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How Serials Reshaped Animation Production

Comparative Analysis of Animated Film Serials Produced by the Studio in Gottwaldov and ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms (1960s–1980s)

Abstract

The 1960s marked a significant shift in animation production in socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland toward serial formats, and our text focuses on a comparative analysis of the adoption of animated serial production at the Polish studio Se-Ma-For and the Gottwaldov animation studio in Czechoslovakia. In Gottwaldov, evening serials for television were the predominant form of production, while Se-Ma-For favored co-produced serials. The shift to serial production required adjustments in production practices, including changes in workforce composition and skill requirements. Comparative analysis reveals divergent approaches to serial production, influenced by production backgrounds, animation techniques, and employment structures. In Czechoslovakia, strict requirements from the commissioning authorities limited artistic freedom, while Polish filmmakers retained more control, leading to the marginalization of workers below the line. The decentralized nature of Se-Ma-For and the diversity of commissioning sources led to different preferred solutions for serial production. This study underscores the complexity of serial production in socialist contexts, highlighting the interplay between organizational dynamics, artistic autonomy, and external influences.

Keywords

Animation studies, Serial production, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, Custom production, Comissioners, Co-productions, Czechoslovak Television, Gottwaldov, Łódź, Se-Ma-For

The text analyzes the production systems in Czechoslovakia and Poland, using the examples of the Se-Ma-For studio ('Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms) in Łódź and the Czechoslovakian studio in Gottwaldov from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s.¹⁾ Although each studio operated under specific conditions, the aim is to explore the dynamics of existing work collectives and their transformations by examining the division of labor and decision-making powers in serial film production. We claim that each studio had its internal dynamics, driven by its employee structure, strong personalities, and relationships with other institutions. Since most serials were produced as co-productions or commission films, their nature depended on the requirements of the co-producer or contracting authority, rather than the producing studio. We argue that filmmakers at the Se-Ma-For studio received a greater degree of creative freedom and control over their work.

A closer examination reveals that both studios developed serial production simultaneously and shared some similarities. Both film industries operated according to the principles of the state-socialist mode of production, where the ruling party²⁾ apparatus played a strategic management role. The actual production process³⁾ occurred at the level of studio managers, dramaturges, and production groups. These units held responsibility for developing film projects, assembling production crews, and controlling the production process to varying degrees.⁴⁾ Market conditions, local production systems, and specific political situations, however, resulted in different development dynamics. Both studios were shaped by contrasting dimensions of market size, political developments (e.g., martial law in Poland in the 1980s), and the individual career trajectories of filmmakers.

According to the concept of art worlds formulated by Howard Becker, a co-creator of an art world is anyone involved in what is considered art. Members of this world collaborate on given tasks, using conventions confirmed by standardized practice.⁵⁾ Becker's theory assesses the extent to which innovative solutions emerge in serial production and the degree of progressive standardization and elaboration of conventions within each animation technique. Becker posits that the art world functions as a well-structured ecosystem of integrated professionals.⁶⁾

This study examines the organizational dynamics of the Se-Ma-For studio in Poland and the Czechoslovakian facility in Gottwaldov and analyzes how employee commitment influenced the creative environment among artist-craftsmen and craftsmen. This environment facilitated the management of specific serial productions based on these collaborative efforts. Becker suggests that artist-craftsmen benefit from their integration into the art world, whereas craftsmen, with more modest aspirations, prioritize excellence in their

1) In the text we will use the name Gottwaldov, which is the name held by today's city of Zlín between 1949 and 1989 after the first Czechoslovakian communist president Klement Gottwald.

2) In Czechoslovakia it was *Komunistická strana Československa* (The Communist part of Czechoslovakia) and in Poland *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (Polish United Workers' Party).

3) In this context, the term "process of production" encompasses the entire production cycle, from the initial planning stages through to the final shooting phase.

4) Petr Szczepanik, *Továrna Barrandov: Svět filmařů a politická moc 1945–1970* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 2016), 33–34.

5) Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds: 25th Anniversary Edition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2008), 34–35.

6) *Ibid.*, 228–233.

craft.⁷⁾ This distinction prompts reflection on the differences between Czechoslovakian and Polish animation studios in terms of serial production. Training and preparing integrated professionals for new tasks demanded profound mastery of the craft and minimal inclination towards innovations (termed “mavericks” by Becker — those within the art world who challenge conventional norms).⁸⁾ Whether it’s the usage of materials or work methods, we can see conventions influencing the organization of serial production. This analysis explores the impact of the prevalence of certain techniques, the establishment of work standards to enhance efficiency, and the adaptability of artist-craftsmen to changing economic and political landscapes. An organized art world may stifle innovation but remains adaptable to functional changes prompted by external factors.⁹⁾

Serial production serves as a litmus test for assessing the organizational similarities within Czechoslovakian and Polish animation studios, through internal evaluations found in archives or oral histories collected in subsequent years.

The text consists of two major sections. After an introduction focusing on a quantitative analysis of the main tendencies in serial production (e.g., episode length, usage of individual animation techniques),¹⁰⁾ it proceeds to analyze how working on serials differed from other types of production.¹¹⁾ Although the available data do not fully cover all serials produced between 1960s and 1980s, they allow us to trace the organizational patterns of contemporary industries associated with the advent of serial production.¹²⁾

The Introduction of Film Serials in Czechoslovakia and Poland

The 1960s saw the emergence of animated serials in Poland and Czechoslovakia, which overshadowed previously dominant non-serial production and brought about significant quantitative changes in production output, film length, and the frequency of animation techniques employed. The specific form of production in each country was influenced by the intended purpose of the serials. In Czechoslovakia, most serials were evening shows commissioned by local television facilities. In contrast, in Se-Ma-For, television began to play a more important role in the 1970s, focusing on co-produced serials that were considered economically viable.

In the typology of film production discussed in this text, we distinguish between serials and non-serial production, two categories derived from the production perspective. Unlike other types of production, serials are conceived from the outset as a group of indi-

7) Ibid., 272–299.

8) Ibid., 233.

9) Ibid., 244.

10) As we will discuss further, before the advent of serials devoted to puppet animation, such focus receded into the background over the years.

11) Both parts of the text are based on the data collected during the project *Animation Studios in Gottwaldov and Łódź (1945/47–1990)* and its outcomes, namely the volume edited by Pavel Skopal *Lidé — Práce — Animace*.

12) In terms of the availability of sources, the situation was most complicated in the 1960s; apart from the unpreserved or unavailable sources, the quantitative level of production was not as high as in the following decades, and it was not possible to use interviews with studio employees to the same extent as in later decades.

vidual episodes linked by specific characteristics (e.g., common story, characters, art design, or the author of the literary model).¹³⁾ Regardless of the number of episodes produced, it is necessary to understand the differences in serial production, which typically involve employing workers over a longer period compared to individual projects.¹⁴⁾ In addition, one must consider the position of a particular film in the production portfolio and whether it was a program film or a commissioned film. Program films formed the basis of the annual dramaturgical plans¹⁵⁾ of individual studios. On the contrary, custom productions were based on orders from various institutions, outside the structure of the nationalized cinema institutions (e.g., branches of local television stations, partners from abroad).

