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BACHELOR THESIS

Americanization:
American Television Culture and Its Impact on the Czech
broadcast

Amerikanizace:
Americká televizní kultura a její dopad na české vysílání

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is completely my own work and that no other sources were used in the preparation of the thesis than those listed on the works cited page. The thesis is not intended to obtain different or the same degree.

Prague, July 2015

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Abstract

This thesis deals with a phenomenon of 'Americanization', which can be explained as a process when the culture and lifestyle of the United States of America penetrate the culture of other countries. Specifically, the thesis focuses on one of the most influential and the most influenced kind of culture – the television broadcast, which has been enriched by the United States with several new types of programs and innovations. The first part puts Americanization into historical context of the Czech Republic and also describes two of the most influential elements of American TV: Nielsen ratings and reality show. Further, the second part includes several analytical contemplations on Americanization and examines how and to which extent the American broadcast has affected the Czech one.

Key words: Americanization, television, The Czech Republic, Nielsen, reality show, culture, The United States of America

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá jevem zvaným „amerikanizace“, což může být chápáno jako proces, kdy kultura či životní styl Spojených států amerických proniká do kultur jiných států včetně České republiky. Konkrétně se pak tato práce zaměřuje na jeden z nejlivnějších a nejvíce ovlivněných druhů kultury, a to televizní vysílání, které Spojené státy americké obohatily o několik nových typů programů a inovací. První část zasazuje amerikanizaci do historického kontextu České republiky a také přibližuje dva v současnosti nejlivnější prvky americké televize: Nielsenovy ratingy a reality show. Druhá část pak nabízí několik analytických úvah týkajících amerikanizace a zkoumá, jak a do jaké míry ovlivnilo americké televizní vysílání to české.

Klíčová slova: amerikanizace, televize, Česká republika, Nielsen, reality show, kultura, Spojené státy americké

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1 INTRODUCTION

Television has been a part of human's life almost for a century. Thanks to that fact, television has witnessed many significant events in the history of humankind. The Coronation of Queen Elisabeth II, the Moon landing, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, The Beatles and their first television appearance, the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana, the Olympic Games – with the possibility of both to see and hear what was happening, these and many other historical moments could be experienced in all their emotional depth. Television had an almost impregnable position and it changed everything – the way people thought, acted and lived.

Its influence on the humans' lives was changed when the Internet had entered households, but TV's presence is still noticeable especially concerning older generation, for which television strongly holds its position in their lives even nowadays. In the era of the Internet it became rather difficult to attract the younger generations to watch TV, which is a challenge to TV networks that are trying to come up with new, attractive programs.

Television is constantly changing, but what has not changed yet is the position of the United States of America as the world superpower of audiovisual arts. Since the beginnings of cinematography, Hollywood was the place where the most talented people were gathering and creating motion pictures that served as inspiration for other movie makers. It was not surprising that America became the superpower of television broadcast as well, as it already had valuable and numerous experiences acquired in movie business. Already since the commencement of TV broadcast around 1950s, American television producers were creating new programs, setting the trends, and learning how to make a profit from the broadcast. And since they were exceptionally successful in this area, it was no wonder that some countries wished to follow America and made their TV broadcast as good as the American one.

Thus, television became a great accelerator of Americanization, a phenomenon that distributes American lifestyle and culture among the other

countries of the world. Thanks to new technologies, Americanization is faster than it was ever before. With the invention of the Internet and many television innovations, American culture reaches even to the most distant and culturally different countries. Besides, English became the international language.

The main aim of this thesis is to realize the impact of Americanization on Czech television. In the theoretical part, the term 'Americanization' will be clarified and put into European and Czech historical context. The functioning and main contribution of Nielsen ratings will be also explicated. Furthermore, the author will explain the principle of the most important American entertainment format (reality show). In the practical part, the formats will be analyzed from the perspective of European and especially Czech broadcast and it will be examined what lies behind the success of some shows and formats, whereas others are instantly forgotten. A special emphasis will be placed upon reality show, a purely American television format, which with all its variations gained the biggest popularity among the worldwide audience. In the final part of the work, a short excursion into linguistics will be made, as the issues connected with TV linguistics may also serve as accelerators of Americanization.

The paper is not meant to reproach Czech TV networks for borrowing and buying American TV programs and formats. It rather serves as a prod at Czech producers to create their own programs or at least programs with fewer foreign elements included, for television is still one of the most important factors participating in national identity formulation.

The work does not focus on other cultural areas that are also more or less influenced by the United States, such as theater, music, literature or gastronomy. The author of the work does not focus on programs with participation of professional actors (TV series), besides sit-coms.

The thesis is based on the author's long-time observation of television trends and general interest in the branch of television broadcast.

Further, it should be mentioned that the thesis is written in American

English. Therefore, the author uses a more unusual past tense form of a verb 'to broadcast': *broadcasted*. The author decided to use this form in order to make a clear distinction between the noun 'broadcast' and the verb 'broadcast'. And finally, it should be clarified that by 'Czech television' is meant the Czech television broadcast in general, while 'Czech Television' represents the Czech state-owned TV network Česká televize.

2 THEORETICAL PART

2.1 Americanization: a specification of the term and historical background

Americanization is a continuous process of penetration and acceptance of products and ideas which have originated in the United States of America. These products and ideas are subsequently being integrated into foreign cultures and other areas, such as economics, politics, or gastronomy. They may become modified or adapted to the local culture, but they can also remain unchanged or completely ignored.

Americanization should be differentiated from globalization, which is a process of international blending of culture, economics and politics. Americanization is strictly associated with the US. The phenomenon of Americanization is a topic of many discussions and until now, it has not been decided yet, whether it is good or rather detrimental to be affected by a foreign country in such a degree. This issue will be also discussed in this thesis.

Americanization of TV broadcast is closely connected to cinematography. Most of the movies which are shown in movie theaters are later broadcasted on TV and copyright prices often depend on the income earned from the theater screening. Generally, movies are integral elements of TV broadcast, therefore this topic will be slightly touched upon throughout the thesis.

The process of Americanization is continuous, however, in terms of the Czech Republic, it did not start until 1989, when the political upheaval in Czechoslovakia took place. Americanization was an unwelcome influence. The Eastern European countries and their highest political representatives were doing everything to instil the feeling of disdain for the USA. America was considered the main enemy of socialism and the greatest threat to communist countries' well-being. Consequentially, anyone who did not have contempt for American culture was regarded as a traitor. Many of the offenders who expressed only a minimal interest or simply seemed to slightly encourage the western way of life,

were deprived of basic human rights. They might not have been allowed to visit the school of their choice, were not allowed to travel abroad (not even for a trip of a few hours), might have been deprived of some of their property and were considered undesirable supporters of the Western world. Which, besides the possible imposition of police surveillance, meant the threat of imprisonment. Foreign (and especially American) books, magazines, pieces of clothing, vinyl records, later VHS and MC cassettes, etc. were sought-after items not only by the Czech people, but also by the StB (Czech State Security; police). To catch the American TV broadcast was not that easy, as the broadcasting technology back then was in comparison with today's technologies rather primitive. To get a signal from a radio broadcast was slightly easier, as the radio technology was already quite an old thing that was on a completely different level of development than television. Even though the RFE (Radio Free Europe; Czech: Svobodná Evropa) became available for the Czechoslovakian nation after the Second World War, listening to RFE quickly became a prohibited activity. By supporting the American lifestyle Czech and Slovakian people expressed their discontentment with the political and cultural situation in Czechoslovakia.

Everything changed in 1991 when the Iron Curtain fell down. After numerous political putsches and transformations, such as the one in Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe opened for new influences. There was not any supervision anymore. One could do, buy, and say anything he wished. One could visit any country in the world and the former Eastern Bloc countries were open again to the visitors from the West and overseas. The US made use of the situation and began to expand its trades in Europe. The first McDonald's chain was opened in Prague, American movies became the regular component of movie theater schedules and American programs found their place in TV guides. Initially, everything American possessed a kind of a special aura. The land discovered long ago by Columbus was the epitome of prosperity and exoticness. Nowadays, when people became spoiled by American products and got used to their presence in everyday life, the initial exoticism disappeared. American products are fashionable (iPhone), cheap and tasty (KFC), exciting and well

promoted (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, even though everyone knows that it is a questionable piece (in terms of quality) served as a must-see movie), open for former taboo topics (*Cosmopolitan*), but as they are not unique anymore, they cannot be referred to as exotic. There is so much of America around that sometimes it seems like there is no distance and the US is right here and right now and people are a little bit Americans themselves.

