

EDUCATIONAL GAME METHODOLOGY

GAME PRINCIPLES OF SIMULATION AND IDENTIFICATION IN
YOUTH'S EXPERIENTIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH CULTURAL HERITAGE
AND ITS SOCIAL DIMENSION

Methodological framework and case study within the Erasmus+ project
ThinkFiLM Educational Game: Combining Physical Interaction and Digital Technologies

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Methodology coordinator: Jakub Jiříšťa, jakub.jiriste@nafilm.org



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The following text presents the output of the international project Educational Game ThinkFILM: Interconnection of Physical Interaction and Digital Technologies developed with the support of the Erasmus+ program. The cooperation of partners (NaFILM National Film Museum, Film Museum in Lodz, the Hungarian organization KÖME specializing in new forms of cultural heritage interpretation and the Slovak creative laboratory DevKid) enabled a multidisciplinary approach to the realization of an innovative game format for youth that transcends the museum space as well as the limits of digital communication. The methodological part of development enabled researching the game mechanisms of various educational formats (from urban games to digital didactic contents dealing with the interpretation of historical topics) and focusing on principles combining physical interaction and digital environment, with its specific approaches to active learning available to the current generation. Their interconnection, which became our focus point, is based on the researched concepts of immersion, simulation, role playing and identification with historical situations. Thanks to a synthesis of these elements in the resulting format, we transcend learning at a museum and take it out to the city streets, interconnect real environments and game situations by including digital storytelling while recreating the museum into a narrative space through our programming.

The methodological framework will introduce the combination of these starting points with the response to the currently changing orientation in education which strengthens the contact between cultural-educational institutions and the school curriculum. It is especially the educational sector of culture and art that is undergoing a significant redefinition which is adding socially beneficial and more subjective relevance to the conveyed values and expected skill development. By defining the basic game principles, the framework will provide a more general and broadly applicable model for learning about the cultural legacy from the contemporary perspective linked primarily to the development of democratic values and formative aspects of personal and social education. The second part of the document will focus on the particular application and practical solutions of the methodological framework using the example of a game prototype developed for NaFILM. It will present the combination of basic gaming principles with the selected

form of storytelling, access to immersion and simulation in a particular gaming environment and in situations sharing the real historical experience of filmmakers, and an organic interconnection of the gaming experience with an active reflection taking into account the subjective opinions of the player. The game prototype further offers a specific approach to the correspondence of the involved principles with the challenges of current education, as it reacts to the still problematic integration of audiovisual education and provides an elaborate structure of impulses including essential overlaps with building social awareness in the young generation.

1. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE GAME FORMAT

Gaming principles are on the rise in the educational system and many formats that can be applied both in formal and informal education are currently being developed. They simulate the game experience for better participation and motivation in learning, as the knowledge gained through effort and new experience has a greater value for the player / student and the problem solving included in the game can be used in future practice.^[1] We have had the opportunity to repeatedly verify motivational and activation benefits of involving games practices into informal education and the experiential concept of the museum exhibition. This verification with target groups and teachers was possible thanks to previous international projects included under the joint educational lab of European film institutions ThinkFilm. Within this project, we also focused on the development and validation of a methodological framework for a new game format from 2021 onwards. The format aims to deepen and structure game interactions in order to enhance their benefits for the (self-)reflective dimension of the knowledge gained.

While the trend towards “gamification” has its roots in the 1980s, today, it goes beyond mere competition and simple games to enliven the lessons and to inspire more effective and focused participation in class. Educational support is becoming prominent in the digital game contents that are easy to use both in class and at

home and offer various ways to adapt the subject to the requirements and interests of the students. The current development and user possibilities thus elevate and make widely accessible the variations of the format of the didactic game – which are defined by careful conceptual integration of game mechanisms towards the educational goal, while the closed experience enables a more effective and controlled learning process and result evaluation.^[2] The current didactic games in a digital environment typically give the students the position of problem solvers, a certain role, stimulating their curiosity and identification with the given task. This type of games increases student motivation as they can react to the gradually gained, often immediate and diverse feedback, experiment and improve their skill without fear of failure, learn to work with mistakes and accept them as new challenges, and link gaining information to more creative processes.^[3] On the other hand, there are also game experiences based on a simulation of situations where students need to make responsible choices and face the consequences of their reactions.

Many games involve narrative elements, with the player becoming a part of the story, which adds another dimension enabling emotional connection with the goals and tasks at hand.^[4] The story also provides a framework where individual pieces of knowledge are organized and enhanced with links and contexts, and amplifies the possibilities of identification with the subject matter through the characters. In this design of the game environment, whether it includes an advanced story or a simple problem-solving impulse for the player, focus shifts from the results to the learning process.

Curiosity, imagination and sense of play are three aspects of learning which are, according to Thomas and Brown, lacking in the traditional educational process and which are developed by modern game contents. They also largely focus on the learning process which involves more mental and perceptual activation than mere listening to the subject matter and taking notes without immediate evaluation of the “stored” facts and findings. Teachers today work with a gamut of tools to make the lessons more lively and the students more involved, to enhance communication between the teacher and the students, group interaction and cooperation in class.

Rather than employing full-fledged didactic games, they give more space to gamification, using game mechanics and dynamics to enhance participation and mutual collaboration between students and involving various cognitive skills through partial challenges and tasks with rewards. However, it is not a self-sustaining educational supplement to replace other forms of learning. An empirical study has pointed out that not all students are competitive types; on the contrary, similar activities may create stressful situations for them, while other students may lose motivation if they do not get high scores or do not like the gamification application.^[5]

1. 1. THE GENRE OF SERIOUS GAMES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE

Besides the traditional definition of the didactic game, the educational use of game contents also falls into the category of serious games, or also applied games, which are used in education and many professional fields. The definition of this category can be quite broad and mark its serious purposes (including education, military training, scientific progress in the field of medicine or therapeutic activities), however, our methodological definition will mainly focus on the principle of simulation. This game dynamic enables the replaying of situations, behaviors and tactics without facing consequences in the real world – immersiveness and new technologies are essential for serious games. The players encounter complex societal topics and strategies to cope with them or address them, while the games also bring impulses for the development of complex competences and confront the players with the consequences of their reactions and decisions.

The disadvantage of the design of these games for educational purposes lies in the complicated system of functions and interactions. The interfaces are often based on real-life conditions, and thus are not suitable for the interaction of the whole class in nonspecialized instruction. Only those games with a certain kind of simulation (or historical immersiveness) can succeed, while the interaction and engagement of the players remains simple and focuses on a more closed solution of partial tasks. The more direct evaluation of the players' steps should also provide gradual motivation to keep the players' attention. This design is acceptable for the

purposes of common school education, as it does not require demanding preparation and input of the teacher, and corresponds to the needs of gamification in the classroom environment.

However, the potential of serious gaming lies in the possibility of reaching a more open game field which brings more identification, emotional immersion, thinking in context, and ambivalent reflection on the topic. Not concerning the limitations of the usual design of the educational situation in the classroom, could there be a format for a school group that could fulfill this potential in an informal educational environment, such as the space of a museum or the city streets? Could we detach from the digital interface which assumes all interaction and evaluation?

Within a common international project, we decided to explore these possibilities from the methodical-didactic perspective and arrive at a format and a corresponding game prototype to apply the principles of serious games to the specific educational environment, and interconnect them with the crucial area of education that is undervalued within the current system (modern history and the perspective of personal experience) as well as with the new approaches in the interpretation of cultural heritage (which would be history of the film medium in our particular application) and the perception of experience in the post-digital era.