In Czechoslovakia and Poland, the production of animated series began almost simultaneously in the mid of the 1960s. In previous years, most productions were non-serial with only a few exceptions — none of those was intended to create a standardized season with a certain number of episodes. In Czechoslovakia, it was common for such serials to be spread unevenly over several years or even decades. From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, the Gottwaldov studio produced fifteen films connected by the puppet character, Mr. Prokoup.¹⁶⁾ Prague animation studios were in a similar situation — Studio Jiřího Trnky (Jiří Trnka Studio) in 1955 produced the trilogy *Good Soldier Švejk I–III* (*Dobrý voják Švejk I–III*; Jiří Trnka), based on the novel by Jaroslav Hašek. The *Bratři v triku* (Brothers in T-Shirt) studio made a hexalogy of short films featuring the Doggie and Pussycat



Fig. 1: Images from *Pan Prokoup vynálezcem* (1949) and *Jak pejsek s kočičkou myli podlahu* (1950)

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- 13) The terms “series” and “serials” can be understood to have different meanings in different contexts, with the former typically denoting a storytelling method. In this text, the term “serials” is employed in the sense of “serial production,” which primarily refers to the production planning associated with the production practice. Radomír D. Kokeš, *Světy na pokračování: Rozbor možností seriálového vyprávění* (Praha: Akropolis, 2016), 181–182.
- 14) Some of the interviewees recalled the monotony of such work related to keep only one artistic style for a long time. Jiří Plass, interview by Michal Večeřa, June 9, 2021; Nataša Boháčková, interview by Michal Večeřa, August 22, 2023.
- 15) Archival sources provide only inconsistent terminology — thematic plans, ideological-thematic plans, or dramaturgical plans. In our text, we will stick to the unified term dramaturgical plans.
- 16) Tereza Bochinová, “Pan Prokoup a standardní figurka agitace,” in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Pavel Skopal (Brno: Host, 2024), 321.

characters (known as Pejsek and Kočička),¹⁷⁾ as five fairy tales based on books by Karel Čapek and produced between 1959 and 1973. An exceptional case of serial production were several cartoon serials made by the American filmmaker Gene Deitch in the Bratři v triku studio.¹⁸⁾

A fundamental change in serial production occurred during the second half of the 1960s when Czechoslovakian cinema began intensive collaboration with Československá televize (Czechoslovak Television) on what were called bedtime stories.¹⁹⁾ The growing demand for this new type of content is evident from its increasing broadcast frequency — from once per week in January 1965 to daily appearances in 1973 and, by the 1980s, it was broadcast twice daily.²⁰⁾ These conditions encouraged the domestic production of animated serials, representing the only alternative to foreign cartoons.²¹⁾ The first Czechoslovakian bedtime stories were produced by Prague animation studios in 1966 (*Pohádky ovčí babičky* /Václav Bedřich, 1966/). At about the same time, the first evening cartoons began to appear from the Gottwaldov studio. Due to their success, the bedtime stories were integrated into the production portfolios of Czechoslovakian animation studios in the early 1970s, only a few years after their introduction. Contemporary production statistics show that the previously predominant non-serial productions, based on the studios' dramaturgical plans, suddenly became the minority.

The year 1961 marked a significant milestone for the Se-Ma-For studio. Notably, the company, previously known as Studio Filmów Lalkowych (Puppet Film Studio) in Tuszyn, adopted its new name. This rebranding was accompanied by a diversification of the studio's production profile, which, in addition to the existing division producing puppet films, included the establishment of additional branches dedicated to live-action films, cartoons, and cut-out films. Consequently, Se-Ma-For emerged as the sole studio in Poland producing films in all animation techniques, incorporating new methods that heightened the demand for creative cadres skilled in celluloid painting and animation phases. This development necessitated the implementation of a new strategy in film production.

In the early 1960s, puppet films did not enjoy high critical acclaim,²²⁾ prompting the studio to pivot towards cut-out and cartoon film production. Inspired mostly by the festival successes of Daniel Szczechura, Se-Ma-For invested in filmmakers with expertise in this artistic domain. The majority of the Cartoon Film Department's employees were alumni of the Państwowe Liceum Sztuk Plastycznych (High School of Fine Arts) in Łódź,

17) All six movies were later edited into the feature film under the title *Povídání o Pejskovi a kočičce* (Eduard Hofman, 1950–1955).

18) Oldřich Haberle, interview by Michal Večeřa, September 9, 2021.

19) Bedtime stories were created as a television program for the youngest viewers before they went to sleep.

20) "Večerníček: Historie večerníčku: Jak to všechno začalo a bylo dál," *Česká televize*, accessed March 21, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210201182056/https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/0-vecernicek/5626-historie-vecernicku/>.

21) Katarína Kunkelová and Veronika Podlipná, "Večerníček pro Bratislavu: Vliv zakázkové tvorby na animovanou produkci gottwaldovského studia," in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Skopal, 274–282.

22) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," APŁ, zespół Studio Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For w Łodzi, sygn. 1943, karton 39/1943/0/-/25.

educated by directors of the Studio Filmów Rysunkowych (Animated Film Studio)²³⁾ in Bielsko-Biala.²⁴⁾ These directors brought valuable experience from working on animated serials.

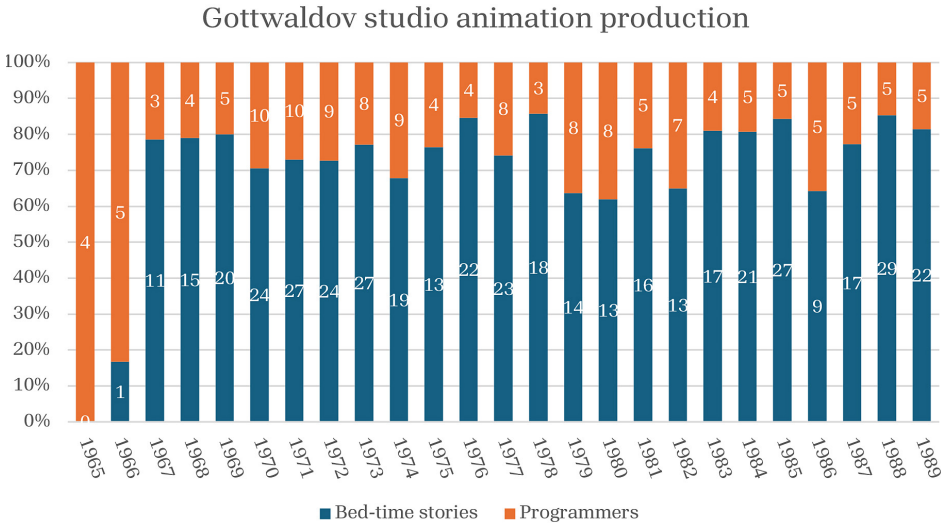


Fig. 2: Changes in the production output of Gottwaldov studio²⁵⁾

In 1963, Se-Ma-For produced the first episode of the serial *The Magic Pencil* (Zaczarowany ołówek, 1963–1977).²⁶⁾ What was once conceived as an individual film, resulted in the long-running production spanning over fourteen years. The need to ensure continuity of production at the Studio, characterized by maintaining the pace of puppet development, drawing celluloids, preparing storyboards, etc., became indispensable through the serialization process. This evolution is illustrated in the accompanying chart, which depicts the growth in serial title production relative to individual film production.

With the increase in production in Czechoslovakia, the most noticeable change was the average film length. Before the introduction of bedtime stories, the average length of films varied significantly, often due to the infrequent production of longer titles. However, following the introduction of bedtime stories in the late 1960s, the typical length of animated films slightly decreased and became standardized to under ten minutes, which co-

23) Jolanta Zakrzewska, interview by Szymon Szul, February 8, 2023, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0034, Łódź, Poland, in Ewa Ciszewska and Szymon Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset),” *Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, 2024, accessed November 22, 2024, <https://repozytorium.uni.lodz.pl/handle/11089/52081>.

24) Ryszard Szymczak, interview by Szymon Szul, December 8, 2022, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0004, Główno, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz.”

25) According to the available data there are blank spots in data on bedtime stories episodes, namely for years 1975, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1989. Kunkelová – Podlipná, “Večerníček pro Bratislavu,” 294.