However, some European countries are more influenced by Americanization than others. It can be inferred from the historical background of Europe. The free and politically open-minded Western Europe was Americanized long before Eastern Europe was. Thanks to the Marshall Plan, which provided the post-WWI help to selected European countries that accepted the aid, the image of a prosperous America grew even stronger. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, together with Poland, East Germany (German Democratic Republic), Belarus, several Balkan states and a few more countries in Asia, were associated with the Eastern Bloc that was under control of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. The communist regime did not allow any penetrations and influences from the Western world – and the most feared influence was the United States of America. Everything which came from the capitalist West was thought to be sinister and anyone who expressed any kind of interest in Western matters was to be persecuted. However, the communist control could not do much about the simple fact: forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest. Any item that had something to do with America was often regarded as something miraculous, something so drastically different from domestic production. It is amusingly (but truthfully) depicted in the Czech movie *Pelíšky* when its main protagonist dreams about getting American jeans and cowboy boots for Christmas. When someone had an original vinyl record of The Beach Boys or The Doors, his/her fellows looked up to him/her as a hero and wondered how he/she managed to get such a trophy. This special was the relationship to America.

2.3 Reality show as the most popular television entertainment program

Reality shows are television programs that originated in the US and feature ordinary people being followed by cameras. Although the show usually does have a script, the participants in the program are not professional actors, which is the feature the show has in common with a documentary. Except for game shows, reality shows are not supposed to educate, but rather to entertain and help the audience to relax and distract themselves from everyday troubles. This kind of show perfectly works with emotions, the programs are full of suspense, excitement, passion, and happiness or even Schadenfreude (a feeling of enjoyment that comes from seeing or hearing about the troubles of other people; *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) and, as Edwards points out, audiences identify themselves with characters and go on their emotional journey with them (Edwards 48). "In all this diversity, reality TV has one appeal, which it shares with fiction—we as viewers hope, desperately, to find something relevant to our own lives. We seek any small hint about how to live our own lives just a bit better, to justify our hope, or to see that we are not alone in what we face in our life" (Slocum). In the context of not only American society, the reality show gained one more characteristic feature: it is the epitome of instant fame and the fulfillment of the American dream. Reality shows let the audience think that it is easy to earn money, find a partner or become famous, but not every such a dreamer realizes that even if he or she succeeds in the reality program, it is only the starting point and all the toughest times are ahead, which should be emphasized especially in terms of talent shows and dating shows.

The reality program can be divided into three basic types: game shows, dating shows, and talent shows. In the United States, there is also a celebrity show, which is not realizable on Czech television as there has not been any celebrity yet that would be willing to undergo such an experience and, as a matter of fact, the Czech Republic does not even have the right type of celebrity for this kind of show. There are no Kim Kardashians or Paris Hiltons. And even if

Czechs had such a celebrity, Czechs are not as obsessed with fame as the Americans are (Edwards 59), so the show would probably be a flop.

The game show is the most diverse of all the kinds of reality shows. It can take the form of an adventure (*Survivor*, *The Amazing Race*), a test of general knowledge (*I vs. 100*, *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?*), and courage (*Fear Factory*). One special kind of reality show is represented by *Mythbusters*, which is a scientific reality show. The game show further divides into subtypes (dance shows, makeover, home renovation shows, etc.), in which the most successful is the family shows (*Wife Swap*). All of the mentioned programs originate from the US and all of them were or still are broadcasted on Czech television.

There are reality programs that were originally British (*Weakest Link*, *The Voice*) or Dutch (the *Idol* singing competition franchise, *Big Brother*) but became truly successful only after they were broadcasted on American TV (the United States often function as a test: if the program succeeds in America, then it is likely to succeed anywhere in the world). One of the most popular American talent programs is the cooking competition show *MasterChef*, which was also a hit when it was introduced on Czech TV, as well as *Hotel Paradise*, which can be briefly described as a more luxurious variation of *Big Brother*.

The first reality shows appeared on American radio. The pioneer programs were *This Is Your Life* and *The Original Amateur Hour*, which were both broadcasted around 1950. The first one had the form of a talk show, when a person was asked to talk about his or her life and be completely honest about it; the latter heavily reminds one of current talent shows: a contestant performs an act (singing, playing an instrument, acting, dancing, etc.) and the audience members vote for the one they liked best (Fordham Metz). With the rise of television in the 1950s, reality programs practically disappeared from the radio and the producers focused on audiovisual entertainment ever since. However, the beginnings were not easy. The first reality programs broadcasted on TV (during the end of the 1950s) were game shows. It was something completely new to the audience that sat mesmerized at the opportunity to win enough money

to buy a house, a car, or even simply pay the rent (Brioux 79). Nevertheless, soon after its commencement dishonest practices were disclosed: some contestants on quiz shows were told the answers in advance. It was a serious issue indeed, all at once, nobody knew whether to believe the television or not. However, television has so much in common with the newspapers – the past and its sins are quickly forgotten and the audience is eager to see what comes next.

Gradually, new programs were being created, such as *The Dating Game* that was bringing together shy couples, or the hidden-camera show *Candid Camera*. The old gaming and talent shows were updated. But what really changed the whole concept of reality television, was the broadcast of *An American Family* from 1971 to 1973. It resembled a documentary in the sense that it followed the story of the Loud family for three years. It was groundbreaking in many aspects. First of all, it was for the first time on TV when somebody revealed so much of their private lives. Also, it was for the first time when the themes of divorce and homosexuality were openly discussed on television (Fordham Metz).

The audience was entertained by a wide range of programs throughout the 1980s but the majority of them was not special in any way. Another breakthrough eventually came in 1992 with *The Real World*. It was the first American reality TV show which worked with the idea of confining a group of unrelated people into one flat (or other kind of shared environment) for a certain period of time. The group of seven were locked in a New York City loft for three months and every step they made was recorded by an omnipresent camera (Fordham Metz). There was also a novelty that was introduced by *The Real World*. It was 'the confessional', a room with a stationary camera which the cast-member activated. The contestant spoke directly to the lens, in a mode somewhat akin to the diaristic or first-person documentary style (Edwards 56).

During the 1990s and the early 2000s there was a great trend for adventurous game shows, such as *Survivor* (1992) and *The Amazing Race* (2001). *Survivor* was inspired by Robinson Crusoe's adventure: several people are

transported to distant exotic island or country (Thailand, Borneo, Guatemala) and divided into tribes that compete with each other. They have to face various challenges and tasks that usually require many of manual skills and psychological resilience. The contestants are challenged to build their own shelters, procure food for themselves or do things they would never do in real life (playing with fire, eating cockroaches). *The Amazing Race* is a little bit more dynamic. Several couples are given a destination and in a limited amount of time they have to reach the destination. Throughout the competition, teams are given clues – by 'given' it is meant that they have to solve riddles, puzzles, rebuses or fulfill tasks, which are sometimes quite hideous, in order to get them.

The 2000s are then marked with the immense popularity of game shows and talent shows. The Dutch production company Endemol created tremendously successful reality programs, whose franchises were sold to dozens of countries, with the US being the largest client. Among the most profitable programs by Endemol are the franchises of *Idol*, *The Voice*, *Wipeout* and *Big Brother*.

The Czech Republic is not very keen on producing its own reality show programs as it is still much cheaper buying a franchise rather than creating a new program. Besides, Czech audience is still relatively small and Czech language is on no account an international one, thus it is improbable that the original Czech program would be as popular as the American shows are. In fact, Czech producers are not able to come up with a decent format yet. Not that they did not try – but all the programs they created either failed immediately in the ratings or were broadcasted for only a short period of time (*Vabank*, *Dům snů*). Some of the programs discussed above were or still are broadcasted on Czech TV either in their original American version (American versions are preferred to the British ones) with a Czech voice-over (*Survivor – Kdo přežije*, Prima COOL; *The Amazing Race – The Amazing Race*, Nova Cinema; *Wipeout – Drtivá porážka*, TV Barrandov) or bought as a franchise format and adapted for the local audience (*Idol – Super Star*, TV Nova; *The Voice – Hlas*, TV Nova; *The*

Dating Game – Rande, TV Nova; *Big Brother – Big Brother, Velký bratr*, TV Nova; *Fear Factory – Faktor strachu*, Prima COOL; *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader? – Jste chytřejší než páták?*, TV Nova; *1 vs. 100 – Jeden proti stu*, ČT 1; *Wife Swap – Výměna manželek*, TV Nova; *Weakest Link – Nejslabší, máte padáka!*, TV Nova).

2.3 Nielsen ratings

2.3.1 A brief history of Nielsen ratings and their position in the TV industry

The Nielsen ratings are specially developed rating systems that measure the viewership for particular programs, be it a talk show or series broadcasted on television. They are very helpful for the TV network itself, which can evaluate the results and decide whether the program is worth of broadcasting or not. Also, a TV station can use the ratings to adjust their broadcasting schedule or TV listings so it would be in accordance with various aspects. For example, the shows for children are aired in the afternoon, when the children come home from school, while the shows for adults are broadcasted in the evening when they want to relax after their full day of work. But the ratings have also a tremendous influence over world trade – miscellaneous companies advertise their products and services on TV and adapt their promotional methods according to the audience's composition (e.g., an advertisement for toys is usually broadcasted during a program for children, not during *NCIS*).

Although the ratings were originally intended to be used in the United States of America only, the system has been gradually taken over by other countries, including the Czech Republic. Thus, the Nielsen ratings are another American contribution to Czech television broadcasting, which is very helpful both for the TV channel itself and for the companies that advertise on the channel.