1.2. GAME SIMULATION, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SELF REFLECTION

Serious games have recently been more in touch with cultural heritage which is not necessarily of material nature in its contemporary form. Cultural legacy is shaped by a number of factors, including social and philosophical values, ways of artistic expression, rules of social behavior, imprints of historical intentions and mentality. These aspects of culture are not easily preserved and we must seek new ways to communicate them in a lively way to the new generations. This is where simulations and role playing employed in game mechanisms can be immensely helpful. Achieving immersiveness through their application helps us connect to the meanings of cultural heritage that are otherwise hard to grasp and communicate, to understand the background which informed its products, and perceive it from a personal and also more holistic perspective.

What is key for this way of learning is designing it as a “first person” game experience which allows us to invest empathy and work with the important aspect of identification with the actors behind the cultural phenomena. What plays a role here is not only identifying with them and understanding their positions and values but also experiencing their shifts on the part of the players who have a different temporal and social anchoring, which can relativize the positions and values, or create a critical distance from them. Adventure games can serve these educational purposes, enabling such identification with historical actors through controlling the character, discovering evocative environments linked to their perception, problem solving and dilemmas in the context of the given historical situation or event. In the digital environment, this active way of learning about history through interaction with the environment and other characters within a structured narrative, which offers solutions to partial obstacles, has quite a rich tradition. It can work with authentic references and materials, involve discovering history through an information search for the real state of the events, or directly decide as a participant in historical events and face the consequences of one’s decisions.

The confrontation of personal perspective and big history can be efficiently used for education and these types of adventure games have already found their way into the school curriculum. Beyond individual use, they also offer collective playing, and transferring the decisions among a group of students so they can discuss the possible impacts and factors and share different opinions and values, face the consequences together, and thus contribute to the following reflection. However, in these formats, it is the teacher’s responsibility to create the conditions for the shared experience and deal with the role of facilitator.

The games themselves do not use this mode and do not offer an interface to support a shared reflection and confrontation with the results. They also do not offer the “multiplayer” form where groups of students could also follow the alternative paths of other groups. However, these options are available in games that do not conceive historical experience as a mere linear structure of partial tasks designed for absorbing historical facts, but open up the chain of decisions so the players can reach different positions and thus face the consequences of their

actions. In this way, they can become aware of the historical era as well as the moral, emotional and ambiguous appeal for a retrospective evaluation of their steps. This layer goes beyond mere evocation and collection of pieces of information, as it meticulously fulfills the ich-form as well as the simulation potential of the game experience. Thus, it accentuates the inner dimension and more self-reflective involvement of the position of the contemporary “me”.

If it is our goal to address history not only through historical events but rather through cultural heritage in the broader sense of its historical conditions, the key aspect of the game design will be reaching the inner dimension and perspective of the actor / creator. Cultural products can serve as specific tools of interpretation, where, to varying degrees and proportions, the personality of the creator meets the spiritual dimension of the historical era, representing a union or clash of these entities, moving along the scale between identification and resistance, internal and external needs, or even dictate. Understanding the range of possibilities is an insight that can illuminate the cultural manifestations of the given time. The experience that identifies us with the historical actors helps us consciously move along this scale in different directions during the creative process.

With this premise in mind, we started reflecting on the game format that could use the key elements of simulation / identification / self-reflection for our own learning and movement on this scale. For a player to understand where and how they got where they got, they need to be aware of the other final positions on this scale, the causes and effects that have determined the alternative results of the players' negotiations between their own intentions and the requirements which transcend the individual (artist / player) and their inner freedom. Then we can employ the factor of ambiguity of the final success / failure and their diverse interpretations from the perspective of the given historical era or beyond it.

To apply this aim to the field of museum education, for which the game format is being primarily designed, it is necessary to create and maintain a game environment where participants are situated into the role of creators and introduced to their goals which they seek to meet and defend in the evoked

environment of historical possibilities and limitations. Thus, the experience is conceived as an effort to navigate an environment of multiple factors influencing the historical cultural playground and sources of clues which help the player find a path towards their goal with as few concessions as possible. To become more identified with their goal, the player tries to apply the gained knowledge in their creative process. It becomes their own little playground, where their creative choices (the predesigned structure of choices) apply an interpretation of the external situation with which they must deal strategically. Their interaction is based on collecting essential information where sources of different value and reliability are at play, and the interactions based on this reflection take place in the form of the offered creative choices. The confrontation of one's own choices with the requirements of external factors brings dilemmas. If the player pays more attention to the gained clues, they can get a more advantageous position for the confrontation and defense of their work, which they would not reach had they ignored them or failed to evaluate them.

This starting position can generate different narrative frameworks and application of particular facts and creative motivations, producing authentic traces. It opens up the space for reflection and sharing, applying the results of different strategies and uncovering a more complex view of the maneuvering space in the given cultural and historical conditions, and possibly also ethical questions concerning the relation between society and art / individual expression.

1.3. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PLAYER AND SPACE FOR HISTORICAL EMPATHY

Since the game format is conceived primarily for an indoor and more extensiveF museum space (rather than a classroom or another room), it assumes its variable adaptation to several checkpoints, free movement of players (high school students) and their concentration for the initial and finals parts, including the following reflection (hall seating with the possibility of screening). The elements of active learning and deciding, including the use of game features, complement the possibilities of employing impulses from drama education that are also suitable for

education and motivation. These are essential, as follows from one of its definitions (drama education is based on exploring, learning and understanding human relationships, situations and inner lives of people of the past and present, both real and imaginary)^[6] for delving deeper into learning about a phenomenon beyond the practical and current experience of the players (the advantage of approaching a problem from the point of view of another person) as well as for incorporating the situational plot into the learning process. That is where the interaction between players and facilitators through their assigned roles (alteration – identification with a certain character and the conditions for their action rather than simulation – where a player is playing on their own behalf in a simulated situation) comes in handy.

This situation brings important educational benefits to the player: through identification with the character, they can better cope with the consequences of their bad decisions in the safety of fictional reality. The building stone of drama education is the situation including “certain circumstances, conditions and relations of characters in the given time and place.” Rather than “presenting ready-made knowledge to students,” it allows them to gain experience from which they can construct a new piece of knowledge. Luděk Richter, who has defined this situation in accordance with dramatic arts, also sees its principle in a conflict, problem or difficulty, which require the students to solve them by mutual action and impact on their surroundings (especially on a group of persons to achieve a certain goal).^[7]

Due to the fact that unlike exact sciences, learning in this field does not have predefined solution procedures, students must rely on heuristic methods which are based on research, practical evaluation and confrontation while offering multiple paths toward the goal that are not unambiguously correct. The benefit of engaging players through role playing, besides independent reflection and decision-making without knowing the correct solution, also lies in enriching the learning process with emotional experience – which includes empathetic relating to the actor in the story as well as investing personal values. This adds cognitive activities that can be applied during the dramatically designed game – such as gaining information, observation and argumentation.