26) Before *The Magic Pencil* there were plans to produce a puppet series based — similar as it was in the series with Mr. Prokoup — on the recurring character Pan Piórko, who was the protagonist of Zenon Wasilewski’s *Pan Piórko śni* (1949). Zenon Wasilewski, “Pan Piórko,” sign. A-62 poz. 93, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

incided with the duration of a program slot in television broadcasting.²⁷⁾ Unlike custom films, programmers exhibited more variability in length, as they were not constrained by the requirements of the commissioner.²⁸⁾

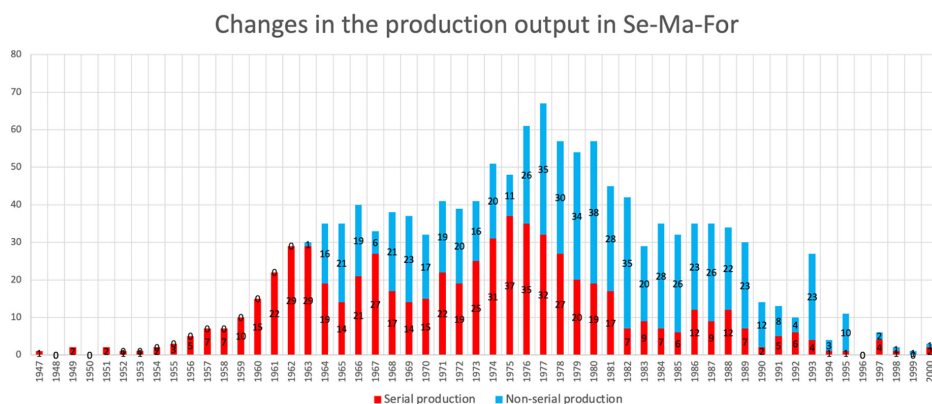


Fig. 3: Changes in the production output of Se-Ma-For²⁹⁾

However, in Poland the standardization of the format for the length of a single serial episode proceeded differently than in Czechoslovakia. The figure referenced above, due to gaps in the film database and the need to convert the film's meterage from meters of tape used to minutes, is not as precise as it could be with consistent data for all films. Nevertheless, it captures a characteristic trend in the production of serials, whose lengths were initially non-uniform. From the original length of eight to nine minutes in the early 1960s, the length of one episode became standardized at twelve to thirteen minutes after the Studio undertook the co-production of the Polish-French serial *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* (Przygody misia Colargola, 1968–1974). Notably, the role of television in regulating and imposing the film's length in the studio was minimal initially; instead, the requirements set by the Western contractor played a significant role in establishing an episode's length of a puppet serial, because it was the first puppet serial made in the Studio. The data depicted in the chart further confirm anecdotal accounts from Se-Ma-For employees, who

27) According to the editor Jiřina Pěčová, the limit was strictly given, and it was not possible to exceed it by even a few frames. Jiřina Pěčová, interview by Michal Večeřa, September 29, 2023.

28) For pointing out the key role of Československá televize as a customer we can compare bedtime stories with serials designed for cinema distribution. In cinemas, animation films were screened as an appendix of long features without given length restrictions since there was no need to fit an exact slot in the broadcasting. Týrlová worked on two serials for cinemas in the 1970s — *Kocour Modroočko* (1974–1976) and *Ferda, the Ant* (Ferda mravenec, 1977–1978). Zeman worked on the seven-episode cycle between 1971 and 1973, telling the story of *Sinbad the Sailor*. Each episode of the previously mentioned serials was approximately fifteen minutes long. “Týrlová, Hermína,” *Zlinský film database*, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://zlinskyfilmbd.phil.muni.cz/akter/11943>; “Zeman, Karel,” *Zlinský film database*, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://zlinskyfilmbd.phil.muni.cz/akter/180>.

29) There are blank spots in this figure due to shortages in the dataset where some films are not included.

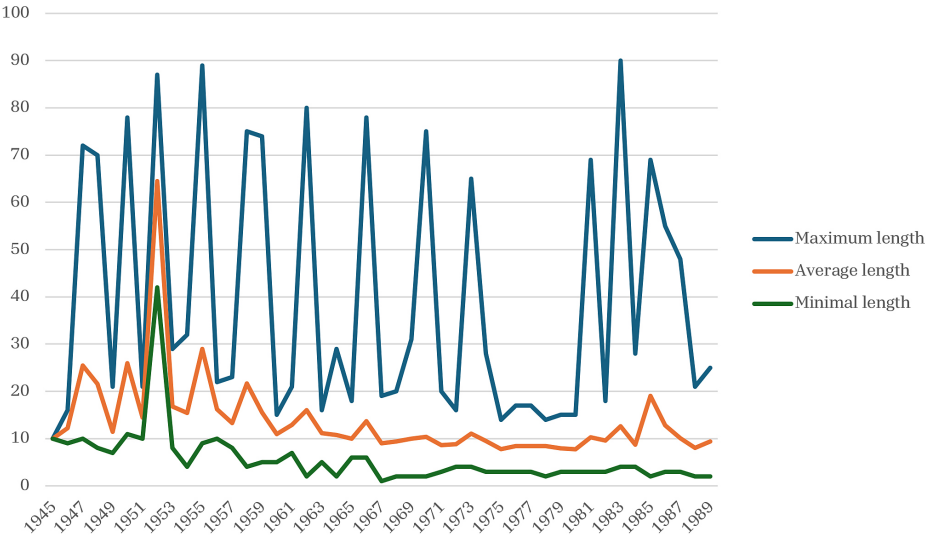


Fig. 4: The average length of Czechoslovakian animation production in minutes

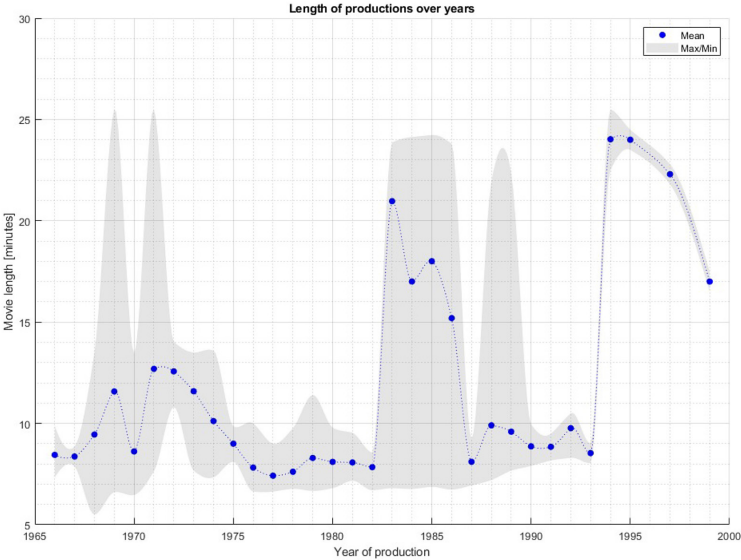


Fig. 5: The average length of Se-Ma-For studio production over the years

admitted that when creating a single episode, they did not have to consider its length in relation to the prequel.³⁰⁾

The second half of the 1970s brought about stability in the form of a seven- to eight-minute standard, which lasted until 1983 when Se-Ma-For's next major co-production

30) Antoni Bańkowski and Sławomir Grabowski, *Semafor 1947–1997* (Łódź: Studio Filmowe “Semafor,” 1999), 64.

with Jupiter Film premiered in full. German and Austrian decision-makers negotiated that the puppet serial *Trzy misie* (1982–1986) would adhere to a standard length of about twenty-five minutes.³¹⁾ This significantly overestimated the average film length presented in the chart, due to the production of the twenty-six-episode serial, which decreased after the serial ended in 1986. The destabilization of the average length of individual episodes could potentially be attributed to economic ramifications, precipitated by the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981. Despite high inflation and a lack of access to certain supplies, which led to an apparent collapse in the average production per year of all films after 1982,³²⁾ Se-Ma-For continued to increase its workforce.³³⁾ In 1982, with a total volume of annual production that included the sale³⁴⁾ of 46 films, the workforce was 156. In contrast, by 1986, with annual sales of 28 film titles, the workforce had already increased by 20 employees and stabilized at 186. It is worth mentioning that in the early 1970s, sales stood at 37 films, and there were 127 employees.