The Nielsen Company was founded in 1923 by an American electrical engineer Arthur Charles Nielsen. At first he wanted the firm to be engaged in

machinery performance assessments, but after the Great Depression in the 1930s he had to reorientate the company's interests to the business which slightly reminds of what was going to come a little later – Nielsen measured food and drug sales, using his own invention of the Nielsen Food and Drug Index. Somewhere around that time he also found out an invention from two technology professors, Robert Elder and Louis Woodruff. The invention was called "Audimeter" and Nielsen immediately knew that it had a great potential. He bought it from them, made some minor changes on it and patented it, having a clear vision that this could become the best instrument to measure the popularity of radio programs. And it indeed became one. In addition, Nielsen also established his own measurement equation, the Nielsen Radio Index ("A.C. Nielsen").

In the 1940s the measurement techniques were nothing like the ones today. Carefully selected samples of American radio listeners were asked to keep a diary about what they listened to during the day, for how long and how they liked the broadcasted program. Back then, it was not important who was listening to the radio, the main point was the fact that the radio was turned on and somebody was paying attention to it. Nielsen's employees at that time analyzed the diaries and the information gained from them was first sent to the radio station (to evaluate how successful the program was) and then to companies that advertised on the radio (to find out if the advertisement is heard by the target audience). This process was executed once a week.

Until the 1950s everything in the Nielsen Company revolved around the radio. Paradoxically, the change, which definitively connected the world of pure entertainment with the world of pure business, came only when Nielsen Sr. was ready to retire. In 1957, Nielsen's son, Arthur Charles Nielsen Jr., took over the company. The period of the 1950s is strongly associated with the steep rise of television technology and entertainment. For the Nielsen Company, it was natural to move on from the radio to the new and exciting means of broadcast ("A.C. Nielsen"). It did not mean though that the world of the radio was

abandoned.

As time passed, it became clear that the old habits had to be changed. The old method of measuring an audience's interest was, putting it mildly, highly unreliable. First of all, there was always a problem with the human factor when using the diary-writing method. Often, selected samples of people forgot to record their TV watching activities. When they eventually remembered that they should have written something down, they did not hesitate to write a made-up record lest be taken for a 'forgetful and unreliable grandma'. Sometimes, as the monitored individuals admitted later, they were even ashamed of watching certain programs. The grown-up men did not want to reveal that every morning they watch Disney animated series, because it made their breakfast more enjoyable. But this problem was soon to be solved.

A people meter – that was the name of the problem solver. Thousands of people meters were distributed into selected households and small boxes were placed close to TV sets, so they would better catch the signal coming from the TV (the same was applied to radio sets).

Besides the novelty that it was an electronic device, it finally took into account the demography. If a member of the family came to see a program, he or she took the remote control, pushed the right button on it (for each family member there was a specific button) and it was immediately clear not only what sort of program was being watched, but also by whom. At first, the data collected from the people meter (also still called an 'audimeter' through force of habit) were to be physically retrieved by Nielsen's employees at the end of every week, but gradually the data were stored by the device itself and then electronically sent instantly to Nielsen. Nowadays, as Nielsen collects an immense amount of data, the concern gathers information four times a year. Every three months the storage of the device is cleared and the measurement can start over again.

In fact, Nielsen ratings work with two aspects: 'the rating' itself and 'the share'. The rating is used for the audience's measurement in a wider sense (how

popular the program is in terms of the whole nation; various demographic features are taken into consideration), whilst the share deals with TV sets that are turned on during a specific program and at a particular time. For each aspect, there is a different way of calculation and equation ("Intro to Nielsen ratings: Basics and Definitions"):

Rating equation

$$100 * \text{households watching} \div \text{households who own TVs}$$

For instance, there are 10 000 000 people living in the Czech Republic, and, say, 3 385 000 households own a TV. On the air, there is a talk show *Všechnopárty* with Karel Šíp and it is being watched by 320 000 households. The demographic rate, in which Nielsen or their clients are interested in, is people aged from 15 to 54. Putting it all together then results in:

$$320\,000 \div 3\,585\,000 = 0.0892 * 100 = 8.9 \%$$

Which means that 8.9 % (the rating is referred to as simply '8.9', without the percentage symbol) of people that fall into the category of 15-54 who own the TV set and watched the program.

Share equation

100 * households watching a program ÷ households watching any TV in the show's timeslot

And once again, an example: TV News is broadcasted. This time, 500 000 households were watching the news, and 1 900 000 households were watching TV in general (not necessarily the same program). The equation has the following form:

$$10\,000\,000/500\,000 \div 10\,000\,000/1\,900\,000 = 0.26 * 100 = 26\%$$

Which means that out of all the TVs that were turned on during a particular time, 26% of them were tuned to the specific program that was in the center of interest.

Any person interested in both the rating and the share percentages in terms of television in the Czech Republic can visit www.nielsen-admosphere.cz, the official website of Nielsen Admosphere, which is the Czech affiliate of American Nielsen Media Research. The user will be then redirected to concrete results that are published on the website of the ATO (Association of Television Organizations).



Picture 1: A standard people meter: on the left is the contemporary touch screen device for identifying who is watching the TV (mother, father, children, and guests), on the right is the measuring box itself. There is also a controller included in the set, which is not depicted (retrieved from www.peoplemetry.cz).

2.3.2 Nielsen families

The Nielsen research-market concern does not actually reveal much about the criteria that are used for selecting the 'Nielsen families', as the samples of monitored people who own a TV are commonly referred to. To include every family which has a TV set into the rating system would not only be economically demanding but it also would be close to impossible to track down every TV set in the country. Nonetheless, what is certain is that each of the approximately five to twenty thousand households (the number depends on the population of the

country) is a representative of a specific demographic aspect that is particularly taken into account, be it gender, age, occupation, religion or area of living. The only aspect all the samples have in common is that they all possess a various number of TV sets and TV equipment. It is sure that at least one sample consists of a purely Catholic family, or a purely Orthodox one. At least one monitored subject should consist of an elderly couple and as a contrast to that there must be newlyweds. One sample should be represented by a university teacher and opposed to that there should be a family where someone works as a bricklayer. Thus, it never happens that a highly scientific program is being watched by nobody – from the five thousand households with different number of family members it is quite probable that someone will watch a documentary about anteaters and it will influence the ratings, after applying the Nielsen equation to it.

There is an interesting interview about being a Nielsen family on the website *About.com*. A TV drama expert and journalist Rachel Thomas was looking for this kind of family for quite a long time until she found out that her colleague Barb Crews was involved in the matter. In the interview Crews talks about different aspects of dealing with Nielsen:

"It was a knock on the door [that is how the company contacted us]. First of all I have to tell you that even though we are only 'two' people – we have a large house and many TVs. Each TV had to be monitored, even one that was only used for VCRs and DVDs in a guest room. Each cable box, VCR or DVD recorder had to be connected and monitored.

Each person in the household had a number, with an extra number for guests. Each time we would watch TV we would use the remote control to sign into who was watching TV. The monitoring box light would turn on for that particular person or persons. If you didn't use the remote to register when the TV was turned on the lights would start blinking and flashing until someone registered."

Of course, the family was paid for helping out with the research, but the

payment was rather surprisingly small – Crews admits that her family received "\$50 every six months for a total of \$200". So, however disappointing it may be for those interested in the matter, being a Nielsen family does not automatically mean that one does not have to work anymore (Thomas).

2.3.3 Nielsen ratings in the Czech Republic

For a long period of time, Czech television used the old American model for measuring the TV audience. The selected samples of viewers had diaries and recorded their viewing habits and experiences with the help of pen and paper. Sometimes, the research-company even used phone calls to selected household in order to record the data.

The first electronic ratings in the Czech Republic took place in the mid-90s, around the time when the commercial TV stations launched their broadcast. The ratings were and still are especially important for this sort of networks, as they fully rely on income from advertising. The greater the audience is, the higher is the price of advertising.

From 2002 was the research executed by a Czech market research company Mediaresearch, that was later bought by Nielsen Media Research (more specifically by its Dutch subsidiary) and on June 1st 2015 it definitely changed its name to Nielsen Admosphere ("TZ Mediaresearch mění jméno na Nielsen Admosphere"). In all the history of Czech television audience measurement, Nielsen's methods and technological innovations have always been used.

The research company always collaborates with the ATO (Asociace televizních organizací – Association of Television Organizations), a research company STEM/MARK and with the ČSÚ (Český statistický úřad – Czech Statistical Office) in particular ("Kdo stojí za českým výzkumem sledovanosti?"). The quartet finds each year around 12 000 households suitable for the measurement and after a profound scrutiny the number is gradually reduced to 5 000. At this point, Nielsen and other entities from the quartet send their employees to the most promising families and stop at the number of around 2

000. The actual number of monitored households is 1 850 which equals to 4 470 individuals ("Parametry aktuálního měření sledovanosti").

