Screening Trafficking: Prudent or Perilous?

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NGOs in South Eastern Europe

- Open Gate (Skopje, Macedonia)
- Animus Association Foundation (Sofia, Bulgaria)
- Human Resource Development Foundation (Istanbul, Turkey)
Films

- *Taken* (dir. Pierre Morel, France, 2008)
- *Seamstresses* (dir. Liudmil Todorov, Bulgaria, 2007)
- *The Spot* (dir. Yuri Morz, Russia, 2006)
- *Broken Trail* (dir. Walter Hill, USA, 2006)
- *Lady Zee* (dir. Georgi Diulgerov, Bulgaria, 2005)

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Michael Cory Davis is a native New Yorker, born in Brooklyn to two Jamaican parents, writer and director. In 2003, while shooting two feature length films in Sofia, Bulgaria, Michael learned of the growing number of young girls and women forcefully taken from Bulgaria and other Balkan countries and exploited as prostitutes. Devastated by a 13 year old Bulgarian girl’s story of being abducted, Michael was inspired to write and direct “Svetlana’s Journey.”

Cross-cultural Differences in Attitudes and Knowledge about Trafficking

**Reasons for the Existence of Trafficking**

- Business
- Society
- Oneself
- Perpetrators
- Naivete

**Behavioral Readiness to Act**

- Involvement in an anti-trafficking organization
- Protest against trafficking
- Defence him/herself from trafficking

BG and USA comparisons.
Cross-cultural Differences in Attitudes and Knowledge about Trafficking

TRAFFICKING AS OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE FROM POVERTY

LEVEL OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAFFICKING
Trauma Film
FOUR POSITIONS OF THE SPECTATOR

- “the position of being introduced to trauma through a film’s themes and techniques, but where the film ends with a comforting “cure.”
- “the position of being vicariously traumatized”
- “the position of being a voyeur” which usually involves a secret pleasure in exploiting the victims
- “the position of being a witness,” which can open a space for “transformation of the viewer through empathic identification.” (Kaplan and Wang 9-10).
Svetlana’s Journey (2004)

- story
- trauma
- culture
Svetlana’s Journey (2004) spectator’s positions

- Empathy and witnessing
  - Traumatic images of abuse
  - Violeta Markovska’s acting
  - Svetlana’s diary?

- Dis-belief and dis-identification
  - Mise-en-scène – sensational
  - Flat characters
  - Dialogue – clichéd
  - Maksim Genchev’s and Gergana Dzhikelova’s acting
  - Flawed narrative
Conclusions

- The cultural insensitivity of the creators produce culturally suspicious and implausible stories.
- The cultural background of viewers determines their identification with the story and through it with the trauma.
- Cultural details, three-dimensional characters, and solid narrative can secure the spectator’s trust and pre-disposition to open herself to the trauma of trafficking.