As stated by Dagmar Sitná, the applied method of drama education enhances critical thinking through a controlled and thoughtful approach to the gained knowledge: “through discovering, evaluating, comparing and incorporating new information within an existing knowledge system, and autonomous, individual decision about its acceptance or rejection.” What is key is addressing a problem or hindrance from various points of view or perspectives of multiple characters and active evaluation of pros and cons preceding individual decisions.^[8]

The application of drama elements in education also has a strong tradition in a field that is essential for our game format linked to the active interpretation of cultural heritage – the possibility of accessing it through historical empathy. It can help overcome the barriers in understanding history which are getting ingrained in the young generation – the perception of history as an incomprehensible period where everything was completely different than today, its simplification into generalizing stereotypes or its noncritical evaluation through modern values and positions. The individual stages on the path towards empathy should be surpassed within the long-term education process, reaching the stage of “contextual historical empathy,” the ability to understand that the actions and goals of people in the past were defined by a different level of knowledge and different perception of value, and to view historical events and situations accordingly. This level already assumes the ability of differentiating between positions and perspectives of a historian and a historical actor, and being aware of what was known to this actor then and what is known to us today.^[9]

The level of gained empathy is linked to the level of historical awareness and thinking. Thanks to its development, we can abandon the purely ethical perspective in the perception of problematic topics of the past and overcome the emphasis on the differences between the past and the present, shift from common sense to primary sources and clues, and thus accept the autonomy of ethical systems in the past.^[10]

However, accepting the role of a historical actor implies the necessity of personal confrontation with a different type of thinking, accepting this thinking and

solving the situations with the awareness that the reactions and decisions may differ from the personal convictions of the player; however, the player understands them. The process of getting to this level of identification does not sever thinking and feeling, so the attempt to grasp the situation of the portrayed character would ideally encompass the thoughts, feelings, experiences, decisions and actions influenced by specific context.^[11] According to Kavalierou, historical dramatization should require a simple approach, focus on small historical episodes with respect for all characters and events, with more emphasis on accuracy and objectivity. The goal should go towards grasping the meaning of conflicts and inspiring the participants to arrive at their own conclusions.^[12] Historical empathy is a skill that should be cultivated beyond the framework of history education, so we can gain the ability of a multiperspective approach and understand that human behavior depends on external conditions. However, for many educators, enriching the experience with the affective level, which is not addressed by most didactic resources, represents a hindrance, as leading students towards higher stages of empathy requires long-term purposeful action.

Naturally, historical empathy during the simulation assumes strong self-suppression on the part of the student, who must distance themselves from their own projections, although they often succumb to their own emotions and experiences at that age, or they take up decisive positions which fortify their distance through moral standpoints. Then we must reflect on how much the use of empathy in the game / role equals denying our own self and accepting the rules of the portrayed period. Of course, the game is not an exclusively educational situation and empathy also means empathizing with someone based on our personal experience, trying to step in their shoes, although they may not be a perfect fit. The fact that we may use projection is not necessarily bad, unless the player is playing a historically defined character whose motivations play a crucial role for the understanding of the event (such as war conflicts). They may act according to their values and convictions, adapt based on partial facts; however, historical context will be uncovered primarily through the effects of this action where different historical rules gain significance.

If the player is assigned the role of a creator, more freedom for their own choices should be a prerequisite for their experience, as personal individuality represents yet another substantial dimension entering the game. The projection of one's own self essentially brings an element of variability which should be capitalized on and subsequently reflected. If the player encounters the historical system based on their own position or individual interpretation of available clues, the confrontation gains a personal dimension and fits into their world. Levstiková and Barton are aware that the basic prerequisite for learning about the past lies in knowledge of the self which brings our own values into the contact. Without clearly stating our current position, so Levstiková and Barton, we are not competent to evaluate the past, which is an essential postulate for the definition of the player's position.^[13]

1.4. THE LECTURER'S DRAMATURGY OF THE GAME FORMAT

The preparation on the part of the lecturers is crucial. They create and maintain the game situation for the players who are divided into several groups within their school group and interact with each other. The capacity of the institution is also important, as it defines how many lecturers can be "on location" during the game experience if we want to amplify the element of simulation and interaction and not substitute it with printed / visual materials or digital contents.

The preparation of the format always assumes a research part tailored to the discussed topic and its historical anchoring (artistic and cultural institutions and their mechanisms, official doctrines and aesthetics, influences exerted on the creators, authentic cases of clashes and reactions of the artists, reference works and possible sources of information / clues to better evoke the period spirit). Based on the gained knowledge, individual checkpoints are created which the players visit during their experience and which can evoke, thanks to stage setting, the period environment (particular places enabling personal interaction / dialogue with the lecturer, receiving written information, using a sound recording / projection, use of a period object). To achieve a greater sense of immersion, the facilitating lecturers take up the roles of the characters on the side of the historical "external authority."

They can be bearers of information, advisors and evaluators of the works, or use their influence on the original intention of the creators and force them to make concessions (for instance, in the form of a committee, a representative of period approval authorities, historical art salons which decided about the non/acceptance of emerging artist, a period art critic). The play mechanism thus follows this structure:

- > introducing the game group to the historical period and their situation, identifying them with the character of the creator and their goal (the choices of the character are made by the players within their groups) – including the use of immersive and narrative elements in communication by the lecturers or specific (e.g. audiovisual) content
- > enabling the students to learn about their historical context within the environment in greater depth – what are their possibilities to become established as new creators – collecting first clues, studying the reference works, possibly using premade “packages” of materials evoking the period atmosphere – these are used by the group to learn about the necessary context as well as the personal interest of the character
- > activity for the creation of the work itself – the selection of choices concerning the intention, means of expression of the work, its ideas (provocativeness) – use of a digital application / cards / paper form
- > free interaction and movement of the groups in space to learn about external pressures, official requirements and censorship – different types of information sources and their evocation, lecturers can represent these instances at the checkpoints – necessity to navigate the environment and factor the gained clues in one’s own work, reevaluate the initial choices and employ the new knowledge in the following decisions. Participants who are receiving clues can also become aware of what is promoted, protected, seen as successful and desirable at the time and confront it with their creative process.
- > finalization of one’s own work using the perspectives gained during the past choices
- > collective evaluation of the work before the main authority (represented by the lecturers) negotiating concessions, defense, dilemma of how to react to the verdict
- > collective reflection using the life stories of the creators and their reactions to the external conditions and pressures – possibility of confronting various approaches and results of actions of the individual groups (individual freedom

vs. existential uncertainty, compromises, careerism and service to power), applying change of perspective on their action from the position of the given historical period / from the position of the present (possibility of gratification) and an example showing there are not always clear winners or losers

- * For the reflection, each group should have a protocol of their individual decisions and journeys which can be collectively evaluated and discussed – whether in paper form or in the form of an overview generated and displayed in the digital interface.

Since this type of program should be designed for a larger group, we may need to limit fluctuation between the checkpoints, prevent overcrowding and maintain control over the activities of the players. That is why it is better for the game experience to divide the players into groups with several members, where dialogue between members is necessary for each decision in the game / creation. It is also beneficial to lead the students to take a democratic vote and stick to an odd number of members in each group. If this is impossible, or to accelerate the process, they can use dice; the students with the highest number can have the “main say” while the others can contribute with their suggestions and comments (embodying inner voices).

The game experience usually works with guiding motivational elements such as victory, points and rewards, so in this respect, our format is rather specific. If the players take up the role of historical actors, they decide which position would bring them more personal benefit – whether they seek the recognition of official authorities, success and career, or stay true to their individual vision at any cost without compromise. The game helps to address this problem by the partial goals it has set – navigating the context, solving one’s inner conflict within the group, where different positions and perceptions of the situation may play a role, making choices during the game that the players deem best based on their previous findings. The structure of the experience, however, should bring dilemmas that may change the original convictions, and circumstances such as uncertainty, existential consequences and ethical failures. It is essential that even if the player designs a strategy to reach their goal, during the process, they are unsettled and faced with

unexpected pressures, so their decisions about the best path to take can be gradually transformed and corrected, and they may even arrive at practices of self-censorship.

