



Instrumentalization of the Border Zone. Environment and Ideology in the Educational Films Made between 1955 and 1989 by the Hungarian Ministry of Interior's Film Studio

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Abstract. Analysing the output of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior's own film studio, which produced educational films between 1955 and 1989, this essay investigates the modes in which the border zone was represented during the decades of state socialism. Considering the vicinity of the border as an area, where ideological confrontations are battled out, the article argues that there is a significant difference between the films produced in the 1950-60s, and those from the mid-1960s onwards. The earlier pieces depict an emotionally charged border zone the defence of which is a social-political duty: father-type superiors teach rookie soldiers about this obligation in coming-of-age stories. However, from the mid-1960s onwards, the films seem to confine themselves to an instrumental mode of persuasion, which presents border protection as a merely technical question. The article briefly ties these shifts to the changing modes in official discourses during the decades of state socialist Hungary.

Keywords: educational film, state socialism, border zone, Hungary, instrumentalization.

A border patrol officer walks into a train compartment to check the passports of the travellers. As he steps up to a young woman, the camera assumes the visual position of the officer looking at her smiling face and eventually checking her documents. Suddenly, the film cuts to a close-up shot showing her previously unbuttoned décolletage from his perspective. Dissonant music swells to emphasize the tension of the moment. The officer's awareness is fooled, and he unknowingly lets the criminal and her companion pass... It might appear as if the described scene stemmed from an espionage thriller, but in fact it is part of the educational film *Identification* (*Személyazonosítás*, director unknown, 1972)

by the Hungarian Ministry of Interior's film studio (BM Filmstúdió) – a piece presenting the techniques of smuggling and using counterfeit travel documents. The ways in which the film studio discursively constructed the environment of the border zone and its protection shifted significantly during the decades, from the 1950s towards the late 1980s, and revealed a great deal about the changes in the social-political imagination of the films' commissioners. In this article, I will track these changes by analysing the subject positions constructed by the films for their audiences in order to create the ideologically charged environment of the border zone. In this essay, the border will be construed both in the sense of the literal national border of the country, but references will also be made to internal borders, such as the border of the army or police barracks or the immediate surroundings of army exercises and the fences of industrial buildings.

The interdisciplinary perspective of the so-called spatial turn in the natural and social sciences and the humanities insists that one should analyse space not simply as a geometrical phenomenon, which can be measured, divided, and thus controlled; but one should also consider that the users of space contribute through their movements and actions to the production and perception of space. Consequently, the social production of space highlights processes that cannot be separated from the subject, who crosses a zone with her myriad of social-historical particularities. Authors such as Henri Lefebvre (1991, 33–38) and Michel de Certeau (2000, 104–109) argued that a dialectical connection can be discerned in the relationship of the top-down cartographic-controlling attempts of the institutions and the bottom-up daily performances of the users of space. In this article, I will use the methodological entry point of the social production of space to investigate the changes in the representation of the border in the educational films made by the Hungarian BM Filmstúdió. This model is significant for my analysis, because in the films the border becomes a construct clearly devoid of any quotidian aspects. The structural absence of any reference to what the Iron Curtain historically represented for state socialist Hungary (a border that prevented people from travelling, isolated Hungarians from their families in neighbouring countries as well as a fortification zone where violators were killed etc.) makes it even clearer that the films' spaces speak of the ministry's political imaginary, and not the everyday experiences of Hungarians. The historical significance of the educational films made by BM Filmstúdió consists in their direct delineation of the official production of space. From 1955 to 1989, the studio's depiction of the vicinity of the border zone underwent significant changes: the psychological-moralising narratives on this highly

ideological environment changed into instrumentalized representations, which did not discuss the causes why it needed to be protected. Overall, I will argue that the ways, in which the rhetoric of the films about the border zone changed, can be understood as part of the general social-political transformations in the consolidating Kádár-regime, which aimed at depoliticising society in exchange for relatively good living standards. Realising that instructional and educational films were consumed by wide audiences in the former Eastern Bloc because of state exhibition practices (educational pieces preceded the screening of any feature in theatres), my aim hereby is to continue the work done by scholars in the field of useful cinema.¹

Charged with the task of producing educational films for both internal use (police and secret services) and the wider public, BM Filmstúdió churned out motion pictures between 1955 and 1989. These black-and-white as well as colour films include traditional short and full-length features (fiction), various types of documentaries, reportages, newsreels (non-fiction) shot on 16 mm, 35 mm and during the 1980s also on video. Additionally, the films use a wide array of narrative devices, such as: diegetic- and non-diegetic narrators, silent segments with no speaking parts, re-enactments, re-edited archival material etc. To make things more complicated, the fate of the surviving films resembles a detective story,² and it remains unclear what percentage the surviving films represent as compared to the entire output of the studio. My interpretation is based on the body of films that was found, viewed and eventually stored by the archivists of the Open Society Archives in Budapest.