Fig. 6: Images from the episode *The Morning of a Teddy-Bear* (Poranek Misia, 1968) of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear* Colargol and *Gościnną jaszczurka* (The guest lizard, 1986) from *Trzy Misie*

The third characteristic of animation influenced by the advent of serial production involves preferred animation techniques and their perception. With the advent of serials, Czechoslovakian producers began to produce a considerable number of films using limited drawn³⁵⁾ or cut-out techniques. This usage was often economically motivated, given the possibility of making films under restricted budgets as quickly as possible.³⁶⁾ In serial pro-

31) "Sprawozdanie z delegacji służbowej do Austrii w dniach 25 XII. — 1 XII 79," December, 1979, sign. Jupiter-Film, Film Polski, Apollo Film, AFINA, Akta Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For, Warsaw, Poland.

32) "I. Produkcja," sign. AAN_syg_12_106, Warsaw, Poland.

33) "III. Kadry, zatrudnienie, płace," sign. AAN_syg_12_106, Warsaw, Poland.

34) In documents term "sale" means "finished in the current year." There is no evidence that the sales in the cited figures included actual sales of all the studio's films — those produced in the year when the document was written and years before that.

35) Compared to the full cartoon animation, the limited animation employs fewer images to create the illusion of movement. Rather than utilizing 8–10 images, only 1–3 images are used. While this results in a less fluid illusion of motion, it also reduces the workload on the drawing department and associated costs. Jiří Kubíček, *Úvod do estetiky animace* (Praha: AMU, 2004), 87–88.

36) Hermína Týrlová's statement that her entire department was fully occupied with work for the television stu-

duction from the Gottwaldov studio, puppet animation was common until the early 1970s, after which the dominance of cut-out, cartoon, or relief animation varied. This shift can be attributed to the significant role of television as a client, particularly in the case of cut-out and relief animation, which were perceived as less time-consuming than other forms of animation. Another possible explanation lies in the ease of shooting a film with a lower frame rate compared to puppet animation.³⁷⁾

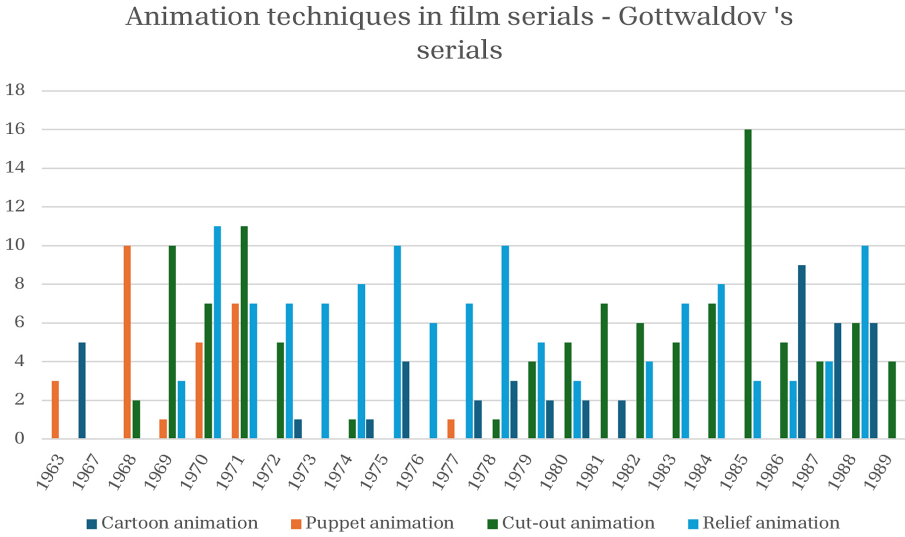


Fig. 7: The animation techniques used at the Gottwaldov studio

A notable trend at Se-Ma-For indicates that animated serials did not initially receive primary attention from the Puppet Films Department in Tuszyń. Instead, they were the primary focus of newly established departments dedicated to other animation techniques. This phenomenon can be largely attributed to the studio's strategy of recruiting individuals who were either enrolled in or affiliated with the Film School; this trend may be exemplified by figures like Henryk Ryszka, Jerzy Kotowski and Wadim Berestowski, who were simultaneously directors at Se-Ma-For and lecturers at the Film School. Berestowski actively promoted the establishment of strong collaboration between film education institutions and animation studios in Łódź.³⁸⁾ Moreover, the influx of graduates from art high schools was influential e.g., Ryszard Szymczak, Andrzej Piliczewski, Julitta Freisler, Krystyna Kulczycka, Stanisław Lenartowicz and Jolanta Zakrzewska, who received practi-

dio in Bratislava, shooting films outside its dramaturgical plan, illustrates the pressure of television on the speed of production. This was reflected in the necessary increase in the pace of work. Alois Humplík, "Studio s nejmenší halou v Evropě II: Hledá se Jirka," *Kino* 23, no. 5 (1968), 4.

37) Significant time savings are also mentioned in connection with cut-out animation by the creators who used it; for example, Jaroslav Cita or Jiří Tyller. Jaroslav Cita even recommends a combination of cartoon and cut-out animation to save time. Jaroslav Cita, "Vděčná ploška," *Amatérský film* 9, no. 7 (1977), 167; Jaroslav Cita, "Maličkosti ve filmu," *Amatérský film* 13, no. 1 (1981), 21; Jiří Tyller, interview by author, December 1, 2022.

38) "Protokół z zebrania Rady Artystycznej odbytego w dniu 27 listopada 1976 roku," November 27, 1976, sign. Protokóły Rady Artystycznej, AFINA, Akta Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For, Warsaw, Poland.

cal training from cartoon film directors at the studio in Bielsko-Biala, including Lecho-slaw Marszalek, the creator of *Rexie* (Reksio, 1972–1982).³⁹⁾ The relatively low proportion of puppet serials at Se-Ma-For before 1970 may also be attributed to the generally modest reputation of puppet films in Poland, which were regarded with disrespect by Polish film critics,⁴⁰⁾ in contrast to cut-out animation, which enjoyed greater prestige.⁴¹⁾ As we can read in one of the studio's documents, which referred to critics' indifference "Puppet film, which requires a lot of work and a long production period, relies on a motionless and difficult to animate body of puppets, is not able to achieve a high pace of action and a wide range of gags, and gives distance to cartoon film in this aspect."⁴²⁾

However, the 1970s witnessed a gradual increase in puppet productions, which steadily displaced live-action, combined, and cut-out techniques. Until 1989, puppet serials accounted for approximately one-third of the total annual production, with minor exceptions. The emergence of puppet serials was primarily facilitated by the co-production of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, which provided employment for the Tuszyn department. According to Tadeusz Wilkosz, the project's art director, the co-production enabled the entire studio to sustain and expand itself.⁴³⁾ *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* comprised fifty-three episodes produced until 1974 and established a certain group of preferred solutions in serial production. The impetus for further serials did not originate internally, i.e., at the behest of television, but externally, from foreign contractors, who were addressing "Film Polski" — the enterprise supporting the import and export of films. As Se-Ma-For was the first animation studio in Poland carrying out a large co-production, this in turn resulted in them being redirected to that studio. The establishment of new production standards in the making of the Colargol serial influenced the later production of puppet serials.

Subsequent serials, notable for their extensive episode count or individual episode length, were predominantly co-productions. Both the seventy-eight-episode *Tales of Moomin Valley* (Opowiadania Muminków, 1977–1982) and the twenty-six-episode *Trzymisie* were produced using puppet techniques, with episodes averaging almost twenty-five minutes in length. This led to a significant increase in average episode length observed in the early 1980s, as depicted in the preceding chart. Se-Ma-For's longest animated serial, the 104-episode *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear* (Przygody Misia Uszatka, 1975–1987), was also crafted using puppet technology, albeit primarily intended for broadcast on domestic television.