Thus, the final part of the simulation stage is not about obvious winners and losers. It is about taking a stand that will be subsequently reflected, and it is the very possibility to compare these positions between all groups of players that builds the discursive path towards consensus about the scale of success, where different perspectives matter (what is a greater or lesser loss or wrongdoing) and so does temporal distance (success at the given time does not necessarily mean success from the long-term perspective, the variable value of particular artworks on the market, what can seem as good service to the art field can be seen as problematic in retrospect).

1.5. THE REACTION OF GAME MECHANISMS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH “REACTING GAMES”

These game principles can be applied in the educational program especially when the target group of high school students is introduced to the eras that typically included mechanisms for control and management of culture (primarily totalitarian regimes). The shared experience enables presenting the topic of art in the thrall of state commissions, the topic of propaganda and the service position of creators, and reflecting upon the concepts of inner and outer freedom as well as the responsibility for one's own work or expression. However, one can also arrive at a broader application in the field of art and culture – also grasping, within this game framework, the topic of formal and moral boundaries in the evolution of new approaches to the art practice (for instance, in the context of the society of the 19th century).

When looking for a possibility to address a topic in a general way and relate it to the formation of visual culture by various forces and counterforces, “reacting games” can also be inspiring. The goal of this format is to make the players realize how events can be affected by individuals and how historical circumstances can be

based on certain social contexts, situating the students into a clearly defined historical moment.^[14] This way of engagement can stir reflection on essential questions that shape the world and develop critical, practical and intellectual skills. The definition of the format largely corresponds to our situational and temporally anchored concept of the game world. Its applications in various thematic and academic fields are mostly created by the Reacting Consortium of Barnard University.

The approach that is the closest to our field of interest among dozens of game experiences so far is that of Keri Watson, who has chosen the clash between modernism and traditionalism for her instruction of art history. The professor has focused the game design on the period of a few months before two key events that defined the following path of art at the end of the 19th century: the Paris Salon in 1888 and the Paris Exposition in 1889. These milestones were evoked in the game as situations played out in a gallery space.

At the beginning of the process spanning a few days, the players gained information about the historical background and they were assigned one of 35 roles with biographic facts. Some of them became avant-garde artists, others turned into art dealers or esteemed art critics. However, the students had to intensively prepare for the game experience, look up information about the real characters, and craft their own speeches addressing the future of art. These grant them a chance to enter the Academy, whose members further negotiate the acceptance of the artists in the official Salon, while the players in the roles of critics and art dealers allow the participation of the artists in the Exposition. Meanwhile, new space is born for independent artists and their alternative presentation. In the final stage of the game (the reconstruction of the Paris Exposition), the game field opened up for new unbiased and evaluating players in the role of art buyers who were addressed and convinced by the present actors through various visual means of representation defined by their previously achieved positions.

The scoring model of the game, which represented the main source of motivation for deeper learning about the historical conditions, was built around partial signs of

success: the chance to enter the Academy, gain recognition of critics, successful art sales. The winners included the best-selling artists, critics highlighting the most successful artists, and art dealers who raised most public interest. What was key was the ability to convince others about one's own opinion and present particular artworks, all based on a thorough source of shared resources and findings about the historical value systems.^[15]

This format illuminates how sophisticated a game experience can be and which temporal framework it can have to introduce the complex communication network between artists and their evaluators, even including the public, who can access the works that went through various conditions and contexts of presentation. Nevertheless, the individual "casting" of all actors within this complex system and setting it into motion puts considerable demands on the preparation for the role and overall coordination, nearing the extensive staged game experiences of the LARP type. It is only through in-depth knowledge and interpretation of sources, almost resembling classical self-study consisting mostly of reading and writing, that the students can put on the hermetic "guise" of a particular historical figure, adopt their ideas, creative values and character, and enact them towards their surroundings. In reacting games, the role-playing element lies in the fact that "students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the figures they have been assigned to play, as well as the context and facts of the historical moment, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations."^[16]

While such simulation with a distinct academic approach may be a perfect replay of history with accurate dates and rules, its course is orchestrated and closed with pre-staged rules and clearly defined positions for all players. The game success is directly linked to the depth of preparation, while the options of an individual approach and confrontation are limited. There is a lack of choices, dilemmas and uncertainties that shape the approaches during the very experience, enabling us to face the influences and pressures exerted on the artists within a more individual experience. The game format that we promote, also due to the significantly shorter time investment, approaches the role-playing elements more openly, so the

students who take on the role of a creator without a predefined character can absorb and respond to the historical conditions, values and rules and imprint them into their own creative act. While the art market and audience are integral parts of the relationship network, which can be included in the game as one of the topics for reflection, it is a different type of engagement than integrating them as the measure of success, which should mainly help motivate the players to carefully research their predefined role.

The game experience mostly works with guiding motivational elements such as victory, points and rewards. In this respect, our format is different, as it works with a less obvious measure of success, which is not a stable element and may be very subjective. While the players are assigned the role of historical actors, due to the deliberately very general definition of the aim (a young artist who wants to become established), they are free to arrive at a position they find personally beneficial – whether it is the recognition of official authorities, success and careers, or staying true to their individual vision at any cost without compromise. It is about the individual expression of values which may be complex to promote within groups of several members.

The game design substantially helps solve this problem by setting partial goals – navigating the possibilities and limitations of the given era, collectively solving one's inner conflict in the team of players, where different positions and perceptions of the situation may play a role, making choices during the game that the players deem best based on their previous findings. The structure of the experience, however, should bring dilemmas that may change the original convictions and inform the game with circumstances of uncertainty, existential consequences and ethical failures. It is essential that even if the player designs a strategy to reach their goal, during the process, they are unsettled and faced with unexpected pressures. Their decisions about the best path to take can be gradually transformed and corrected, and they may even arrive at practices of self-censorship.

Our design of the game format, while it may be more situationally limited and simplified, is also more open to a confrontational reflection of our own steps. It will

use its informal approach to open up new possibilities in the educational field of Art and Culture. It will strengthen its main disciplines: original creation with a possibility of sharing and reflecting on the creative process, understanding the specific language of the given art form and the variable approaches to its reception over time, perceiving the context in which artworks are created and how they communicate with the social milieu.

The design of the game experience thus enables activities supporting this complex action – a set of creative decisions for making one's own work (which may, to a varying degree, take into consideration the historical possibilities and thought sources, a repertory of reference works for our inspiration and preference, possibly also involving specific means of the given art discipline), an active discovery stage of the external conditions and dictates forming the awareness as well as the self-censoring practices of the creator, confrontation of these conditions based on the gained clues with our own creative choices, subsequent sharing and defense of the work, whose results, related to the real examples of life stories of artists, will illuminate the complicated positions of the creator in the given era. The educational benefits include the ability to work with the creative intention and its communication in a group setting, learning to apply new perspectives to historical periods and understanding their expressions in artistic and cultural artifacts, as well as strengthening the work with resources of diverse information value and their critical reflection in relation to our individual acts / choices.