In this article, I will refer to this diverse cinematic body as *educational* or *instructional films*, since the terms express the attitude of the authorities, which led to these films being produced. I intentionally avoid the use of the notion *propaganda films*, a widely used term that has, however, the potential to employ a passive model of spectatorship with viewers defenceless against the manipulations of the films' rhetorical arsenal. While it is beyond the scope of this article to outline a general model of spectatorship for the BM Filmstúdió films, I am convinced that viewers possessed the means to resist the films' rhetorical

1 The field has received more attention from scholars in the Anglo-Saxon world; see among others Acland and Wasson (2011), Hediger and Vonderau (2009), Grieveson and MacCabe (2011), Orgeron, Orgeron, and Streible (2011). Work covering Eastern European aspects of useful cinema include Česálková (2012), Lovejoy (2014), Sarkisova (2016) and the yet unpublished work of Adina Brădeanu. *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* published recently a special issue (11:2) on the archives in Eastern Europe, which includes several articles on the topic.

2 Some reels were located in the basement of the film studio, but other films were found dumped on a dog training site that belonged formerly to the Ministry of Interior.

apparatus.³ However, an entirely different methodology would be necessary for investigating this issue. My goal here is to analyse the shifting narratives and stylistic trends in the representation of the border zone, and how these trends connect to more encompassing social-political discourses during the state socialist period in Hungary. It is important to note that, in this article, I can only briefly hint to the complex connections with the social-historical context of the Kádár-era. These links will be explored in a more detailed manner in the forthcoming stages of this project.

In the 223 surviving films, the theme of the border as a fortification protecting the state socialist country is dominant: 24 films, i.e. more than 10% tackle this topic. The films generally play down the fact that many citizens tried to escape Hungary, and talk about the border as a zone, which guards socialist society from foreign intervention. In order to see how the studio addresses this question, the genre of the films can serve as a strong initial orientation point. A significant majority of the films can be described as technical films (these explain the usage of a specific policy, device, technology or a measure). My sample includes 5 works, which are non-technical films, but construct a dramatic storyline – either fictional or non-fictional – with cinematic devices. Remarkably, even if one looked only at the dramatized films of the studio, which allow the audiences to visually, and subsequently emotionally align with the characters, the shift from the moral-psychological mode towards instrumentalization becomes already visible. Nonetheless, almost all technical films instrumentalize – quite understandably – the discourses on the border zone, since they instruct the viewer about the steps to follow in order to protect the country. To highlight these discursive transformations, I will first look at the narrative-expressive devices employed by the five non-technical films, and subsequently analyse the ways in which they address their viewers.

Dramatizing the Environment of the Border

Two dramatized educational films directed by Tamás Rényi depict the border as an emotionalized landscape: *Emergency Situation* (*Rendkívüli esemény*, 1958) and *Friendly Stranger* (*Barátságos idegen*, 1959). Both pieces show recruits in training, who at some point make bad decisions, but recognize their mistakes

3 I can offer personal evidence to strengthen this point. My memories of visiting movie theatres with my grandfather in the 1980s include audiences talking and socializing through the newsreels and educational films that were always projected before the main feature. Not paying attention to these parts of the program was one possible way of resisting their rhetoric.

with the help of their superiors. These films allow audiences to emotionally align with their protagonists, and thereby present the thematized political discourses as psychological-emotional issues that, importantly, are also resolved psychologically.

The flashback structure of *Emergency Situation* creates a narrative frame that allows an effortless point of entry for audiences into the story, told in hindsight by the reminiscing characters. Starting from a position where the morale of the story is already presented, viewers are taken back to the beginning of the fable where the protagonists, Jámbor and Vadas, are rookies in drill in a border patrol unit. While in training, their unit is shown patrolling the picturesque Hungarian border zone with its rivers, valleys and mountains, forests and fields. The various landscape shots with forests, rivers, meadows set up the dramatic role of the environment in the film. The space of Hungarian state socialism is under serious threat from imperialists spies, who have no idea about “our way of life” – as the characters spell out in the prologue. The safety (but also the beauty) of the national landscape, which is initially depicted as untouched nature with no humans present, is guaranteed and protected by the appearance of the border patrol unit.