The notable prevalence of puppet techniques in serial production can be attributed primarily to considerations of material reusability, which were not as feasible with drawing techniques. According to puppeteer Wiktoria Bartoszek, puppet breakdowns primarily occurred due to skeletal issues, which, once repaired, allowed the puppet to be seam-

39) Szymczak, interview by author.

40) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," sign. 1943, carton 39/1943/0/-/25, APL, Warsaw, Poland.

41) Andrzej Kossakowski, *Polski film animowany 1945–1974* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977), 104–105.

42) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," sign. 1943, carton 39/1943/0/-/25, APL, Warsaw, Poland.

43) "Letter from Tadeusz Wilkosz to author," June 22, 2023, private collection of Szymon Szul.

lessly reinstated.⁴⁴⁾ Unlike drawing techniques, creating animation frames did not necessitate the reconstruction of most set elements from scratch, as was required for painting celluloids with individual movement phases in drawn animation.⁴⁵⁾ With the commencement of the *Tales of Moomin Valley* production in the late 1970s using semi-flat puppets, efficiency in serial production further improved, with skeletal-free puppet bodies experiencing less frequent breakdowns.

The production duration of a *Tales of Moomin Valley* episode, featuring semi-flat puppets, was approximately one-half of that of *The Adventures of Philemon the Cat* (Przygody kota Filemona, 1977–1981), a similar-length cartoon serial.⁴⁶⁾ Moreover, comparing nine-minute cartoon serials from the 1970s with thirteen-minute episodes of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, the latter managed to maintain a nearly one-third shorter length than the former.⁴⁷⁾ In addition, puppet technique films' overall cost was lower than cartoon technique films.⁴⁸⁾ These factors collectively contributed to the ascendancy of puppet techniques in serial production.



Fig. 8: Images from the episode *He Has Melted Away* (Szukaj wiatru w polu, 1977) of *The Adventures of Philemon the Cat* and *The Californian King* (Król Kalifornijski, 1977) from *Tales of Moomin Valley*

The development of serial production in Poland and Czechoslovakia followed slightly different trajectories. Despite some similarities in the animation techniques used, production in both countries differed, with one of the main reasons being the commercial nature of animated serials in Czechoslovakia due to tight connections to custom production for the local television industry. In Poland, the demand for serials was shaped by external factors that had influenced the field of Polish animation. The choice of technique was dictated by the cost calculation. Puppet films were cheaper in production than cartoons.

44) Wiktoria Bartoszek, interview by author, March 22, 2024, ASAFGL, sign. SMFF_0037, Łódź, Poland.

45) On the contrary to movement phases, in drawn animation it was common to re-use background paintings.

46) "Analiza ekonomiczno-produkcyjna filmu z serii: *Opowiadania Muminków* pt. *Król Kalifornijski*," sign. Król Kalifornijski. odc. 2. 1977, *Opowiadania Muminków*, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

47) "Analiza ekonomiczno-produkcyjna filmu lalkowego, bawrnego pt. *Miś pod wodą*," sign. *Miś pod wodą*. odc. 30, *Przygody misia Colargola*, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

48) "Z serii: *Przygody kota Filemona*," sign. *Wilczy apetyt*. odc. 10, *Przygody kota Filemona*. reż. Andrzej Pili-czewski, 1978, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

In connection with Becker's art worlds' theory, it is important to notice the Polish and Czechoslovakian trends in implementing innovations and in turning them into new solutions. The Gottwaldov studio, mainly due to television, established a standard for the length of a single serial film in the second half of the 1960s. In the early 1970s, there was also a shift in the dominant technique for serial production, with puppet film first being replaced by relief animation and later by cut-out animation. In both cases, the increasing dominance of serial production is evident, although it occurred at different times, depending on the faster emergence of animated serials in Czechoslovakia. Since its inception in the 1970s, the Se-Ma-For studio had observed a fluctuation in the length of its serial production, with changes occurring every five to seven years because of the actual co-production projects. In Czechoslovakia, there were no such abrupt changes, suggesting that certain conventions were adopted over a longer period, probably influenced by the closer association with television production compared to the various co-productions of Se-Ma-For. Conventions existed in both countries, but the internal processes of developing and refining them differed between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The Dynamics of Workgroups and Management in Serial Production

The changes in serial production described above also raise questions about the evolution of the animation production system and the organization of work. The following section will examine specifically how serial production changed production practices. One significant fact is that the introduction of serial production caused a visible growth in production output, consequently influencing the functioning of the production system. The dearth of proficient personnel demanded that a single worker fulfill a greater number of tasks, as well as the immediate recruitment of new employees.⁴⁹⁾ The shift towards serial production and quantitative changes in the usage of animation techniques also highlight the necessary competencies and adaptability of workers for new types of production. Considering these characteristics, several issues had arisen due to these changes. These included how the older and younger generations of workers adapted to them, the extent to which serial production was integrated into the existing workflow, and the impact of changes in the quantitative aspect of production on the distinct animation art worlds.

Since 1945, two workgroups had been involved in animated film production in Gottwaldov; one led by Hermína Týrlová and the other by Karel Zeman. When the studio began producing serials, they made only a few series of short films for cinematic distribution and did not actively participate in custom-produced serials for Československá televize.⁵⁰⁾

49) There are no exact quantitative data, but the problem is often mentioned by internal publications or interviews with studio employees. See for example: "Filmové studio Gottwaldov. Komplexní rozbor hospodaření za rok 1984," undated, k. R13/BII/4P/3K, f. ÚŘ ČSF, NFA, Prague, Czech Republic; Ladislav Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal, June 10, 2021.

50) Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell in detail about the dramaturgical process of bedtime stories since it happened outside the studio structures without the most important artistic personalities being involved. In part it is also related to the passivity of Týrlová and Zeman in bedtime stories and previous extensive loss of archival sources.

The only structural change to this system came in 1973 with the establishment of a separate cartoon film workgroup that focused exclusively on the serial production of bedtime stories.⁵¹⁾ The existence of the Cartoon Film Department highlighted the lack of experienced animators specialized in new animation techniques. Initially, its workers had formerly participated in one of the aforementioned workgroups, consequently blurring the borders between all groups. For example, one of the few members of this department, Ladislav Vlk, had participated in puppet film production for Karel Zeman, but also collaborated with Týrlová. This situation prompted Gottwaldov's representatives to hire Bohumil Šejda, a seasoned animator from *Bratři v triku* and a collaborator with Gene Deitch, to train new workers in cartoon animation techniques.⁵²⁾

In Poland, working groups operated within the activities of the film departments of the enterprise. Due to the dispersed structure of the studio, individual employees could not explicitly adjust serial production under them, although such situations did occur. One such employee was Tadeusz Wilkosz, who specialized in puppet animation, received training at the Czechoslovakian animation studios — namely *Bratři v triku* and Studio Jiřího Trnky (Studio of Jiří Trnka), studied at UMPRUM in Prague,⁵³⁾ and held significant institutional positions at Se-Ma-For, including leading the Artistic Council of the studio for some time.⁵⁴⁾ Wilkosz was among the oldest employees of the studio; he began his work in Tuszyn, debuting with the film *Mysie figle* (1959), and quickly became one of the most influential employees due to his membership in the Polish United Workers' Party.⁵⁵⁾ Interview respondents likened Wilkosz's management style to working in a factory, where all tasks had to be performed on time according to his established plan and using his prepared projects.⁵⁶⁾

With Wilkosz's serials we observe the role of an art director, which does not appear in other serials from the discussed period. Wilkosz, as the art director, rarely directed serial films himself. He was responsible for shaping scripts written jointly with other directors or approved by him, and for developing the visual designs of characters and sets, thus having a significant influence on the serials. The co-production of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* was economically beneficial for the studio and allowed the directors participating in the serial to travel abroad. Albert Barillé, Head of Procidis, the French co-production partner, together with Wilkosz, organized trips to Paris for employees, treating it as a form of gratitude for their work on the serials.⁵⁷⁾ This co-production gave Wilkosz considerable

51) "Zpráva o výsledcích rozboru hospodářské činnosti KF za rok 1973," 1974, k. R13/AI/6P/1K, f. ÚŘ ČSF, NFA, Prague, Czech Republic.