2.3.4 The future of Nielsen ratings

Over the years, Nielsen Media Research gained a monopoly in the branch of television viewer ratings research, proving to be highly professional and relatively accurate in its findings. In fact, it became a synonym for measuring the popularity of the program. As the audience is slowly but surely turning its attention to the online world of television (the audience is not turning away from television as such, the viewers are rather giving up on the television as the physical object), it is no surprise that recently, with the help of cookies, the company decided to expand its interests in World Wide Web research. After all, the Internet has, among many other privileges, the power of instant access. The Internet user can watch any kind of program, at any time at any place, there is no need to wait for the specific program, and, in most cases, there are almost no tiresome commercials. And that is something which TV cannot offer yet.

Nowadays, any video or live stream that is being played on the Internet, is quite likely to be monitored by Nielsen and the acquired data are further passed on to Nielsen's clients that use the data for their business plans. Earlier, the YouTube videos that captured some television program were usually already broadcasted on the TV before they were uploaded on the website. Currently, it is, for instance, possible to see a live broadcast from the Glastonbury music festival on YouTube. Four years ago, Twitch was introduced by Amazon as a new video streaming platform that is especially popular among video games players and is believed to become a new form of television in the future. Some of the television networks are already willing to offer a free of charge live online broadcasting. This kind of broadcast is practiced by Czech news channel ČT24 or the sport channel ČT sport belonging to the same network. Besides the live airing, Czech Television network provides the Internet user with a large archive, where he/she can access any program that he/she had missed previously. TV

Nova runs a platform that goes by the name of Voyo. If a user subscribes to a specific content, say, a series, he/she will be able to watch the series before it is even aired on television. This kind of service is, however, chargeable (it should be clarified that this is not the only service the platform offers, besides the possibility to watch the program in advance, there is also a huge database of movies to be seen). The last prominent television network in the Czech Republic, FTV Prima, runs an archive similar to the one Czech Television runs. Inspired by the American pattern, all Czech television networks also use their official websites as an additional source of information for the audience. Especially active in referring the viewers to the online source is TV Nova. In their TV News the news reporters (the people who are usually reporting from outdoor environments) and the news anchors (also known as 'the announcers'; the people that tell the news from the studio) encourage the audience to "go and visit tn.cz (the official website of TV Nova) for further information" or "go and see the shocking photos of an almost naked celebrity", bearing in mind that the more scandalous or enticing the spur is, the higher is the attendance of the website, and the higher are is the income from advertising – and the better for Nielsen.

From the short reflection on Czech television and its gradual transition to the World Wide Web provided above, it is quite clear why Nielsen puts so much effort into online monitoring of viewers' interests. Various technological devices of the 21st century such as cell phones, laptops and tablets have one great advantage over the good old television set – it is portable, in its most literal sense. Of course, there are now portable DVD players (that are slowly fading out of fashion) and some TV sets are not that gigantic in their size so they can be carried along. But the essential TV set cannot compete with all the pleasures that enable contemporary technological inventions. Even though the latest models of TV sets can be connected to the Internet, have 3D functions or rewind function, they are still confined to four walls and that remains their greatest disadvantage.

After a little investigation in Facebook's Privacy Policy section, one can easily find the information that Nielsen Media Research (together with Datalogix)

actively participates in one's social life on the website, monitoring the videos that are watched on the website and reporting it directly to Nielsen's head office. As Stephanie Mlot explains in the article from the website *PCmag*, this is all happening thanks to the SDK (which stands for "software development kit"), that Nielsen introduced in October 2013 (Mlot). She further explains the principle of such a device: if a user is signed into any kind of social website (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr), that reveals his age and gender (and nothing else, the research is purely anonymous), and watches a video on a browser-based video player (YouTube, Vimeo) or a branded app (Vine, Instagram), then nothing is easier for Nielsen than to enter the measurement data into their database. "At the end of the day, the company receives a file from Facebook reading: "For video #1234 on site #5678, 15 women aged 19 saw the video, 12 women ages 20 saw the video," clarifies Mlot. She also adds an interesting fact that "Nielsen and Facebook have been partners since 2009, when they began collecting data to provide marketers with information about Facebook users' purchase preferences", which leads to the conclusion that Nielsen found a way to track viewer's interests even without SDK that was not in action yet back in 2009, plus that was the time when the online television was not in such bloom as it is now. YouTube (owned by Google), the largest and most popular provider of online video and the possible future of online television, did not sign any contract with Nielsen yet, but YouTube representatives know very well that the targeted advertising achieved with a helping hand from Nielsen would improve its credibility in terms of advertisement. Today's YouTube advertisements are still somewhat disordered – when a child watches a video with *SpongeBob*, it is not unusual that he/she sees an advertisement for vitamin supplements for seniors. With Nielsen, YouTube, which can be considered as the 21st century version of television, hopes to improve its advertising power as it is the primary source of income for the company.

It should be also mentioned that Nielsen offers the possibility to log out of the online research, so the company will not be able to track down the user's activities performed on the computer or mobile device and base the further

advertising on them. On their website of online services www.nielsen-online.com, there is a section of Privacy Statement, where after clicking on "If you do not wish to participate in any of Nielsen's online measurement research, please click here to receive an opt-out cookie" Nielsen will not collect the data from the user any more.

3 PRACTICAL PART

3.1 Americanization of television

3.1.1 Americanization: Is the term accurate enough?

When it comes to the United States and the degree of its influence on other nations, it must be realized that, after all, America is just a melting pot. From the early beginnings of colonization, that took place within the 17th century, a wide range of nations mixed up. From Hispanics, Latinos, Africans, Slavs to Native Americans – every thinkable nation was more or less represented in the process of colonization. Along with them, the immigrants brought their own traditions, cuisines and all sorts of cultures that were, throughout historical milestones and turning points, either blended together or carefully kept in the original form. African culture successfully survived in America, even though African-Americans had been oppressed for a long time (being regarded as a nation of slaves). Their distinctive rhythmical feeling and later the gospel tradition enriched American culture in a great way. Peoples from Latin America brought the unmistakable Latino sound and cuisine with them. As all the immigrants settled down, they mixed up even more and more or less assimilated with the native way of life. Eventually, it became hard to distinguish who was who, and everyone was American in/her his own way. Some contemporary Americans are surprised to hear, that they actually come from, for example, a Slavic family, because all their lives they thought they were "just Americans". Some surnames adapted Americanized or "Britishized" forms and after almost three centuries, they became unrecognizable from their original form. All of this deepened the distance between the current America and its former, original ethnic stratification.

Therefore it is not correct to assert that Americanization is just the matter of, say, true Americans and that it has nothing to do with European or world traditions. It must be taken into account that basically every non-Native American has some ethnic connections outside the US. So from this point of

view, it would be more accurate to say that Americanization is a process of – in our case – cultural import that is run by the people that are not even Native Americans. And, as the percentage of Native Americans in the US is rather negligible – 1.7 % (Palmer), it is clear that practically almost no one in the US is purely American.

Although American culture may appear as rather fascinating to Europe, America very rarely comes up with anything new, it usually just builds on what has already been created; in many cases it builds on the traditions of the Old Continent. It can be observed on example of French fries: a typically French food gained a new life in McDonald's being served in a nice environment and with numerous sauces (which Frenchmen do not particularly appreciate, as the original recipe did not include any sauce). Jeans, also devised by non-American, became popular due to the advertising campaign in the US. And of course – the cinematograph, originally from France – the gadget that America changed in the way no one else ever did. The first widely acclaimed actor, whose stunning acting skills had an impact on all generations of actors, was not from America either. It was Charlie Chaplin, an Englishman. It should be acknowledged though, that many inventions that concern TV culture originate from the US, such as a huge amount of new formats and programs, already discussed Nielsen measuring system or Teleprompter (a special reading device that is implemented into a camera and being used mainly by news anchors, who do not have to learn the news by heart).

Dr. Wassim Dagherir, a Tunisian professor sums it up in a very accurate rhetorical question in his essay *Globalization as Americanization? Beyond the Conspiracy Theory*: "Has not the US been as much a consumer of foreign cultural influences as it has been a shaper of the world's entertainment and taste? Has not the US been a recipient as much as an exporter of global culture?" (Dagherir). Thus, a more accurate term for Americanization would be 'American-led globalization', as suggested by Beck (Beck et al. 111).

Nonetheless, this conclusion does not excuse the American producers

from applying their tactics of becoming the superpower of culture. There must be always enough respect for all kinds of customs and specific tastes of other countries. This might sound a little bit like an accusation to which America would have possibly retorted by saying 'We do not foist anything on anyone, other countries are accepting our culture without second-guessing.' And it is partially true, which is the topic that will be slightly touched upon further in the practical part.

Regarding Americanization, one more topic should not be forgotten: the cultural clustering. It can be described as a phenomenon when talented people gather in one specific place or country that is not their homeland and apply their talents there.

"Moviemaking also is prone to geographic clustering. Many cultural innovations and breakthroughs are spatially concentrated. If a good Italian Renaissance painter was not born in Florence, Venice, or Rome, he usually found it worthwhile to move to one of those locales. An analogous claim is true for Hollywood, which attracts cinematic talent from around the world, strengthening its market position" (Cowen 73). In other words, Cowen is speaking about "cultural clustering". Prague, being the capital of the republic, can be looked at as the Czech Hollywood, as it is the place where most of the movies are being created, both of native and foreign production, and consequently, there is an increased number of actors in one geographical point.