Vadas, a prodigal son, is presented as a well-intentioned, but impulsive character, who cannot resist the temptations of his earlier civilian life while in training. He leaves his machine gun unattended when chatting up three girls in a picturesque orchard, fires his weapon on an animal in the forest landscape, and finally gets drunk and unintentionally wounds Jámbor during an open-air wedding party on a field. Each of these events, occurring in the environment that harbours “our way of life,” could have ended in a major disaster, and only luck kept that from happening. Importantly, the lush landscape is presented at the beginning of each episode as an environment that seduces the men, especially Vadas, who cannot resist. Subsequently, he is court martialled and sentenced for his reckless actions, but is finally shown as having learned his lesson from his earlier mistakes. As the film returns to the reminiscing character of Vadas from the intro, he actually agrees with the prosecutor’s evaluation of the events. Ultimately, it is the landscape of the border zone that triggers the learning trajectory of the protagonist: Vadas’s realisation turns the landscape into an environment of moral, and thus, political development.

In the second film, *Friendly Stranger*, the hardships of newly enlisted soldiers in a training camp are recounted again. As a prelude, the film’s first scene shows five recruits in frontal close-ups, looking directly into the camera and reciting sentences from their military oath, pleading allegiance to the people’s republic. Through the framing, the producers attempt to immediately create an emotional

bond with the viewers. However, these images stand in stark contrast with the following sequence, which depicts the recruits as immature youngsters eating home-made food and looking at photos of attractive women, i.e. not yet attuned to the goals of their training. In a lengthy montage scene accompanied by playful music, we witness the youngsters exercising: initially clumsy with equipment and on manoeuvres, they gradually become more mature and expert in their actions, under the tutelage of their demanding, but caring superiors. Within a few minutes, the movie effectively activates several visual and thematic parameters of the war film genre: the figures of the scatter-brained, cheeky rookies and the benevolent drill sergeant as a father character. Through these well-placed genre markers, viewers can relate to the characters and their hardships in a psychological-emotional way, which in turn creates accessible points for affective alignment.

Taking a predictable turn, the film continues with the protagonists on leave, travelling home. As they journey to their hometown, they cross the landscape which hides unexpected dangers: already on the train, they are approached by a friendly stranger, who appears first as a pleasant companion trying to pass the time. Soon, however, he attempts to blackmail one of the protagonists to smuggle out of the army base the plans of a new radio transmitter. The film brings up the usual connotations of civilian environment and the military border zone. Seemingly innocent and welcoming, the civilian setting does not protect the rookies. Much rather in opposition to the safe haven of the army camp, where morality is clear-cut, they are now in ambiguous territory. The smuggling of the plans across the border between the sphere of the military and civil life would constitute a major violation of his oath, and Füzesi is seen in dramatic scenes struggling with his conscience. By envisioning this struggle, the film reaches its emotional epicentre. Hard contrast, low-key lighted close-ups of the turning and tossing Füzesi in bed are intercut with low angle medium shots of the two parties that contest for his decision: his superior officers and the blackmailer, aka the friendly stranger. This visualization of the moral dilemma is reminiscent of “the angel and the devil arguing over a character’s shoulder” device, which in this film is also used as an audio technique via the two men’s voice-over sentences. It is hardly surprising that Füzesi finally comes to the right decision and reports the spy’s attempt to blackmail him. As a result, the spy ends up being caught by the authorities. Significantly, the film denies our expectations about the dichotomy of the military and civilian environments, and turns the dilemma of the protagonist about the violation of the border into a problem of the main character’s conscience. Both films directed by Rényi progress along conflicts in

character psychology and a perceived sense of moral-ideological development. Thereby they reveal that the border zone is a space constructed primarily through ideological persuasion: the films emphasize why the processes of aligning with the official position are so important. This psychological and moral dilemma and its solution opens up the channels of identification for the audiences, creating easily inhabitable subject positions in line with the official discourses.