52) Until the late 1970s, he held two concurrent positions at the two studios. In 1978, he relocated permanently from Prague to Gottwaldov, where he remained until his retirement in the 2000s.

53) Tadeusz Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul, November 8, 2023, AFSAGŁ, SMFF_0036, Cracow, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

54) "Protokół ze spotkania Rady Artystycznej Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For z dnia 16 czerwca 1968 r.," July 16, 1968, sign. 07, Rada Artystyczna, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

55) Jerzy Podgórski, interview by author, November 19, 2021, SS_0002, Cracow, Poland. Similar observations about Wilkosz also appear in other interviews. Wilkosz himself mentions that he wanted to watch over the people who were making decisions about production in Tuszyn at the time, which is why he joined the party.

56) Monika Chybowicz-Brożyńska, interview by Szymon Szul, October 14, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0006, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

57) Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul.

control over a significant part of the Tuszyn team. He claims that he provided them with opportunities for advancement from animators to directors of serial films.⁵⁸⁾

Due to the rapid growth in serial production at the studio from 1970 to 1980, Wilkosz's protégés, often in conflict with him, due to the necessity to create films according to his solutions, sought further advancement within the studio hierarchy through serial production. For instance, Lucjan Dembiński became advisor-consultant for *Tales of Moomin Valley*, co-authoring scripts and directing some episodes, thus obtaining competencies similar to those of an Art Director.⁵⁹⁾ He was in charge of the serial that he was responsible for and had a stable team of collaborators, just like Wilkosz. Similarly, Marian Kielbaszczak, also in conflict with Wilkosz, managed his own serials, such as *Kolorowy świat Pacyka* (1981–1990), *Maurycy i Hawranek* (1987–1990) and *Mordziaki* (1993–2000). A certain relationship exists between these three figures in serial puppet film production. Those responsible for the visual designs of sets and puppets and involved in writing scripts were usually considered in the studio as the authors of the serials. This led to an interesting shift. Authorship in the sense of auteur cinema, which manifested itself in Se-Ma-For through directors of cut-out animation films, was adapted to serial production. These figures could be described as “barons,”⁶⁰⁾ who owned the serials, developed directors’ skills, and ensured the possibility of career advancement from Animator to Director, but only within serial production and not individual films.

However, these “barons” were essentially managers who saw serial production as individual achievements, realized with the help of craftsmen often not mentioned by name. A new understanding of the paradigm of authorship functioned at Se-Ma-For. Tadeusz Wilkosz never hid his approach, as evidenced by his actions aimed at popularizing the serials he managed, treating serial creativity at the same level as achievements in directing individual films.⁶¹⁾ Despite both *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* and *Trzy misie* being co-productions, Wilkosz seems to treat them as purely Polish productions, achieved solely through his efforts.⁶²⁾

Not everyone was as vocal about supervising serial production as Wilkosz. A signifi-

58) Monika Chybrowicz-Brożyńska and Anna Godlewska, ed., *Tadeusz Wilkosz: Scenografia filmu lalkowego: 40 lat twórczości (1958–1998)* (Łódź: Muzeum Kinematografii, 1998), 11.

59) “Umowa z doradcą-konsultantem,” 1982, sign. 1, Gość z Marsa, odc. 77. 2, Żegnajcie, odc. 78. 1982. Opowiadania Muminków, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

60) The term “barons” is used in Polish journalism to describe regional politics. Party members who are responsible within the party structure for managing a particular region can enjoy extraordinary privileges and have more power than rank-and-file party members. This situation can be compared with those in charge of the production of a TV serial. They are not directors of the studio; they have an important role in their department and manage the work of the rank-and-file employees. Andrzej Stankiewicz, “Były baron Platformy z zarzutami,” *Rzeczpospolita*, February 29, 2016, accessed November 22, 2024, <https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art-3873991-byly-baron-platformy-z-zarzutami>. On Polish ground Marcin Adamczak also wrote about barons, defining in this way film directors who, with symbolic capital, were making high-budget film spectacles. Due to the funds that were invested, it was difficult to expect any formal experiments from them. Marcin Adamczak, *Globalne Hollywood: Filmowa Europa i polskie kino po 1989 roku* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010), 301.

61) Chybrowicz-Brożyńska, interview by Szymon Szul.

62) Wilkosz, interview by author. He also emphasizes that the image of Colargol was inspired by the appearance of his son, further highlighting the almost paternal relationship between the serial and the person who managed it.

cant role at the studio was played by a group of people associated with dramaturgical developments. The dramaturgists were primarily the two-person editorial team responsible for assessing the dramaturgy of texts submitted by employees and the screenwriting duo of Janusz Galewicz–Maria Kossakowska. In the 1970s and 1980s, the dramaturgical team consisted of Sławomir Grabowski and Antoni Bańkowski⁶³. Although their competencies included accepting others' scripts, many respondents noted that they pursued a strategy where they themselves became scriptwriters.⁶⁴ The chart below presents the top ten most frequently occurring names of authors of the scripts of serial films in the 1970s and 1980s, with Galewicz at the top. Considering his connections with Maria Kossakowska (whose actual share in written scripts is higher than suggested by the FilmPolski.pl database), they would significantly dominate over other employees. Understanding the influence of participation in the production of as many films as possible confirms the thesis that the most influential employees had to include authorship or co-authorship of scripts as part of their competencies. Among the top ten people, who confirm the thesis, are for example Marian Kielbaszczak and two dramaturgists.⁶⁵

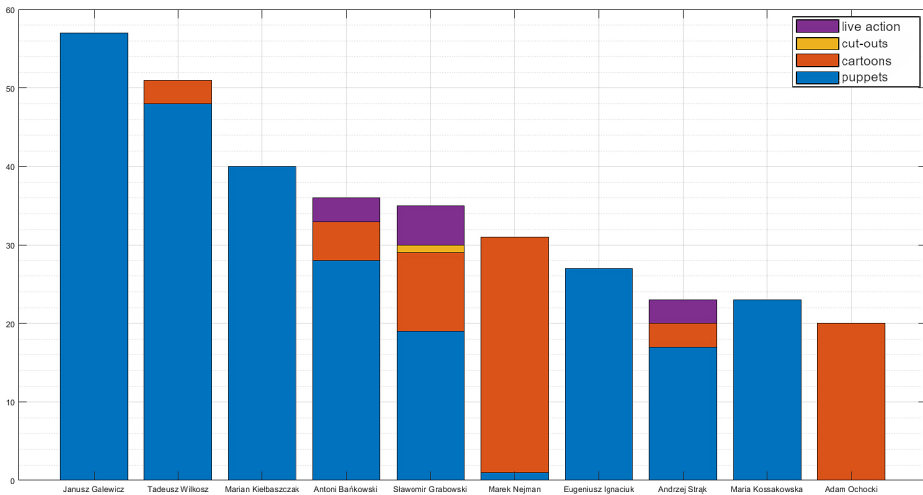


Fig. 9: The most influential employees (dramaturgists/screenwriters) in Se-Ma-For and the film techniques by which the serials were made

While dramaturgists encountered resistance from authors of non-serial films who, even upon accepting their scripts, implemented significant alterations in serial production — primarily geared towards supplying serials to entities such as television — they could craft narratives for numerous films directed by various directors.⁶⁶ During the period under

63) These four names can be considered the only professional scriptwriters who worked at the studio.