The movie business in America flourishes since many talented people that were misunderstood or underestimated in their native countries came to America and finally realized their dreams and ambitions. Alternatively, more of them started to work together and by sharing their talents they created something significant. Possibly, they just wanted to be in America for everyone was saying how good it is living and working there. America just spread its arms and accepted anything and anyone that would contribute to its flowering. Digressing from the movie making theme, it is just like with the Czech scientist Otto Wichterle: his invention or, to be more precise, a radical improvement of contact lenses was not supported nor by Czechoslovakian scientific community neither

by the government and hence he sold his patent to American investors who made use of it. And going back to the movies, a Czech movie director Miloš Forman could not bear the communist cultural restrictions and moved to the USA, where he did not have to overcome any cultural obstacles and being completely free (except for needing to fund his projects), he became one of the most successful directors of all time.

However, there is one more reason of clustering. The US has many things to offer: the impressiveness of its surroundings and nature (not every country can be proud of such a variety of climatic zones: America has deserts, snow mountains, oceans, dense woods, overpopulated urban areas); if some kind of stage property or technical device is needed, everything can be quickly and easily ordered. And probably the most important aspects that America has to offer: creative freedom, which is a bait many artistic people cannot resist, and money, which is a bait (almost) no one cannot resist.

3.1.3 Europe and its attempts to resist Americanization

The European continent is for the United States of America a very appealing business territory, even with the boom of piracy downloading and occasional economic crises. A whole array of movies are more profitable overseas than at home. In 2013, the film *Runner, Runner*'s income was 19.3 million dollars in the US and 43.4 million gross overseas. *The Smurfs 2* (a franchise originally from Belgium) had domestic earnings of 71 million, whilst the sum worldwide stopped at the figure of 276.5 million (Acuna). *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a popular movie based on a book, made approximately 81.7 million in the US in the opening weekend. Only six European countries (UK, Germany, Spain, Russia, Italy and France) earned a sum that is very close to the one earned in the US – 75.8 million dollars (Child). Earlier, the situation was different: producers focused mainly on domestic sales and the overseas, including the European market, was seen as secondary. However, European countries soon realized that there is no other country like America in terms of audiovisual

business.

It is not only because of the attractive story-telling and setting of the American pieces of work that Europeans are so keen on watching them – they turn on the TV and go to a movie theater to see something different from their daily routine, to be at least for two hours a part of the new world because many of them do not feel satisfied with their lives. And even though they might see America through rose-colored glasses they can still see it as a country of their dreams. European movie and TV production is much less productive and the audience does not have as much choice when wishing to see something relatively cheap for them, yet at the same time a real spectacle. Even though there is planned the screening of a European movie in the theater, the movie association has to contemplate that the translation of, say, a Swedish motion picture (it does not matter if it is a translation with subtitles or translation by means of dubbing) is more expensive than the translation of an English-speaking movie and moreover, the translator or interpreter is harder to find. The reason is obvious: not many people speak the languages that are considered to be rather exotic, whereas English is the global and the most learned language in the world. It is just another reason why are the movie theaters more inclined to English-speaking pieces of work.

Concerning the deceleration of Americanization, EU and consequently, the Czech Republic, is not being passive, it is trying to defend itself, for instance, by setting quotas. It would be naive to think that the US would not react to Europe's unwillingness to accept some of the products the North American continent produces. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) occasionally protests against regulations that would restrict the import of American movies to Europe, especially to France. The US art export depends very significantly on Europe and thus, American negotiators promised to remove many trade barriers against European goods, but they asked in return that the Europeans – especially the French -- extend an impartial treatment to American movies and remove the special taxes and quotas (Daghrir). As an aside, France is quite patriotic even outside the cultural field: most French people strongly

refuse to use English in conversations with foreigners. The author of the thesis witnessed this herself when visiting several French cities.

From the American geographical point of view, it is not necessary to go so far, though. Canada, a country that is geographically, socially and culturally very close to the United States, also preserves its traditions and encourages patriotism because of the possible infiltration of the questionable American taste. According to an essay by Doresa Banning that deals with the theme of 'cultural imperialism', Canada defends herself quite forcefully: "Canada has long maintained some curbs on sales of American publications and textbooks and on the reach of American radio. In April of 1998, Canadian regulators mandated that at least 35% of music played on local radio stations must be Canadian, with the goal of raising the content percentage to 40% over the ensuing five years. France and Canada have passed laws prohibiting satellite dissemination of American content into their citizens' homes. Islamic states, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and Iran, have banned the import and use of satellite dishes or decoders" (Banning). The US also defends their interests. In 1989 began quite an aggressive campaign against the European quotas that served as the means of preserving European traditions and encouraging the countries of the Old Continent to prefer native production to the American one. Americans regarded the quotas as highly biased and took legal actions against it. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) then set a series of new rules for the American-European trade.

What many consider to be unfair and what causes the most serious controversies and even waves of anti-Americanism is the fact that there is, broadly speaking, barely any balance of television culture. American programs and movies, after being presented to the wide American public, are sold for low prices and in a huge amount mainly to Europe. "One study of European television, for example, showed that 80 percent of program imports were feature films; of these, 53 percent were American. The percentage of American movies shown on European television screens grew from 46 percent to 53 percent between 1988 and 1991. In Norway, 100 percent of films showed on the

commercial television station TV Norge during the same three years were American; Sweden's TV3 broadcast American movies 81 percent of the time. Meanwhile, the percentage of domestic movies shows on the same stations in that period declined approximately 10 percent" (Crothers 120). The situation is very similar with the Czech Republic. In the everyday prime time only (7 pm to 11 pm), the most successful commercial stations TV Nova and FTV Prima usually air at least three programs and almost regularly, at least two of them are American (be it American programs – especially series and films, formats or franchises). On Saturday and on Sunday, it is not unusual to spot exclusively American programs in the primetime. As for the daytime, the American programs usually represent 40% to 70% of TV schedule of both commercial networks (TV Nova: July 18th 2015; day-long schedule: 19 entertainment programs – 12 of them are American, the rest of local or other origin; FTV Prima: July 20th 2015; day-long schedule. 19 entertainment programs – 7 of them are American, the rest of local or other origin, especially British, German and Danish; FTV Prima is, in fact, being praised for broadcasting many European programs).

It does not work vice versa. European movies and licensed shows (except for a few British franchises including *Strictly Come Dancing*, which was then transformed into American *Dancing with the Stars* and Czech *Když hvězdy tančí*) do not penetrate American households in any noticeable manner. Some television series are remade for American audiences, such as the British *Life on Mars* or Denmark's *The Killing*. Cowen elaborates on it on the example of the movie *Rumble in the Bronx* as follows: "Non-American movies, when they pursue foreign markets, must strive for universality as well. The Jackie Chan Hong Kong movie *Rumble in the Bronx* was marketed in the United States with success. The producers, however, cut parts of the movie to appeal to American audiences. All of the action sequences were kept, but the relationship of Chan with the co-star was diminished, in part because the woman (Anita Mui) was a star in Asia but not in the United States, and in part because the relationship was based on the 'Chinese' values of obligation and loyalty, rather than on a Western sense of erotic romance" (Cowen 94). Beck looks at the topic from a slightly

different point of view, but still makes a good point: "The Chinese, for example, have bemoaned the fact that their leading directors (including Zhang Yimo and Chen Kaige) make films that exoticize (or in Said's [1978] terms 'orientalize') Chinese culture and history for Western audiences. The most recent example is Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which won many international prizes, but reportedly was unsuccessful in mainland China. In short, Chinese films are being tailored to American sensibilities in order to gain prestige and sales" (Beck et al. 37).

Paul Rixon notices that the United States producers act cautious enough with the Old Continent and adapt their broadcast to a more suitable form in order of not being too intrusive. The most popular and influential networks such as ABC, NBC and CBS are "being American full-time" when broadcasted on the territory of the USA, whereas in Europe are the same channels aired with slight changes in order to suit better the regional specifics and possible language barriers. A good example of this adaptation is the music channel MTV, which has its variations all over Europe (Rixon 164-173). Thus, the Czech MTV partly broadcast in English and partly in Czech.

Channels from overseas or non-English speaking channels are accessible only through cable TV or Internet and are not met with much of an interest from the American audience.

But what is also interesting is the fact that in numeric terms most of the world's movies come from Asia, not from the United States. It is not unusual for India to release between 800 and 900 commercial films a year, compared to about 250 from the United States (Cowen 75). As an aside, the music industry is similarly diversified and the most popular music comes from 'The big four': the USA, United Kingdom, Sweden and Japan; other countries lag badly behind.