Made several years later, the *Defence of Military Buildings* (*Katonai objektumok védelme*, director unknown, ca. 1965–67) is a hybrid piece: it launches with a long intro montage sequence, which attempts – in a classic Eisensteinian way – to emotionally engage the viewer through the quick juxtaposition of images. The subsequent film shifts into technical mode and dryly educates the audiences on the methods of averting foreign intelligence services' activities at external and internal borders as well. In this sense, the film already represents a shift towards the instrumentalized modes of engagement which, as I will show, dominate the films produced from the mid- and late 1960s onwards. With its visually engaging intro sequence to the long and dull technical piece that follows, the film shows that its producers still considered necessary to explain to the viewers why the defence of Hungary's military bases is a crucial task that has to be taken very seriously.

The introductory montage sequence starts with an outline of the global political situation during the height of the Cold War. A voice-over narrator discusses how the United States poses as the saviour of freedom and democracy, although in the meantime, subjects leftists political governments and movements in Latin America or South East Asia to sanctions. However, saving in this case means the creation of aggressive military blocks and the intensification of the arms race. During the voice-over, the film shows the military complex of the imperialist powers through shots of airplane carriers, fighter jets, rocket launchers and massive cannons fired. After a long shot of a huge cannon, the film cuts to military commanders pointing out an invisible target and covering their ears. Next, the weapon is being fired. Here, in an Eisensteinian fashion, the sequence progresses by a rapid succession of a very brief shots: one, two, three different buildings can be seen collapsing. The cuts are placed on movement, seamlessly connecting the obliteration of the buildings and thereby generalizing the destruction caused by imperialist warfare. The shot of the third collapsing building is followed by an equally brief shot of a collapsing horse in front of a carriage.⁴ By cutting to

4 The filmmakers create here a direct reference to the 1925 Eisenstein film *Strike* and its slaughterhouse sequence, where shots of workers being mowed down by a machine gun are intercut with the killing of a cow at the slaughterhouse. The shot, where the animal collapses is remade in the intro montage sequence of film *Defence of Military Buildings*.

the dying animal, the toll of warfare on living beings is emphasized, and this verdict reaches its strongest form with the subsequent extremely long shot depicting an atomic explosion. Here, the overtone montage mixes the rhythm of the collapsing downward movement of the building and the horse, and of the upward movement of the atomic cloud with the emotional tone of destruction, which dominates the entire intro scene. Lines of the voice-over narrator such as “the ugly face of American imperialism can be discerned most clearly by the light of the burning Vietnam” also play on the empathy of the viewer, especially since they are accompanied by horrific shots of ground infantrymen terrorizing the civilian population. Overall, the intro plays on the engagement of the audiences through dramatization, as in the two films described earlier.

However, the film that follows this montage intro sequence shuns expressive modes completely and switches to the technical description of how the authorities can protect the internal borders of the country (such as army bases, field exercises) from imperialist spies. The film discusses the know-how of setting up road blocks around the perimeter of an army field exercise in order to prevent foreign agents from entering the area, or what kind of practices military police units should follow when patrolling the fences of army bases. Using advanced illustrative devices such as split screens or animated inserts, it displays all the characteristics shared by the large majority of technical films about the border zone. What is noteworthy about this significantly different expressive mode within the same film is that it does not discuss at all the *reasons* why the internal borders of the country need to be protected. Refraining from persuading the viewer about anything, it thereby withdraws completely from the terrain of social-political argumentation, and resorts to the discussion of the instruments of protecting the border zone as if a consensus about the political necessities had already been battled out. It is in this sense that the *Defence of Military Buildings* can be categorized as a hybrid film, which mixes the expressive modes of moral-psychological persuasion and instrumentalized education.

Produced in 1977, the film *Secrets and People* (*Titkok és emberek*, János Lestár) continues the discussion about the protection of the country’s internal borders,⁵ but without the dramatic introduction that made the *Defence of Military Buildings* emotionally so engaging. Referencing the goals of imperialist NATO forces of finding out as much as possible about Warsaw Pact units, the film immediately plunges into the discussion of situations, in which enemy intelligence might

5 In fact, some shots are recycled across the two films, a practice which is fairly common for the productions of the BM Filmstúdió.

intercept secret information from and about army and border patrol units. It is important to note that the film does create dramatic situations, but these are completely devoid of emotional dimensions: the recreated scenes serve merely as illustrations of mistakes made by soldiers, which might lead to leaking of information across the borders. No attempts are made to attach audiences to the psychological-emotional state of the characters; the scenes remain completely descriptive instead. For example, in the film's first episode, an officer violates the communication ban and uses a high-power radio station to send private messages to a buddy, which leads to the enemy radiolocating his position from an airplane. In another scene, a member of a border patrol unit misses the last bus, and hitches a ride home only to be picked up by a seemingly friendly enemy agent. In each of these educational episodes, the "morale" of the story is quite simple: obeying orders is paramount! The characters do not have to understand the larger context or the significance of their actions, they should merely follow the instructions of their superiors. It is this attitude of the films that I aim to describe through the concept of instrumentalization: unlike earlier films, in which the protagonists learn something and become better border patrol agents, or more generally, better socialist citizens, the instrumentalized films merely demonstrate certain steps to be followed or avoided. Both the external and the internal border zone in the two films is emptied out of its social-political dimension and turned into a technical sphere. The subject position constructed for the viewer remains devoid of psychological-emotional overtones.