2. PROTOTYPE OF THE GAMING EXPERIENCE – SITUATION OF A FILMMAKER IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER THE SOVIET OCCUPATION /CASE FOR A ROOKIE FILMMAKER/

The development of a prototype of a gaming experience for the educational needs of the National Film Museum included adapting the gaming principles introduced in the methodological framework and using them to strengthen the relevance of audiovisual heritage for the newly emerging orientation in education. The role of

film in contemporary history does not hold an established position within the Framework Educational Program in the Czech Republic. If it is encountered by the students at all, it is often limited to comparisons of socially oriented literary works to their film adaptations. Within the ongoing revision of education, film is gaining ground primarily as a contemporary means of developing digital skills through the active acquisition of possibilities of communication and expression offered by audiovisual media. Its different position in the educational field of Art and Culture is also taken into consideration, though with less particularity. This opens up the possibility of seeking new didactic ways to present the variable means of expression of this medium as well as the close interconnection of various means of artistic expression with the historical framework.

For both the contemporary digital media and the audiovisual heritage have the potential to strengthen the currently prominent perspective on creative thinking as a “way of thinking about the world and, within it, about oneself”.^[17] What is key is the question how the didactic inclusion of films linked to a particular historical experience can contribute to this goal – supporting the self-awareness of a young person and opening the space for their opinions, values and emotional learning. What followed from our long-term conversation with educators was that traditional education lacks space for studying particular film works in complex ways and addressing their social and subjective overlaps. Should future education promote the need for interpretation, reception and reflection in film works, too, embedding them within the cultural awareness, most educators would resort to a projection of the film and a brief analysis of its content.

With these starting points in mind, we approached the overall methodological development of the gaming format. We explored the possibilities of synthesis of various didactic and gaming approaches to find a suitable structure of impulses to introduce the creative and social relevance of the substantial works of Czechoslovak cinema from the era of consolidated totality to the new generation. To convey this relevance, we arrived at the need to create links between the creative impulses of the works themselves, the individuality of the filmmakers on a specific historical backdrop, and space for self-expression through the subjective opinions

and interpretations of the player. The concept of the gaming experience also included the possibility of letting the player enter the creative process to an acceptable extent and reflect it in dialogue with existing period works and their reception. This response to tried and tested didactic methods of art education gives players an opportunity to build a closer connection to historical works and their values.

When applying the methodological framework to the educational practice of NaFilM National Film Museum, we selected the period of social normalization after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia as the specific framework. The complex topic enables us to elevate the museum's specific approaches to experiential presentation of the film heritage to a new level and to combine interactivity with personal reflection and historically embedded experience with contemporary social values. The interactive exposition employs identification elements in the presentation of the history of the film medium as well as the opportunities for confrontation of its original identity with the experience of the current generation. During the journey through the exposition, visitors can become film pioneers or projectionists for a while, thanks to immersive elements (virtual reality), they can relive the experience of an early film viewer or contribute to the live element of a film performance as a creator. This approach, employed to introduce the birth of film and its establishment as an art discipline, was translated to the even more complicated field of the future development of the medium, with the key element of the influence of social systems and historical events on the evolution of cinema. We also decided to address the position of the filmmaker which brings along choices, dilemmas and compromises, especially in the context of Czechoslovak (or Central European) cinema.

Since the means of presentation in the exposition and its spatial limitations do not allow to fully play out the identification to include this dimension, we decided to realize the gaming educational format. The goal of the new type of experience is to enable the players to become aspiring filmmakers and perceive the turning point in Czechoslovak cinema after 1968 through their lens. It was a difficult era for filmmakers to navigate, as they had to find their path based on their personal

values. We thus translate the value scale between the individual approach and forced official dictate from the methodological framework to the experience while the players move along this scale based on the clues gained from a number of sources. The movement of the player along this scale translates into the creative choices forming the film work whose final confrontation with the regime representatives will define the final position of the actor. Thus the game brings the possibility to actively contribute to the experience of the filmmaker facing the substantial dilemma between their interests and the authoritarian interests of the regime.

The experience primarily teaches the lesson that the artist and their work only have the privilege of free independent expression under certain conditions and that film is not necessarily an escape from reality but can become a tool of its formation or social resistance. Currently, we are again witnessing how cultural policies of a number of countries face political and ideological pressures and manipulations, delimiting space just for the “right” and simplified values. It is desirable to understand this danger and subject it to reflection which does not have sufficient space in the current education system. It is also beneficial to work with authentic situations and experiences whose consequences on the part of the filmmakers have been tested by time.

The gaming experience, with its evocative scenography, simulates the environment of fading freedom, gradually penetrated by uncertainty, fear, illusions, conformity. The aspiring filmmaker enters this environment, searching for their path which is advantageous to them for a certain reason, formulating their goal based on their choices – do they want to be a successful filmmaker at all costs, will they be driven by circumstances, or will they use film as a means of resistance? Will their work have conformist or compromised tendencies, or will they defend their position? The emerging work within the gaming structure becomes a position that the player must defend – whether in the embedded approval process, which represents a crucial confrontation with historical instances and authorities, or in the following guided reflection. It is thus not just about presenting the situation of the creators through various pressures in the era of early normalization of society,

which followed after the era striving towards freedom of opinion, but also about dealing with the manipulative “appeasing” of the situation, which has many parallels to today, through one’s own values and perceptiveness.

The choice of the narrative framework was met in cooperation with our Polish partner so the game prototype could be easily adapted to the educational needs of the Film Museum in Lodz. The system of choices based on the dilemmas of filmmakers at the turning point between the liberal and the repressive regime and the confrontation with historical authorities can be translated, with slight content modifications, to the similar experience of Polish filmmakers from the “cinema of moral anxiety” at the time of martial law in the early 1980s. Since this movement had its roots in the city of Lodz, a progressive center of Polish cinema, where young filmmakers lived their formative years at the film academy, the Polish partner, too, opted for the game format in a hybrid form combining activities in the city environment and using the museum as an evocative narrative space.

2. 1. CONTEXTUAL AND NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The game plays out in several stages capturing the essential transformations of the social climate and the functioning of cinematography towards the filmmakers. August 1968, when Czechoslovakia was occupied by the armies of the Soviet Union and “allied countries” which brought an end to the brief and prolific period of culminating liberalization and reform of communism, is only a prelude depicted in the prolog. Together with the protagonist, we start several months later, after a period of chaos and defiance, when the society starts showing the first tendencies towards fear and resignation. In the spring of 1969, the field of culture still seems to be fine, films with substantial (though obscured) socially critical tendencies enter production, censorship is only effective in the field of mass media, cinematography is still led by enlightened figures. Yet the period atmosphere, even in cinema, is informed by fear of future and avoidance of open provocation not to escalate the situation. Filmmakers still receive strong support from FITES, the Film Union – a body that defends not only their interests but also general freedom of expression. The player enters these conditions as a fresh film school graduate to get a chance

to establish themselves and create their first big film. The insinuations in their surroundings make it clear that if they do not act quickly, they may lose this chance. People who still decide about filmmaking will close the production plans soon and it may be the last chance to push something through freely and without external pressures.

The goal is to draw attention in the right places while getting to know various institutions and workings of cinema. To do so, the player uses their student film with a provocative content which got stuck abroad due to the chaotic situation after the August invasion. They must make sure that the film is screened to the right people at the right place before it's too late. Their effort intertwines with the period hockey events in Prague, the main catalyst of change of the political course. The player's presence causes contact with the first threats as well as the social atmosphere – as the street protests after the victorious match with the USSR became an orchestrated spark leading to the need to appease the atmosphere in the society and mainly to the dismissal of Dubček's government and the arrival of a new government, now completely loyal to Moscow's dictate. For the first time, individual ambitions collide with the events impacting the entire society and bringing the first dilemma to the character. The player's decision forms their starting position – do they want a film career at all costs, even if they put those who help the protagonist at risk? Do they feel resistance and will they hesitate to show it?