3.1.4 What lies behind the success of American television and motion picture production

The television and movie business plays an important role in the economy of the United States of America. It is partially supported by government subsidies and partially (and mainly) by private business companies (Warner Bros, Sony Motion Pictures, Pixar). A small entertainment tax is also derived, which is practiced in California as the heart of the worldwide motion picture production since the beginning of the 20th century. In 2014, the website *Vizworld* published a list of the most profitable business in the United States. The result is quite noteworthy:

Top Ten Most Profitable Businesses in America, as reported by Powerlytics
(Meyers)

1. Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing
2. Support activities for Mining
3. Oil and Gas Extraction
- 4. Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries**
5. Telecommunication
- 6. Broadcasting (except Internet)**
7. Other Information Services
8. Social Assistance
9. Accommodation
10. Pipeline Transportation

It can be clearly seen that the importance of the entertainment industry in the US is not at all insignificant. No other country in the world can even come close to the earnings of Hollywood, its daughter companies and other entities that have to deal with broadcasting and entertainment. According to the website *Statista* that gathers statistics from any business sector imaginable, in 2013 the cultural revenue for the US added up to 20.133 billion GBP ("Filmed entertainment revenue"). Compared to the revenue of Japan (4.364 billion GBP)

and the United Kingdom (3.939 billion GBP), the dominance of the United States is even more evident. However, it must be pointed out that the final amount of around 20 billion is not the income only from sold tickets or merchandise. The largest percentage of the total earnings is made up of advertisements.

Hyped by protectionist movements and national feelings of pride, experts (economists and movie-critics from Europe mainly) are trying to understand what really lies behind the success of American visual entertainment production. It is basically needless to say that almost everything coming from American movie and TV production has an appealing nature. A wide range of action and special effects, likeable characters, a well-written screenplay – these are just a few clues of the elements that make the result satisfactory. As far as the screenplay is concerned, the Institute for European Policy expressed an opinion, that American producers put much more effort and finances into it (10% from the budget is invested into the script and all the matters connected with it), while the producers from the Old Continent do not consider the script to be the essential key to a successful product (screenplay investment barely reaches 1%). Besides, American business vision takes into account huge (and aggressive, in a way) marketing and advertising expenses, counting up to 50% of the total budget ("Zboží, nebo kulturní hodnota?").

Since the US produces many motion pictures, it can afford to set a lower selling prices for them, which is a real bargain for Europe, that prefers to buy cheaper American programs (that usually prove to be popular among the audience afterwards) instead of creating their own programs or buying the ones from domestic producers, success of which is not at all guaranteed. Moreover, most of European TV programs are made and aired mainly for the local audience, which means that a viewer from any other European country would not even watch the program ("Zboží, nebo kulturní hodnota?"). A TV viewer from Germany would not be interested in a Czech talk-show because first of all, Czech is not an international language like English so it would be highly unlikely that the German would understand what the talk is about, and secondly he would not

know who the guests are (in contrast with the American talk-shows, where it is absolutely common to invite an internationally famous and acknowledged actor, musician or celebrity in general to talk about things everybody has some knowledge about – new album, new film, new partner). The lower number of viewers leads to lower income from advertisements that in consequence increases the overall production costs. The European TV stations that do not have enough financial resources for making their own programs then simply give preference to American production ("Zboží, nebo kulturní hodnota?").

Besides, there is a certain tendency of Czech contemporary TV that was originally invented by American TV businessmen: a channel buys a package of several programs and it is bought for a lower price than the network would have paid for a single program. Czech networks Prima COOL, Prima LOVE (both belong to FTV Prima) and Fanda (possessed by TV Nova) have packages of sport programs, crime scene investigation series, animated programs or reality shows.

3.1.5 A brief final contemplation on Americanization

Many Americans believe that Americanization is almost a natural process that does not need much of justification. Already at school, American children are taught to love their country and treasure its values and traditions. Abraham Lincoln himself stated that "America is the last best hope of the Earth" and Bill Clinton with George bush liked to describe America as "the guiding light of the world" (Beck et al. 15).

Looking at Americanization from the United States' perspective, it is not America's fault that the world is accepting its culture so easily and even cordially. For Europe, it is much easier to become 'Americanized' than 'Europeanized', as America is only one country while Europe is a palette of almost sixty various countries and cultures, that would eventually mix with one another and the result would be a profound cultural chaos. Another fact that contributes to the success of American products in Europe is that Americans are amazingly good in

producing appealing and seductive products. Besides, American promotion methods are very effective, which can be easily exemplified by means of movie posters: a poster of Czech movie is very likely to be dark and not very attention-grabbing, whilst a poster of American piece of work is usually very conspicuous, colorful and generally much more elaborated. Possibly it is hard to believe it, but America is rather passive in imposing its culture on the rest of the world. Of the top 100 companies in the United States, almost none derive more than 30% of their profits from outside the American continent (Jaja).

Of course, European producers would like their work to be respected overseas so the process of cultural exchange would be more balanced, but what may seem quite easy on paper is not always feasible in the real world of television and movie making. Even the most elaborated promotion plan made by the smartest promotions manager does not guarantee the desired success, for American TV programs and movies may simply overshadow the European piece (no matter how good the piece is, according to critics), albeit it was profitable in its home continent and was acclaimed by critics. The American audience is more likely to choose the movie created in their own country and so do the Europeans, regarding their own countries. "The Hollywood advantage is concentrated in one very particular kind of moviemaking: films that are entertaining, highly visible and have broad global appeal. The typical European film has about 1 percent of the audience of the typical Hollywood film and this differential has been growing. American movies have become increasingly popular in international markets, while European movies have become less so" (Cowen 75).

Turning attention to Americanized domestic products, it must be realized that the effort to be American-like is not always intentional. As Tyler Cowen points out, artists can lose their creativity in certain genres if they learn too much about other approaches. Beck, the Grammy-winning musician, made a very accurate point by saying: "You can't write a pure country song any more. You can't write a pure Appalachian ballad. Because we live in a world where we've all heard speed-metal, we've all heard drum-and-bass, we've all heard old-school

hip-hop. Even if you're not influenced by it, or you're not using elements of it, they're in your mind" (Cowen 51). This also means that everything may be predisposed to being compared to America. In the Czech Republic a purely original piece very rarely pops up that was not inspired by foreign work, which consequently leads the viewers to trying to compare it to the original foreign piece and creates polemic about the qualities.

Interestingly enough (and for anti-Americanism supporters luckily enough), the Americanization exists even in America herself. It can be observed that the cultures among the single states blend together, which is especially characteristic for California and its neighbors. For instance, thanks to television, specific accents that are typical for the given area start to take over words and phonetic variations from a different state, no matter how far they are from themselves. Cowen describes this process as a "homogenizing tendency" (Cowen 67) rather than "Americanization", but a little more accurate is the second term since America is just as manifold in nationalities as Europe is.

3.2 Concrete examples of American TV innovations applied to Czech television

3.2.1 End credit promotions

Most audience members are not particularly interested in the final titles of the program. Except for individual cases, when someone may like the ending song or is too lazy to reach for the remote control to turn off the TV or to change the channel. But mostly, the titles in the ending serve only as background. No special attention is paid to them. And maybe that is the reason why some people are surprised, when they are told that even in the final part of the broadcast America succeeds in applying its inventions on foreign broadcast.

The point, as explained by Paul Rixon (Rixon 113) is, that the United States invented a thing called End Credit Promotions (abbreviated as ECP). It is an invention commonly seen during the final part of the program, where the

picture is divided into two parts. One side depicts a trailer with selected scenes from the next episode (usually the most dramatic and ambiguous sequences to keep the audience in ardent anticipation regarding what will eventually happen), and the other (usually of the same screen width) displays the cast-list and titles. Naturally, everything is accompanied by not so prominent music. If played too loud, it would completely scatter the watcher's attention. The average viewer cannot cope with so many activities at once. On Czech TV ECP is frequently applied to the series: *Ordinace v růžové zahradě*, *Ulice* and *Svatby v Benátkách*.

Rixon also mentions a different type of this innovation. A show is broadcasted, and somewhere on the edge of the screen appears a small box with moving pictures (or only moving figures without a box). It is a trailer for the next scheduled program that has nothing to do with the current program, and it attempts to keep the audience by the TV set and continue their watching through the adverts (Rixon 113). This invention is frequently by Czech commercial TV stations Nova and Prima, who do not like to use any boxes and use the more contemporary form of moving figures only.

3.2.2 TV advertising

For a long time, there were no commercial breaks on television. The reason was obvious: a TV set in its very beginnings was thought to be almost a miracle, the number of families that owned a TV was not remarkably high and the target audience for commercials was equally low. However, as the popularity of the device grew, the number of viewers rose along with it. Advertisements printed on paper and broadcasted on the radio could no longer measure with the appealing TV advert. Even though the picture was black and white and rather unclear, it was the start of a new advertising revolution that thoroughly altered the whole world of trade. Gradually, the commercials became much more sophisticated and they proved to be an effective means of attracting the potential purchasers.

When it comes to connection between America and TV advertising, The

United States changed the TV commercials in a great way. As already described in the theoretical chapter 2.3, Nielsen ratings gave various business companies the possibility of targeting possibly interested audience members by means of television advertising. Thanks to Nielsen research, it is possible to find out who is watching the program and commercial breaks contained in the program and in what time do the adults, seniors and children mostly watch TV. The commercials can consequently be time-shifted and variously adapted in order to suit the audience's composition and interest.