The last dramatized production of my sample constitutes another form of instrumentalization: the withdrawal to the sphere of complete dramatic implausibility. Made at the end of the state socialist years, the piece *Hunting – Trophies* (*Vadászat – Trófeák*, Tamás Czigány, 1988) shuns the emotionally engaging characters of the other dramatized films. However, instrumentalization here means apart from ignoring the larger political context and depicting the border zone as a mere tool, as is done in *Secrets and People*, also the hollowing out of dramatic consistency and believability in which the border plays an important part. *Hunting – Trophies* takes the logic of instrumentalization to the point of completely disassembling the coherency of the film's diegetic world. By interweaving two similar storylines, in which symbolically important players who regularly cross the border (a secret service officer and a fighter jet pilot) are blackmailed by foreign agents, the film underlines the necessity of reporting such attempts to the authorities. The officer is threatened through photos taken of him in a strip club, and the fighter pilot through the politically questionable

actions of his fiancée. Following painfully didactic plot twists, both men redeem themselves by exposing the foreign agents' attempts. In one episode, for example, the foreign agents plan to blackmail the fighter pilot through his pregnant fiancée, who was made a successful businesswoman with the assistance of the agents. They want to lure her abroad by threatening her that they will inform Hungarian authorities about her privately made business transactions and her private savings in foreign bank accounts. If this plan succeeds, the child will be born in the West, and the pilot can be pressured abroad to visit his child. These twists are so overcomplicated and ridiculous, the construction of the characters so one-dimensional, and the acting so bad that the entire film loses its plausibility. It could be argued that these characteristics are just signs of a very low value movie, but other pieces of the BM Filmstúdió have shown that the unit was capable of producing dramatically coherent and psychologically engaging films. Hence, the question arises: what are the effects of education-instruction, when the depicted diegetic world and the characters are totally unbelievable?

The case of *Hunting – Trophies* demonstrates that, by the late 1980s, the plausibility of the educational film's diegetic world was completely irrelevant for the producers. Moreover, the environment of the border zone was turned into an implausible territory, which revealed the falsehood of the official production of space. The causal connection between the political reality of Hungarian society and the dramatic reality of the films was by this time absent. Cynically, the producers made apparently no efforts whatsoever to create a more credible setting, storyline and characters. Considering this piece, the development of the dramatized films follows a clear path, which starts with psychological-moral persuasion by storytelling in the late 1950s, continues with technical-factual education during the late 1960s and 1970s and reaches total narrative implausibility in the 1980s. The instrumentalization of the border zone in the educational films made by BM Filmstúdió can already be seen in the dramatized productions, which are numerically far outnumbered by the technical films. The temporal distribution of the latter pieces also reflects the trend highlighted through my analysis of the dramatized films: the trend of instrumentalization is tied to the attempt of depoliticizing Hungarian society.

Depoliticizing the Border Zone

The nineteen productions, which thematize the border zone using a technical discourse, tackle specialized situations: the searching of freight train cars, the