The player's decisions have impact on the place where they will be able to screen their film – either they will hold a school screening at FAMU, keeping the favor of their conformist professor / film director, or they will succeed in screening the film to the public (which is a conscious risk) at the FITES Film Club and thus fall under the influence of this rather nonconformist and soon problematic institution. There, the player can also meet the head of a creative group from Barrandov Studio who gives them an opportunity to include their next project in the production plan. At FAMU, the player doesn't get such visibility, but the professor, grateful for their careful approach, offers them a commissioned project, which may not bring as much creative freedom as working directly for Barrandov Studio. With these

diverse positions, the players enter the second stage, which is already linked to the creative process and the obstacles brought by the second half of the year 1969.

The next gaming stage is defined by the significantly changing situation – the personalities that were active in the Prague Spring are excluded from cinema, there are changes in leadership, which starts to get even especially with the young generation of filmmakers. Filmmakers face denunciations, FITES finds itself in direct conflict with the authorities and faces liquidation. The filmmaking community succumbs to distrust and growing panic, they are awaiting the interruption of film production and those films that will not be finished by the end of the year (which eventually happens). In this rapidly changing situation, the players make their first film. They must independently navigate various sources of concern, unguaranteed information, official “well-intentioned” reports and protests, making creative choices and re-evaluating them in the individual stages. Their main goal is to finish their film without the threat of external interventions, yet with certain compromises. Nevertheless, it depends on their values as well as the players’ perceptiveness to clues how much they will tend to self-censorship, what will be eventually left from the original film idea, or how they will adapt to the situation.

The year 1970 marks the entry into a completely new era, filmmakers are under scrutiny and out of favor, everything succumbs to rigorous control and dreaded approval. It also marks negotiations with filmmakers, who will collaborate with the new representatives of cinema in power and do their bidding, who will conform against their own convictions, or who will be completely out. This stage unfolds in the shadow of the feared exponent of the regime and apparently also Soviet agent Ludvík Toman who becomes a self-proclaimed, inscrutable and irremovable ruler of the film studio – even the director of Czechoslovak Film yields to his power as the Chief Controller. Toman’s task is to finally settle the score with the Czechoslovak New Wave, strip cinema of the achievements of the 1960s, corrupt the resisting filmmakers and essentially “starve” them. As a manipulator, he becomes the player’s main antagonist who determines the key dilemmas. His actions are based on how the player’s film work succeeds during the approval screening and which position they will assume towards the comments and verdicts – this

determines the strategy through which Toman impacts the player's future path and confronts them with the final dilemmas.

Because of Toman, some of the period directors lost the opportunity to keep making feature films, due to their active engagement (e.g. in the FITES Film Union) and their provocative works, while others had to accept various forms of penance, such as pandering to the regime by creating pro-regime films, public self-criticism, or pressure to give up film awards. Those who did gain more favor and freer hand suffered under his scrutiny and mutilation of works born out of their initiative.

The relatively short period of consolidation had a pervasive impact on the creative paths and existence of promising young filmmakers. Some chose to go into exile, others were ostracized or excluded themselves from cinema after many attempts, and others still were able to resist and defend their space, or at least maneuver at the cost of certain compromises. However, many filmmakers survived through projects they could not identify with, or succumbed to career promises by sacrificing their own ambitions. The outcome of the individual paths is complicated and ambiguous, which is why it becomes a subject of shared reflection within the gaming experience, allowing to summarize individual choices and reflect on the implications of the players' final positions in relation to the specific positions of several real historical actors.

2. 2. STRUCTURE OF THE GAMING EXPERIENCE

The experience is tailored to the gaming space which has a variable form. The NaFilM museum makes it possible to devote the whole morning block to the game, as it is closed to the public in the mornings, so the exposition can be adapted and recreated into an evocative gaming space including several rooms on one of the floors. Another advantage is the location of the museum in the focal point of the environments where the main action of the game is set. The gaming space is thus expanded to the immediate surroundings and includes historical places that are directly involved in the game (passages with cinemas, Adria Palace which was the seat of the FITES Film Union and Film Club, Wenceslas Square as the scene of key events). Due to the time demands, thanks to the digital application, the introduction

part can also be completed separately with the school group (without the need for a tutor) and later linked to the educational topics related to the given era. Then the class participates in the following stages of the game (simulation and reflection) already at the museum, where a special lectured program awaits them, enriched with evocations of historical pressures faced by young filmmakers.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GAMING EXPERIENCE IN THE CITY ENVIRONMENT (60 MINUTES)

The introductory chapter of the game is designed to provide a more immersive dive into the time where the game story is set and allow the player to arrive at one of the positions that are key for the following parts through a system of choices. For this purpose, we work with a digital narrative form which offers an interactive structure for decision-making. In case of a school group, individual groups are sharing tablets and the collective decision-making takes place on a democratic basis introduced in the methodological part above.

Thanks to the authentic graphic and sound design of the digital content, the player meets the Prague of 1969 and the essential locations for cinema at the time. The realistic collage style works with combining and illustrating period photographs. In this quieter stage, the player can get to know the character and their primary goal, gain insight into the possibilities of starting a film career and the obstacles one could face immediately after the occupation. For this reason, the introduction has a more linear narrative framework which is close to the form of a visual novel. It is key to go through several plot situations where the player makes increasingly serious decisions whose consequences they will bear throughout the game's narrative – finding a suitable place for screening their student film, leaning towards different solutions to the issue with transporting a film copy from abroad, deciding on the extent of their participation in the protests stirred after the hockey match with the Soviet Union.

The consequences of these decisions are the following:

- > The player will make their film freely under the creative group in film studio/ The player will make a commissioned film and their choices will be influenced by a foreign producer
- > The player gets into the sphere of the resisting influence of the Film Union / The player is in the sphere of the influence of their mentor, who becomes a representative of conformism
- > The player has caused the dismissal of their friend from the film school by their actions – they lose her favor
- > The player has not caused harm to the friend – they keep her favor and thus access to important information
- > The player has drawn the attention of Security by their actions – this causes a set of complications in the second part of the game (factors affecting the creative process)

The immersive nature of the first part of the game is reinforced by the possibility of physical movement between individual locations, delimiting the game's field which will be simulated in the closed environment of the museum in the following part. Under the guidance of a tutor, the school group visits the given environments in the recommended order; there the essential plot interactions take place, made accessible through the digital application. During the tour, the tutor works with additional visual and audio material which translates the game's plot into the social context, applying the perspective of the protagonist. At the designated stops, the tutor uses period photographs, footage and recordings to evoke the character's short recollections of key moments that testify to the changing atmosphere of the past months – reminiscing about the relaxed atmosphere of the Prague Spring, memorable moments of renowned filmmakers of the New Wave seen at the cinema, the August invasion, student activities at the film academy during the occupation days, impressions from the funeral of student Jan Palach who burned himself to death. These gradual clues, corresponding to the frequent practices of film narration in the 1960s (particular places evoke immediate associations and flashbacks), do not force clear stances on the players that would influence their decisions based on a clear idea about the protagonist's character. The accompanying material gives the player an opportunity to reflect on their own

choices within an immediate framework of period events seen through the eyes of a young person.