Czech channel Czech Television (ČT) and its subdivided channels ČT 2, ČT :D/Art, ČT sport and ČT 24 are the only ones in the Czech Republic that have a very limited amount of commercials. The whole group of channels is supported by the government and each citizen of the country has to pay a television license fee (135 CZK in 2015). A large part of these fees is then divided into employees' wages, the creation of new programs, purchases of franchises or investments to keep the channel running smoothly. As the internal regulation claims, if a commercial does appear on any of the channels, the product or service must be somehow connected to ČT itself. That is why a commercial for beverage or perfume never appears on this kind of network. The time assigned for these commercials cannot run over 0.5% of the daytime broadcasting ("Zákonný rámec"). The other (commercial) channels, however, cannot count on license fees and have to find other methods to turn a profit. And the most profitable from them is advertising.

It must be mentioned though, that despite the criticism of the excess of commercials on Czech television, the intervention of adverts is definitely milder than in the United States. It can be better understood by the means of a simple example: one episode of an ordinary Czech series lasts one hour and fifteen minutes. Two commercials break in: one after 25 minutes from the start of the program and the other one 20 minutes before the ending. Moreover, according to the regulation from the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting that was brought into force on June 1st 2013, the volume of commercials must be

tuned down by the broadcasting company. Naturally, the advertisers were not particularly happy with this new regulation and the broadcasting companies, worried about the potential outflow of the advertisers, came with quite a smart solution: the volume of the movies, series and other programs were lowered, while the volume of commercials was raised (Eyem and Troušilová).

The situation with commercials over the Atlantic is different. "According to new data from Nielsen, commercial time for an hour-long TV broadcast was about 13 minutes and 25 seconds in 2009. In 2013, Americans endured 14 minutes and 15 seconds of televised ads. And if we're taking cable, forget about it. In 2009, commercials comprised 14 minutes and 27 seconds. Four years later, we're talking nearly 16 minutes of being pestered to buy a product or service" (Gedeon). Rixon, who scrutinizes Americanization of British TV, says that: "The British channel Sky One, which tends to follow an American commercial pattern, has about five advert break per hour, after 6 minutes, 25 minutes, 44 minutes and 55 minutes into the program and one at the end before the next program begins; these are breaks which suit the narrative flows found in American programs" (Rixon 113). American adverts are also louder than the European ones.

3.2.3 Sit-coms

For a long period of time, sit-coms (situation comedies) did not garner much acceptance in the Czech Republic. In the 1990s, with the rise of commercial TV stations, namely TV Nova, the audience got to know American sit-coms such as *Married-with Children*, *Friends*, *ALF* and many others. Closer to the millennium the popularity of those specific American TV series diminished, for there was a mighty influx of South American soap operas (*Muñeca brava*, Czech: *Divoký anděl*; *Yo soy Betty, la fea*, Czech: *Ošklivka Betty*). Nevertheless, time showed that the North American model was for Czechs more appealing and comprehensible in terms of morality as well as lifestyle.

Sadly enough, the native production of situation comedies has been

permanently falling. The problem is solely in the genre, as the regular TV series made by Czech artists do have at least decent ratings but they are not very much acclaimed by critics (especially when talking about the series created by commercial stations). Sit-coms are generally more demanding concerning the screenplay: every uttered sentence should ideally end with a punchline or at least witty remark, the unity of place must be adhered to and the writer has to work with a limited amount of characters. It was also at first unusual for Czech viewers to hear a laugh-track during the program, as Czech people are in general prone (and proud) to find the jokes themselves and laugh afterwards; they do not like when someone basically tells them when to laugh. And that is why the series *Hospoda* (1996), considered to be the first proper Czech sit-com, did not have a laugh-track. Yet there has not been a single sit-com that would reach at least a mild level of popularity (they had only one season, were abandoned already after the pilot episode or had extremely low ratings) until 2008 and the introduction of *Comeback*. John Vorhaus, an American screenwriter with great experience, collaborated on this multi-episodic show with rather inexperienced Czech script screenwriters and the outcome was more than satisfying: every episode of the first season had more than one million viewers. The American model of entertainment finally seemed to work. However, *Comeback* with its laugh-track did not possess the qualities of the best American sit-coms, but it still has been a decent attempt.

Unfortunately, the sit-com is a very idle genre on the Czech TV. Czech writers are not able to come with something, which is for the success of the sit-com absolutely essential: humor. It almost seems as if the writers are afraid of being too funny. Of course, nobody talks the way the characters do in the situation comedies, it is improbable that every utterance ends with a joke or witty remark. But Czech producers need to realize that sit-com is not the real life and they have to avoid cheap jokes and an excessive use of black humor.

3.2.4 Talk-shows

As many other types of program, a talk-show also originated in the

United States of America. In fact, it is even one of the oldest kinds of television entertainment, for the first talk-shows that went on the air were broadcasted in the mid-1950s – at the same time when the first TV sets started to be a modern household item. Throughout the century, they did not alter much. The main point of the show remained the same: to invite a famous or at least a remarkable person, seat him/her in a (supposedly) truly comfortable couch and ask him/her various questions.

In recent years American producers thought of advancements that would somehow make the shows more attractive. After all, with such a wide range of channels and programs, starting with big-ticket movies filled with the newest special effects and ending with dramatic (American) football matches, a show based solely on simple dialogue has certain difficulties to compete and survive. And so little games and sketches were added to the basic idea of the program. Conan O'Brien started reviewing video games (*Clueless Gamer*) and shot many outdoor videos, Ellen DeGeneres began with scaring the guests or playing word and *yes-or-no* games with them in order to lead the conversation in a more appealing way, and most recently Jimmy Fallon started a lip-synching competition with his invited guests. Thus, the talk-show became more enticing not only for the viewers, but also for the celebrities who found the appearance on such programs as one of the best (if not the best) and easiest ways of self-promotion. The Russian talk-show *Vechernyi Urgant* ("*Evening Urgant*") did not resist the American influence at all: 70% the show's time is occupied by sketches and thematic videos. Czech talk-shows have not taken on this trend yet, but Jan Kraus has a special section, where he discusses the events that happened during the week.

The inspiration from the United States can even be spotted in the look of the backdrops behind the hosts. While Ellen DeGeneres's backdrop depicts Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles and the photo behind David Letterman reminds viewers of New York, the first Czech host that tried to create the effect of a window, was Jan Kraus in his *Uvolněte se, prosím*. Paradoxically enough, the

background did not show Prague, but a photo of skyscrapers that are not very typical for Central Europe. Only after Jan Kraus switched channels from ČT1 to Prima FTV, did the background finally change to a panorama of Prague and Bratislava Castles.

The last visible imitation of the American model is the presence of a live band, which accompanies the audience's reactions or the guests themselves.

3.2.5 All-news channels

The first 24-hour broadcasting TV news channel in the world was the American CNN. Soon after it commenced the broadcast, television networks all over the world followed the example and the Czech Republic was no exception. The 24-hour news channel is not literally broadcasting the news all the time without a break. A big batch of fresh news usually enters the broadcast once in an hour; a smaller batch of news does so every half an hour. Between the news programs, there are various sorts of discussions, analyses, or reflection on manifold topics. Also, there is a line at the bottom of the screen that provides the viewer with brief news.

The first Czech all-news channel was ČT 24 and up to the present, it is the only channel of this kind in the Czech Republic. At the beginning, there were some doubts about the ability to broadcast 24/7, bearing in mind how small the viewer community (in comparison with the American or Russian ones) in the Czech Republic is. Though, it must be admitted that the new channel was not at such a risk of withdrawal from the broadcast after all, as the channel belongs to the federal TV company Česká televize. Still there were many skeptical opinions about the appeal of the broadcast, it was a challenge indeed. The country is small and relatively poor on local news; there were also doubts that the foreign news would engulf the national news. During ten years the channel found a way to balance the proportion of information. ČT 24 came up with huge range of programs (*Hyde Park*, *Události*, *komentáře*, *Studio 6*, *Horizont*, *Newsroom*, *@online*), discussions, historical flashbacks (*Retro*) and some traditional and updated ones (weather forecast, traffic reports with graphic up-to-date graphics).

Czech Television (Česká televize) definitely improved its news-delivery reputation as their 24-hour subordinate channel proved to be a very reliable source of information and became a synonym for objectivity. According to a survey, eight in ten people consider ČT 24 to be very trustworthy (Divíšek). As all subordinate channels that broadcast on Czech TV though, no one can expect the channel to be watched by hundreds of thousands of viewers. In fact, ČT24 experiences a huge boost of audience's interest. In 2006 the audience share was only 0.31 while in the last year it was already 4.34, which is among all the similar European channels the second best result (Divíšek).