organization of the daily duties of border guards, methods used by violators at border control points, the guarding of narrow border territories, human trafficking across the border etc. Each step is carefully demonstrated and redundantly displayed so that audiences (members of the armed forces in training) understand the processes to be followed while implementing border protection measures. The overwhelming majority of the films use re-enacted scenes and voice-over narration. Re-enactment here refers to the fact that the re-staging of the border scenarios is openly addressed, and the male voice-over narrator, as an instructor, guides the viewers through the educational material. The fact that the films refrain from using speaking parts also emphasise the total control of the narrator. Characters become mute extras, who merely illustrate the skill, measure or device under demonstration. A significant part of the technical-instructional pieces makes use of graphic material (animated maps, drawings, inserts, charts etc.), too, that are often overlaid on the photographed scenes. The technical nature and instrumentalization of the films' diegetic world becomes even more explicit through these dual-exposure scenes, where the graphic layer apparently exercises total control over the human agents, but more generally, also over the officially produced spaces of state socialism underneath. The films get bogged down with border protection skills to such extent that dramatization as a discursive strategy disappears entirely. It is probably not surprising that the technical films do not use the narrative devices of moral persuasion or psychological motivation. However, when taking into consideration the temporal distribution of the studio's productions, the trends become all the more visible: the dramatized-psychological films virtually disappear around the late 1960s, while the 1970s are characterised by a visible rise in the production of instrumentalized educational films, which refrain from the interpretation of social-political topics and limit themselves to illustrative goals. In other words, the topic of border and the border zone is thematized in the large majority of the films produced during the entire period in the context of technical knowledge (how to protect the border?) and not as a political theme (why is it important to protect the border?). In the educational films made by BM Filmstúdió, the official production of the space of the border zone displays a strong tendency of instrumentalization.

After the end of World War II, the border, and especially the Western border with Austria (and to some extent the Southern border with former Yugoslavia as well) was regarded as a fortification, which protects the country from imperialist influences. The large emigration wave following the 1956 revolution – when approximately 170 thousand citizens left the country – further intensified

the rhetorical construction of the border as a line that needs to be defended: physically, but discursively as well. The films produced by the BM Filmstúdió during the late 1950s and early 1960s reflect this discursive construction via the moral-psychological argumentation adopted. By allowing audiences to visually, and consequently psychologically align with the protagonists, who through their stories learn about the necessity of territorial protection, the films display a certain logic of governmentality. According to this logic, political-ideological persuasion is devised through the construction of binary character pairs (politically wise father figures vs unexperienced rookies or evil antagonists) and character identification. Melinda Kalmár characterizes this mode of political discourse as literary: “[during the 1950s] cultural ideology, and the institutions of public space were transformed in such a way that they functioned according to a conservative *literary mode*. This aesthetic mode of ideology wanted to affect people emotionally, it was didactic and cultic” (Kalmár 1998, 53). The rhetoric of the early dramatized BM films, thus, fits well into this broader pattern of governmentality where the psychological processes of identification play the central role.

After the defeat of the 1956 revolution and further into the 1960s, the party under the leadership of secretary general János Kádár provided relative affluence and existential security to citizens, while demanding in return tacit acceptance of the status quo: “Kádár’s tactics could be described as having evolved towards a strategy – depoliticize society and keep the population sweet through economic concessions” (Schöpflin 2016, 97). In a broader sense, the discursive shifts in the official space consisted in the simulation of consent: instead of emphasizing the process of learning and insight, the Kádárist system acted as if an agreement about the common goals had already been arrived at. “The language of argumentation (...) is pragmatic, it refers to reasoning and interests.” (Kalmár 1998, 75.) This shift can be seen in the instrumentalized rhetoric employed by the educational films made in the BM Filmstúdió from the mid-1960s onwards. The characters in the emotionalized films produced during the first phase of the state socialist decades engage extensively with the principles why the border zone needs to be protected. However, these principles are left undiscussed in later films, regardless whether these are dramatized or technical pieces. In the dramatized productions, characters retreat into a sphere where motivation rests almost solely on individual-material interests. This strategy overlapped seamlessly with the regime’s intentions. As Takács puts it, “instead of allowing open criticism of the party line or public discussions [of] sensitive political issues, people were left to arrange their private life or careers in a freer way. The better living standards

and the satisfied consumerist urges contributed essentially to a social atmosphere where loyalty to the political regime and keeping distance from the political decision-making could be equally required" (2010, 116). In this new situation, the rhetorical construction of the border turned into a set of technical considerations that also had to keep up with the changing status of the border: from the 1960s onwards, the regime started to allow some citizens to travel to the West. Thus, the educational films ceased to make attempts to morally-psychologically persuade, but instead instructed audiences about the technical-instrumental processes of border protection. In the films themselves, the decisive shift consisted in the fact that the reasons why the frontier needed to be protected were left undiscussed. The unbuttoned décolletage of the attractive foreign agent misleading the border patrol officer in the mentioned scene of *Identification* was discussed by the film's voice-over narrator in a detached manner as a "device," which distracted the soldier's awareness. Moving away from the typical objectifying-affective use of this sexist imagery (but not for progressive reasons), the décolletage in a close-up turns out to be a technical instrument that marks the transformations of governmentality during the Kádár-era Hungary.

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