At the main checkpoints, the game interactions take place, with players receiving cues through the digital application to make choices discussed in groups – which place seems the most appropriate and least complicated for the start of their career (will they screen their film at the film academy, at the film union, or a legendary cinema?). The route allows them to move from the museum (base of the protagonist for finding a strategy to import the film copy within the digital space rendered like a student apartment) to Wenceslas Square where the escalating atmosphere of the hockey protests is evoked through digital content and authentic period recordings. Based on snippets from the period newsreel and photographic clues, players gradually arrive at the place that saw the most crucial incident. At the site of the former office of Soviet Aeroflot, players must face the fundamental dilemma whether they will join the protests or remain passive. After returning to the museum, each group is confronted with the consequences of their decisions, interacts with the members of Security and tries to save their plan and come out with a clean slate.

After this interaction with the digital application, everybody meets at the screening room where the journey of the protagonist or their liaison to the West to retrieve the forgotten film copy is evoked through multiple projectors. The players receive radio information which represents the first essential necessity to confront various perspectives on the social situation (interpretation of the consequences of the hockey protests on domestic radio and in western exile broadcasts). Then each group goes separately through a customs check whose result depends on the evaluation of previous decisions in the digital application, which is presented to the player through an interactive scene. The outcome depends on whether the group managed to smuggle the film copy or not. This determines with which tutor assuming a fictional role the group establishes personal interaction – with the head of the creative group if they can screen from the transported copy at the film union, with the professor if the film material was confiscated and it is necessary to hold a study screening from a working copy at the film school. The digital content

confronts the players based on whether they attracted the attention of the security forces or harmed their friend Marie, as an important support for the next stage of the game, by their decisions.

The digital content designed in the form of an application for the first part of the game allows for several uses, considering the identified limitations on the part of educators and better implementation within formal education. The teacher has the possibility to complete the experience through the digital application (in the city streets or just in class) and interconnect it as needed with the facts and events of the given period. Then, with the class divided into groups based on the final positions, the teacher continues to the second part including the reflection guided by tutors at the museum. Another variant offered by the digital application is experiencing the introductory part as homework, which is followed by a contextually oriented reflection with the teacher and formation of groups in class. This meets the requirements for the continuation of the experience at the museum.

SIMULATION PART - MAKING A FILM IN HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES (70 MINUTES)

The second part of the game represents a more open field where individual groups of players react more independently and the gaming trajectories are more divergent. Communication with a clearly structured digital content turns into simulated interactions in the adjusted game space. These interactions are divided into two basic lines: the creative process (system of choices situating the player in a simplified game design into the process of writing / shooting / final editing of the film) and orientation in the simulated field (movement in space with several checkpoints for gaining important clues and information about the transformation of the social atmosphere, which should be taken into consideration in the formation of the film work).

The simulation part works with the following structure:

- > Creative process (original idea) – 5 minutes
- > Field orientation (evocation of the events of the summer of 1969) – 10 minutes

- > Creative process (shooting) – 5 minutes
- > Field orientation (evocation of the events of the fall of 1969) – 10 minutes
- > Creative process (final cut) – 5 minutes

Creative process – due to the time possibilities and role of tutors, as well as the following use of the film work in the game, this cannot be an open activity of shooting or writing a screenplay. There is a need to observe the historical and social context in which the work is created, consider the motivation of the target group regarding the topic they can identify with, as well as the educational benefits which transcend learning about the individual steps of filmmaking. What seems crucial for the introduction of the social atmosphere of 1969 is the key moments of growing resignation and gradual acceptance of the exceptional state as normality; and it is these reactions to this development that is offered by the emerging film narrative. The assignment is to vary the film idea of a young protagonist considering a diverse scale of approaches to such a situation, as well as how explicitly / implicitly it is to be expressed. Players thus have the same assignment concerning the topic of revolt of a young man, but they choose different ways to meet it concerning the motivation and goals of the character. Thanks to the cards of plot variations they can choose from, they determine whether revolt is a general expression without specific links to the time, an obscured reflection of the social situation, or a direct representation of the state of things.

- At the beginning of the first stage of the creative process, players learn about the premise of the film (a young hero / rebel provokes those around him to wake them up from the omnipresent lethargy and skepticism). Based on the cards with annotations provided by his supervisor (head of the creative group / mentor Prof. Šeda), players choose their preferred approach. There are four possible levels:
 - Level 1 – the player decides to avoid the depiction of the occupation:
The world is too normal and boring, the hero tries to draw attention

with his provocations and prove to everybody that he doesn't want to live such a life.

- Level 2 – indirect hints at the occupation in the form of symbolic depiction: *The hero doesn't understand the absurd world around him, and therefore he revolts – in his family, an uninvited visit of an unknown relative (brother) takes place, first they want to get rid of him, but soon they all get used to his presence.*
- Level 3 – does not capture the period reality in full detail but includes hints at the occupation: *The young rebellious hero senses excessive caution and inability to act everywhere around him, as if everything was mortified – he rouses people from their lethargy with bigger and bigger provocations.*
- Level 4 – very explicit (even critical) depiction of reality: *The young hero isn't going to accept the occupation, he actively protests, provokes and agitates. He finds he is more and more lonely, everyone turns away from him out of fear and resignation.*

Based on their own understanding of the chosen level, the player also makes a decision how the film hero ends – the ending of the film was the key aspect that the approval bodies reacted to and that was most open to censorship manipulations. This choice is made based on 4 cards:

- Option 1: The love of a girl heals him from his rebellion and he finds a new sense of life
- Option 2: The protests are without response, he succumbs to the same skepticism like people around him
- Option 3: He runs away from home / town because he can't live in the conditions around him
- Option 4: He commits a desperate protest by which he wants to arouse his resigned surroundings, he loses his life during the protest

Another important factor in these choices is the visual style the actors want to employ in their work. It is suggested in the form of inspiration by period films. The tablets include a repertory of short clips from New Wave films spanning a range of aesthetic approaches from raw realism to heavily stylized expressions. Thanks to the various styles, the following reaction of the approval committee is not directly linked to the degree of explicit and skeptical expression in the original idea.

The scale of the clips is the following:

- Clip 1 – Neutral style – comprehensible form without significant stylization, to the new management in cinema, it will be nonproblematic in the next stage, they will consider other aspects of the work.
- Clip 2 – Easy style – maximum authenticity including awkwardness and humor in the tradition of Miloš Forman, to the new management in cinema, it will be acceptable, if the sarcasm typical for this style does not meet a more explicit expression of the social situation.
- Clip 3 – Raw and depressive “black” style – evocation of disillusion and hopelessness, skepsis, to the new management in the next stage, this style will be unacceptable, especially in combination with a negative ending.
- Clip 4 – Artistic stylization – formally complicated expression for a demanding viewer, the committee will not favor this style, but there is a chance of getting the film to the viewer at least in a limited way. It enables the players to pass even with a more explicit expression of the situation, as it won't be intelligible to the censors.

In the first stage, the player gathers cards which capture their film work – besides the chosen style card, the plot cards define the 5 basic plot situations with which the players become familiar and further use them. Importantly, they include elements such as metaphorical expression of the situation or provocative allusions

that must be deciphered and evaluated (for instance, a figurative depiction of the occupiers in the scene of the arrival of an uninvited visitor – he hastily settles in the apartment, “accidentally” dropping the radio and breaking the TV – a strong visual shortcut for the behavior of the occupation army). This ability is supported by the orientation activity played out outside the stages focused on the creative process.

In each stage of the creative process, the player receives one card from their supervisors enacted by the tutors (head of the creative group / mentor Prof. Šeda), except for the middle stage where they receive two cards, which introduce authentic circumstances they will have to respond to by their choices. Their source is also adapted to the conditions in which the film is made – in the creative group or as a commission of a foreign producer. These cards, for instance, include the emigration of an actor, filming in an environment with high risk of denunciation (then it is crucial how explicit the filmed scene is), having to film a bold love scene (the approval committee mercilessly censors these scenes) or adding an explicit scene because the western audiences wish for a more courageous content.