64) Daniel Szczechura, interview by Szymon Szul, March ASFAGŁ, 2022, SMFF_0019, Łódź, Poland, in Cis-zewska – Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz.”

65) The chart should also include the name of Lucjan Dembiński, who co-authored the scripts for all 78 episodes of *Tales of Moomin Valley*, but this can only be determined based on archival documents, not information provided in the database.

66) Maciej Okuński, interview by Szymon Szul, November 27, 2021, SS_0004, Łódź, Poland.

examination, batches of several episodes formed a serial. Janusz Galewicz and Maria Kossakowska, whose relationship was both professional and marital,⁶⁷⁾ formed a tandem that owed its position primarily to Janusz Galewicz's reputation. Galewicz, a script reviewer, studio director in the early 1970s, and later director of artistic affairs, could influence and establish the conventions of animated serials. Galewicz wrote episodes of the serial *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear*, while Kossakowska, together with Dembiński, authored the scripts for *Tales of Moomin Valley*, in which Galewicz's involvement was significant, as he was instrumental in securing a license from Tove Jansson to produce it. He was directly or indirectly responsible for the two most extensive serials of Se-Ma-For in terms of the number of episodes.

In comparison to Wilkosz's serials, overlapping similarities are evident, notably in the production methods — Galewicz's serials employed the same personnel and technical infrastructure as those of Wilkosz, which indicated sharing solutions in their work, but primarily influenced by the art director's way of conducting the serial. Furthermore, even at the level of titles, similarities can be found: one serial was about Colargol the teddy bear, while the other was about another teddy bear, Uszatek. However, differences in education and professional experience — Wilkosz received education in the field of film graphics, while Galewicz served as the literary manager at the "Pinocchio" theater in Łódź — influenced the way in which both serials were written. In *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, the narrative was linear and required knowledge of previous episodes to understand events in later films. In *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear*, each episode created a standalone entity. This resulted, among other things, in foreign importers ordering serials from Poland preferring serials like Galewicz's, because individual episodes could be placed in a children's cartoon slot.⁶⁸⁾

Galewicz's serials were created in a convention that was both a continuation of the production method established by Wilkosz⁶⁹⁾ and in opposition to his dramaturgical or visual solutions, as Galewicz did not take over all the most important fields of serial production which were being responsible for art projects, directing and supervising the work of other employees. Figure 10 shows a list of names divided by animation techniques, highlighting individuals who had the greatest influence on the production of serial films, considering only positions such as art director, dramaturgist, and various professions involving artistic and graphic development. It is not surprising that among these names are people primarily specializing in puppet animation, as this technique had the majority share in serials at that time.

It is worth considering whether we can measure the level of influence and decision-making in the context of serials created in only one technique. For instance, looking at the figures of Grabowski and Bańkowski, they are the only ones among all who had a significant, comprehensive influence on serials produced in different techniques. Such a broad area of activity required some concessions; it forced them to share the informal role of art director with people responsible for visual designs, but at the same time, it showed a dif-

67) Ibid.

68) "Tots TV: Dog & other stories (1994 VHS)," accessed April 30, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-9BB_aOfPk. Here can be seen the usage of that format in United Kingdom.

69) Letter from Tadeusz Wilkosz to Szymon Szul.

ferent, softer form of exerting influence and creating conventions in serial production.⁷⁰⁾ This softer form of influence manifested itself not only on the literature layer of the film, but also in the process of accepting materials submitted by directors, such as scripts and storyboards.⁷¹⁾ Bańkowski and Grabowski also participated in most of the collaborations, influencing what changes should be made. Danuta Adamska-Strus, adDirector at Se-Ma-For, mentions that this tandem was responsible for creative issues at the studio.⁷²⁾

Comparing the situation in Se-Ma-For with Gottwaldov reveals significant differences. The sub-worlds of different animation techniques overlapped due to the specificities of the local production cluster in Gottwaldov and its isolation from other cinematic institutions and the previously mentioned shortage of personnel.⁷³⁾

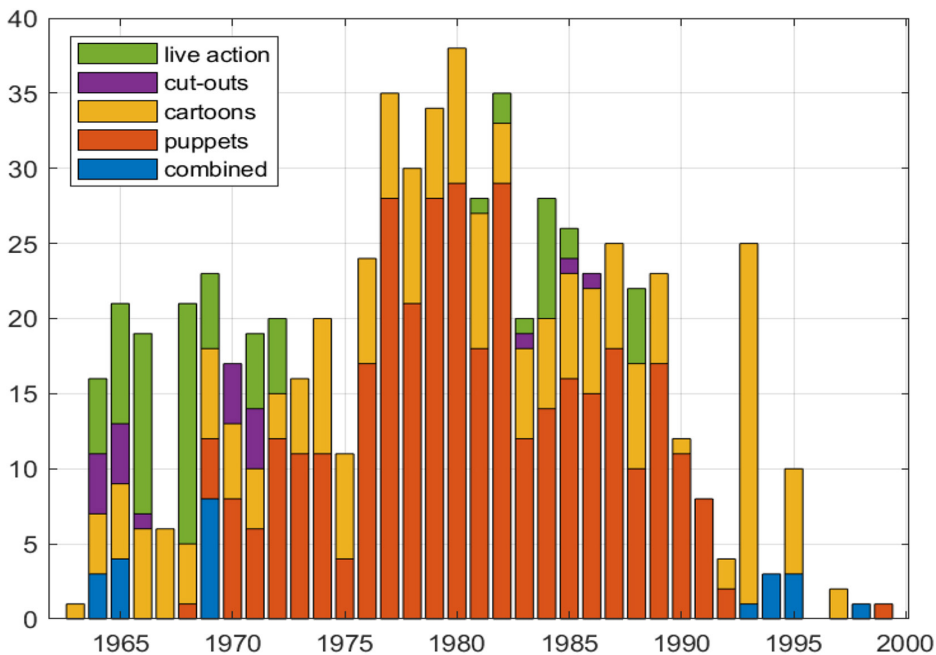


Fig. 10: Number of episodes of serials in the 1970s and 1980s by film technique (live action, puppet animation, cartoons, cut-outs, and combined animation) in Se-Ma-For

The aforementioned names also highlight another aspect. Individuals in creative-administrative positions enjoyed greater freedom in organizing serial production and creating space for their own authorial projects because they supervised production. Moreover,

70) Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul.

71) Antoni Bańkowski, interview by Joanna Banaszczyk, November 23, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0011, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska – Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz.”

72) Danuta Adamska-Strus, interview by Szymon Szul, June 16, 2023, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0035, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska – Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz.”

73) Pavel Skopal, “Umělecké světy a sociální sítě na Kudlově: Gottwaldovský animovaný film od poloviny 60. let 20. století,” in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Skopal, 173.

these authors, including both formal and informal art directors, were primarily found in the remote Puppet Films Department in Tuszyn. The independence afforded by historical conditions — as the department was the cradle of the traditional puppet technique for Se-Ma-For — and locational conditions — its location away from the management and editorial offices — facilitated the creation of several significant and interpenetrating teams with strong personalities. Tuszyn was also a place with its own more elaborate administration than the studio's other departments, so the influence of the studio's management was not direct. Both Galewicz and the dramaturgists had their offices in Łódź, in the building where the Cartoon Films Department was located. This physical proximity may have impeded a career path similar to that of Wilkosz, and subsequently, of Kieľbaszczak and Dembiński.

In Gottwaldov, Týrlová and Zeman led their respective workgroups independently, as noted by their subordinates. Their involvement in bedtime stories was rare, with most bedtime stories being produced by younger filmmakers. The reluctance to adapt to the new production practices was partly due to their age; in 1970, when the era of bedtime stories began, Zeman was fifty-nine and Týrlová was seventy, already of retirement age. Týrlová, as her co-worker Milan Šebesta indicated, initially attempted to engage in television production, but soon declined due to the necessity of meeting production speed requirements.⁷⁴⁾ Karel Zeman did not participate in television custom production, except for a single instance in the 1980s. This occurred following the emigration of his daughter Ludmila Zemanová and son-in-law Eugen Spálený in 1986 during the production of the *Indian Fairy Tales* (Indiánske rozprávky; Eugen Spálený, Karel Zeman, and Ludmila Zemanová, 1982–1988) serial. Consequently, Zeman was compelled to take part in this project, despite having retired from film directing in 1980.⁷⁵⁾ The early generation of filmmakers was circumspect about bedtime stories, leading to the majority of these films being created by younger filmmakers who began their directorial careers in Gottwaldov no earlier than the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The attitudes of the “old masters” towards younger collaborators varied significantly. Zeman, for instance, forbade his associates from working on bedtime stories until he retired as a director in the early 1980s. In contrast, Týrlová encouraged her collaborators to engage in these projects. This discrepancy led to a blurring of the boundaries between existing workgroups. Some of Zeman's workers, such as Josef Zeman⁷⁶⁾ and Zdeněk Ostrčil, left his team to work with Týrlová on bedtime stories in the early 1970s.⁷⁷⁾ In 1975, Ladislav Vlk also departed from Zeman's group to join the Cartoon Film Department, where he collaborated with Týrlová. Notably, Zeman expected his colleagues to be readily available for his projects. When they wished to work on their projects, they had to do so secretly and outside standard working hours.⁷⁸⁾ Consequently, most bedtime stories were produced by Týrlová's workgroup, followed by the Cartoon Film Department.

74) In the 1968 interview, Týrlová mentioned that she had been working on an unspecified bedtime story, but there is no evidence that she ever finished the work. Humplík, “Studio s nejmenší halou v Evropě.”

75) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.

76) Even though he had the same surname, Josef Zeman was not related to Karel Zeman.

77) Kunkelová – Podlipná, “Večerníček pro Bratislavu,” 298.

78) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.

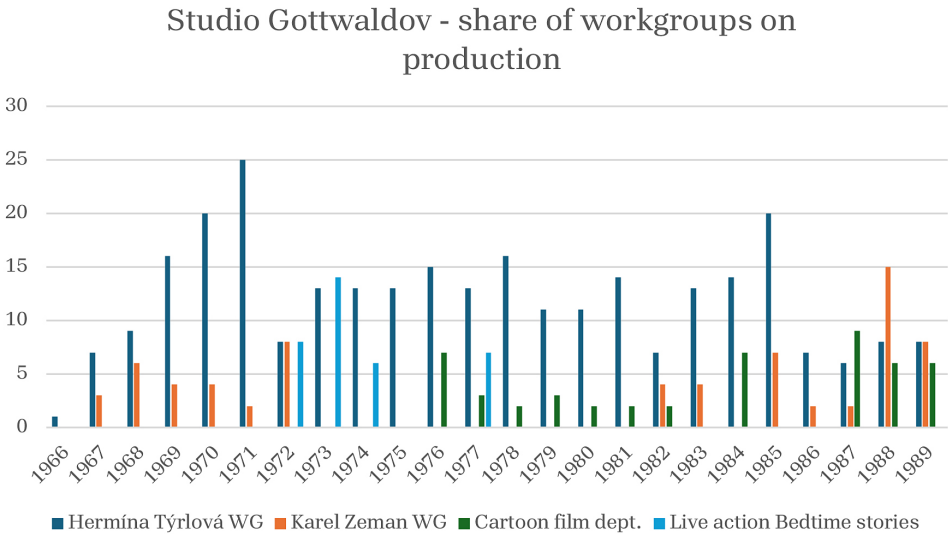


Fig. 11: The share of individual workgroups and departments for bedtime stories' production in Gottwaldov studio⁷⁹⁾

The studio's relational dynamics were also influenced by the number of workers and the degree of labor division. Although the total number of people working in animation in Gottwaldov is unclear, it slightly increased with serial production. Filmmakers working on bedtime stories often assumed multiple roles, such as directing, writing, art design, and animation. As noted by one of these filmmakers, Ladislav Vlk, the advantage of this situation was that workers were compensated for all their contributions, thereby increasing their overall earnings.⁸⁰⁾ The limited personnel and isolation in Gottwaldov facilitated co-operation with individuals from other local studios, such as Taťána Havlíčková from a local feature film studio⁸¹⁾ and two filmmakers involved predominantly in non-fiction production — Director Ján Iván⁸²⁾ and cameraman Bohuslav Pikhart.⁸³⁾

In Se-Ma-For, despite the presence of numerous workgroups, advancing to the position of art director was challenging, due to the lack of a clear demarcation between seasoned veterans and new recruits in serial production. Minimal transition occurred between the “festival” filmmakers and artist-craftsmen, resulting in the latter group exclusively shaping promotion criteria within serial production.⁸⁴⁾ Leveraging their influ-

79) Kunkelová – Podlipná, “Večerníček pro Bratislavu,” 297.

80) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.

81) Taťána Havlíčková, interview by Tereza Bochinová, April 27, 2021, 1/3.

82) “Iván, Ján,” *Zlínský film database*, accessed October 15, 2024, <https://animation.phil.muni.cz/akter/1123>.

83) “Pikhart, Bohuslav,” *Zlínský film database*, accessed October 15, 2024, <https://animation.phil.muni.cz/akter/416>.

84) Groups of artists-craftsmen were only recognized collectively, mainly with awards from representatives of state institutions, such as the Prime Minister Dariusz Zawilski, interview by Tomasz Poborca, July 27, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0005, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, “Animation workers from ‘Se-Ma-For’ Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz.”

ential status, Wilkosz, Galewicz, Bańkowski and Grabowski oversaw the activities of other directors and animators, treating them as artisans and facilitating their progression within established parameters.

As previously mentioned, the quantitative changes led to significant alterations in the production of both studios. The isolated studio in Gottwaldov faced difficulties in recruiting new staff, as the only source of workers was the local art school in the nearby city of Uherské Hradiště. Due to that, existing workers had to assume multiple roles concurrently with increased production. In Łódź, there was generally more potential for recruiting new staff, due to the proximity of the Film School and the larger population. However, a commonality between the two studios was the absence of older-generation filmmakers as active creators in serial production.

Conclusion

When comparing the production of Czechoslovakian and Polish animated serials, several differences and similarities emerge, rooted in the distinct developmental stages of their markets and the growing demand for animated films. Significant influences include production backgrounds, preferences for specific animation techniques, and the employment structures of the studios. Examination of the two studios reveals several general themes that characterize serial production in both countries.

In Czechoslovakia, the close connection to commissioning authorities and the necessity to meet their stringent requirements, along with the transfer of dramaturgical competencies and mandatory approval of finished films, resulted in limited artistic freedom. In contrast, Polish filmmakers retained stronger control over the production process, especially in the 1960s, when they could freely shape the episode length and number of episodes. As a larger studio, Se-Ma-For could afford more competition among its employees. Influence on the shape of the serials was therefore more diffuse, the more that were produced. Unlike in Czechoslovakia, formal requirements in Poland were not as strictly standardized by commissioning authorities.

At Se-Ma-For, serial production was influenced by two main ordering centers: foreign co-producers and television. This dual influence meant that there wasn't a single, centralized form of serial production. One specific factor was the geographic organization of animation film studios. In Gottwaldov, isolation from other cinematic institutions created unique conditions for developing dynamics within workgroups, fostering a specific cluster environment. At Se-Ma-For, the geographic dispersion of departments and the exclusive co-production of puppet serials led to two different yet similar conventions for their realization, depending on the specific art directors responsible for them.

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Biography

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