The game thus includes complications and pressures which lead to the need for new decisions which are registered for the following approval or lead to the need to react due to time constraints. The player receives information through the characters of the chief of the creative group / professor that it is absolutely necessary to finish the work by the end of 1969, otherwise the new leadership in cinema may stop it immediately. Partial complications also force the player to consider which plot scenes they will sacrifice, or substitute them with other ones due to their perceptiveness towards the escalating situation. This manipulation with the cards of the basic plot situations (possibly also exchange of film finishing cards) must be addressed during the final stage of editing which provides a possibility of re-evaluating one's relationship to the work based on clues gained from available sources. By sacrificing a certain scene, the player may accept a preventative measure, but also can ignore a scene they find marginal at the moment. However, during the approval process, it may be that this very scene will be assessed as the defective element based on period rules.

The time investment is given by a certain number of points corresponding to the months of realizing the work (6) – these are cut short by circumstances with which the players are confronted as they gradually receive more cards. Thus the player may run out of moves necessary for the final edits / full finalization, which limits their maneuvering space in the editing room.

The creative process results in a set corresponding to the filmed work (annotation card, film finalization card, style card, card of partial situations after final editing changes, digital protocol of registered choices based on circumstance cards).

Simulated field orientation – the three stages dedicated to the creative process are interspersed with two ten-minute stages where groups of players are encouraged to thoughtful movement in the space with prepared checkpoints. The goal is to absorb as much useful information about the changing situation in cinema / society as possible and to be able to apply it in the making of the film work in accordance with the player's goal. The museum space and the temporary interactive elements offer a simulation effect through evocative objects and projections. Players with permits have a chance to visit places related to their position after the introduction part (i.e. not everyone has access to the Film Union and to Professor Šeda, not everyone has a chance to get information from a friend-producer).

Players first encounter possibilities provided by the source of orientation – period radio, press, game characters and institutions, film in cinemas and what their audiences say about them. In the main screening hall, the screen plays a compilation of the key events giving testimony to the social changes at the time, without commentary but still telling (the key turning point is represented primarily by protests on the first anniversary of the occupation in August 1969 – then, however, it depends whether the player is present there or not). Interaction plays out in various ways – dialogue interaction with the game characters portrayed by the tutors, interaction with the game objects which are available at their checkpoints (replica of a period radio, evocation of a newspaper booth), perception

of screenings (big screen and use of small hand-held projectors for a partial evocation of the environment), including digital technologies – active spots and activation codes – to gain visual materials or sound evocation (sound recording with the reactions of viewers to a film seen at the cinema, discussions taking place at the Film Union) and to make decisions on the spot.

In the given time limit, the player is free to visit any sources and interact with them. However, it is preferable to consider that not all information sources are relevant at this time and that they may even provide misleading clues. The highest value in terms of insight into the situation is provided by the Film Union (which, however, puts the player in a risky position) and valuable information is also shared by the friend, in case the player can still count on her, whereas the period mass media already promote normalization and manipulative rhetoric, while Professor Šeda increasingly profiles himself as a mentor who leads the player down the path of conformism. The individual group members may collect information separately, however, they will need more time for its sharing so they can make a thoughtful decision for the film editing.

The second stage results in submitting the film in the form of a package which will go through the approval process. Between these gaming situations, a space opens up during which the individual groups facilitated by the tutor share with the others a short reflection on the film production, to make it more clear who chose which path before appearing together in front of the committee. The following break enables the adjustment of the checkpoint for the final stage of the game.

FINAL PART – APPROVAL COMMITTEE AND REFLECTION (75 MINUTES)

Before the actual appearance in front of the approval committee, there is a last 15-minute orientation round, giving the gaming groups a chance to get familiar with the conditions created with the arrival of the new leadership in cinema. The player may learn about the first persecutions of filmmakers who were most active during the liberal era of the Prague Spring (especially through the character of Marie), the

first forbidden films, confront their opinions with the striking conformism of Professor Šeda, notice the liquidation of the Film Union as a place of resistance, gain partial information about the new dreaded ruler of the film studio with a connection to the Soviet Union – the Chief Controller Toman and his strategy towards young filmmakers. Through a recording, the players can hear the oppressive atmosphere during the approval screening, revealing Toman's insidiousness.

During this period, the tutors are preparing the decision of the approval committee based on the combination of cards in the creative packages, and assuming the old-new roles of committee members (Professor Šeda is already a member). The players, armed with the knowledge of the rapid changes in the social atmosphere and the film community can apply the gained impulses in their reaction to the approval committee. The committee makes specific demands and verdicts over the individual works and asks for their opinions. The groups get space for discussing the situation and rolling the dice to arrive at a consensual response.

The committee listens to the decisions of the individual groups (which demands they will or will not accept) and after deliberation (taking into account the protocols of the individual steps and choices in the game) invites the individual groups to an "interview" in which a decision is met about their future fate in film. Will they be excluded from cinema altogether, forced to emigrate, reassigned to an inferior position, will they get a chance to make a tendentious film as penance and to perform self-criticism, or will the new leadership offer them an advantageous cooperation on harmless subject matters? Each group comes out with a specific position which perfectly corresponds to the real scenario for period filmmakers. To be able to learn about its real implications and learn about the fates of particular filmmakers, the educational program is concluded by a reflection guided by a tutor which will enable the confrontation with the individual positions through the paths and forced compromises of the filmmakers of the Czechoslovak New Wave in the 1960s.

The final reflection has the form of a collective activity for all groups and is held under the frontal guidance of the tutor. The group representatives are invited to present the verdicts of the committee to the other students and add their own interpretation. They are asked if they perceive the result of their passage through the game as a win or a loss and whether the verdict is acceptable or not for them. The tutor follows the individual presentations by matching them with specific personalities from the field of film who had to deal with the same verdicts. In a short presentation, they introduce the common points between their confrontation with the regime and the choices of the given group, and outline the fate of the filmmaker in the normalization era. The key intention is to use particular examples to provide impulses for discussion which follows after the fictional "alter egos" of all groups are assigned real faces. The goal of the partial discussion is to collectively reflect on whether the final positions upon entering the normalized era paid off or not in the long run, and which of the personalities ultimately emerged as a winner or a loser. The tutor and the students assign points to the profiles of the filmmakers, which allows them to reflect their personal opinion and create a visual scale for a graspable result of the debate.

The remaining part of reflection is dedicated to sharing comments about the choices of the individual groups, which the players sent in during the simulation stage through a simple application that allows to record their progress (for example, the educational application Chooselt Maker offers a simple decision-making interface with the possibility of a common visualization of all choices). The tutor can thus work with the visual representation of the trajectories of the individual paths and open a confrontational space for subjective opinions concerning the fundamental dilemmas the period filmmakers inevitably had to face. At the same time, through the pressures and instigation of uncertainty, which raised the necessity of choice, the tutor points out the fundamental principles of limitation of creative freedom, individual view of the world, and the issue of self-censorship.

Since the students went through the necessary process of identification with the filmmaker facing a coercive system, the tutor follows up the summary of the

dilemmas with the final question: did the students project their own experience and inhibitions following from the now much more accessible role of content creators into certain stages of decision-making? A role which is offered by the seemingly free and unlimited world of digital media? Does the current digital environment also bring new forms of dictate we must either succumb to or rebel against?

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