3.3 The reality show as the most popular show on Czech television

'All reality shows are basically fake. When you have a camera on you, you are not going to act yourself.' (Paris Hilton)

The term 'reality show' or 'reality TV' is slightly misleading. Essentially, it should depict reality. There are no professional actors, only more or less ordinary people – that is true. But at the same time there is a screenplay that controls the contestants' lives, which is not so real anymore. Without the script, the show would be a stack of boredom only and it is probable that no one would actually watch it. The producers of the show know that very well and so they ask the script writers to create such a situation where the contestants would argue with each other or the individual contestant would be forced to do something he or she despises. Edwards remembers the term that Erik Barnouw, an American television and radio historian, applied to this sort of phenomenon – 'provoked action' (Edwards 52). In the celebrity reality show *The Simple Life* was its main protagonist Paris Hilton even asked to 'act dumb so it would be interesting' and so she pretended to have no idea what Walmart is: "*What is Wal-Mart? Do they sell wall stuff?*" (Edwards 58). The contestants simply do not behave naturally. There is a pressure upon them as millions of people watch their adventure, there is the possibility of winning a great prize, and there is always the thought 'I may never be on the TV again' which pushes them into unnatural behavior so they would attract the audience to vote for their victory later in the show. Another

factor that does not contribute much to the 'reality feeling' is that the footage material is considerably shortened. Of course, it would be nonsense to air something different than the highlights of the events that happened in the show. No one would want to see twenty-four hours of footage. But the problem is that the editors manipulate with contestants' personalities and it is not always deliberate. There is footage of a wild argument between, say, just imaginary contestants Chloe and Ethan and it was broadcasted, but the subsequent reconciliation was not shown to the audience. So the show lets the viewers think what a beast Chloe is and what a good man Ethan is and, sadly, Chloe is due to this unlucky editor cut later eliminated from the show. As for Ethan, he could not wish for anything better. And that is the essential Catch-22 of the reality show.

Since reality shows appeared in the Czech Republic, there is one thing that they have in common: in most cases, only their first season is the most successful one. Which is quite in contrast with America. According to Nielsen ratings, *American Idol* (it should be mentioned here again that the program is not originally from the US, but from the Dutch production company Endemol who is led by an Englishman though; but interestingly enough, not only Czech producers decided to buy the franchise only after the American version made it big and proved to be worth broadcasting; besides, it is generally assumed that if the program succeeded in America it can succeed almost anywhere else, for America is endowed with possibly the most varied viewer's community and it can be estimated what kind of a viewer is most interested in the program – taking into account gender, age, occupation), this singing competition with strong influence of reality show was most successful in its fifth season (Kenneally). The first season of the Czech variation (*Česko hledá Superstar*, later *Česko-Slovenská SuperStar* and now simply *SuperStar*) was by far the most successful one, its final having been watched by 3.34 million viewers. The last, sixth season final was in fact rather a failure with its 826 000 viewers ("Porotu SuperStar rozšíří Vytisková"). But despite of this low number TV Nova still decided to continue and the seventh season is due to begin in September (the producers of *American Idol*, contrarily, plan to quit the contest after its fifteenth season).

There are reality shows that are not successful in the Czech Republic, even though they were (and some of them still are) very popular in their country of origin, the United States. A good example of an ambitious reality show project originally taken from the American model is *Vem si mě!* (US: *The Bachelor*). The plot of the game is partially based on the standard dating show principle: the male protagonist (usually a wealthy man; the US, however, prefers a more average man) has to choose his ideal female partner from a given number of contestants (usually from ten to twenty-five). The women compete among themselves in various ways to prove that they are better than the other competitors. They do not actually fight physically or harm each other in order to gain the bridegroom's attention and favor, but rather try to show their best qualities in the direct contact with the man (kissing contest, cooking contest), strive to appear in a good light (singing contest) or do the things they would never do before (racing games) – anything just to make the man like them. Some of the contests in the Czech version are exactly the same as the ones from the original American show. This concerns mostly indoor games, even the seemingly most childish ones, such as Kim's game (one has to remember what he has seen or heard and then reproduce it aloud, the person who remembered the biggest amount of things is a winner), pillow fights, Play Station gaming and so on, while the others are adapted to local facilities – if the contestants are asked to go to Dinosaur World, then of course, no one is going to fly to Los Angeles, but the closest suitable park is found or a completely new alternative is made up.

ABC is currently airing already the 19th season of *The Bachelor*, whilst the first and at the same time the last Czech adaptation suffered a rather embarrassing situation: after the game ended, many of rumors spread concerning the plausibility of the bridegroom (Michal Červín). Later, the defamation proved to be legitimate, as Červín was sentenced to eight years in prison for embezzlement. Hearing that, Czech people like to say 'Well, this is so much like the Czech Republic! Everything is always a lie and you cannot believe anybody. And one will do everything just to be on television.' But what may soothe them

a little bit is the fact that even the American dating show was not spared of a scandal: in 2009 on the 13th season, the bridegroom proposed to one contestant but afterwards he revealed that he was actually in love with the runner-up. However unlikely this may seem, this episode was viewed by 17 million viewers and had the best ratings and share in the whole history of the program (Elavia).

Some of the American reality shows also suffered from other type of slander – Frankenbiting. This term is used for the stealthy action when bits of conversation which happened during the show are converted into mp3 format and then applied to a completely different conversation. Another version of Frankenbiting includes mixing up two different video footages. This means of reality show manipulation is quite hard to prove, but *The Bachelor* had bad luck. Its contestant Megan Parris confessed that her conversations with other contestant were edited (Miles). Leigh H. Edwards noticed even a more shocking manifestation of Frankenbiting: "Producers on *Joe Millionaire* edited in a different audio clip to make it sound like bachelor Evan Marriott and contestant Sarah Kozler were having sex in the woods, when that was not true" (Edwards 31). Luckily, there have been no cases of Frankenbiting on Czech reality shows yet. Or at least, they have not been proven yet.

Of course, everything concerning the broadcast of reality program must be in accordance with the license that is an integral part of the copyright. The license obliges the purchaser of the program to stick to certain rules. For example, the graphics, logotype or theme song must not be altered. As for the price of the license, this information is purely internal and the TV networks in the Czech Republic are not very obliging to reveal the numbers. But for the sake of illustration, TV Prima paid 150 million crowns for the copyright of the reality show *VýVolení* (Kopecký), about which this thesis does not discuss as its original concept comes from Hungary.

As an aside, the whole idea of locking a group of people into a confined space does not originate in the United States or the United Kingdom, as many people tend to think, but from the Netherlands. But the truth is that it the

franchise would not be such a sensation if it had not been aired and hugely promoted in the United States of America.

It sometimes happens on Czech television that two similar reality shows or game shows run at the same time, which is in the United States absolutely common, but with the amount of American TV networks, it is practically inevitable. In the Czech Republic this kind of situation often occurs due to the rivalry between two largest commercial networks in the country, TV Nova and FTV Prima (previously TV Prima). Just like in America there were *The Voice* (NBC) and *American Idol* (FOX) aired in the same season, there were *Talentmania* (Nova) and *Czechoslovakia's Got Talent* (Prima) in the Czech Republic. In recent years both Nova and Prima realized it would be better to extend the competition to Slovakia and thus entice not only more contestants but also more viewers (and gain more profit). It is practicable as both countries' cultures and languages do not differ much. Unlike America though, it is rather rare on Czech TV that two similar TV projects exist next to each other. Usually one of them has to be abandoned by the network and is aired only once, as it is not as successful as the rival's program is. *Talentmania* had to be cancelled although it had decent ratings, but *Czechoslovakia's Got Talent* had simply more appeal, better script and more likeable contestants and it is aired up till now. It almost seems like the two similar programs cannot simply exist on Czech TV concurrently, as the same issue happened several years ago with *Big Brother* and *VyVolení*. While the first one is almost a forgotten matter now, the second one is still remembered as a program that changed the way Czech people watched TV. In hindsight, it is obvious why the world famous *Big Brother* did not make it big in the Czech Republic: it was the choice of contestants. Most of them were personalities that Czech people could not identify themselves with. There were bodybuilders and models among them, while the contestants of *VyVolení* were not only ordinary people but also the viewers themselves had the possibility to decide who should enter the contest.

At present, the most popular reality program on Czech TV is a family

reality show *Výměna manželek* (originally *Wife Swap*).

The principle is very simple: two families participate in the program and they both switch wives (and mothers – if the family has children) for ten days. The wives then learn to live in a completely unfamiliar environment and everything is being captured by cameras, thus it resembles a real documentary. First five days should be spent in the rhythm of the family the woman resides in; in the other five days is the wife in the right to adapt her own rules to the new family, which is usually met with discontentment and disagreement of the family concerned.

According to data provided by Nielsen Admosphere, the program's best result was 1.5 million viewers (Potůček), which makes it the most popular program broadcasted on Czech TV in the recent time.

It is unquestionable, that reality show is probably the most popular program created or, in some cases, only popularized by the United States, that has entered Czech broadcast (with series not taken into account). At the same time, it is the most ambivalent type of show – is it real or is it fake? In terms of the original purpose of reality show, it is, after all, not so important. The main purpose of the program is to entertain and looking at it from this perspective, reality show fulfills its purpose.

3.4 Linguistic aspect 1: Dubbing

In recent years a certain kind of tendency has been growing in Czech movie theaters. Due to cost savings (unlike Russia or Poland, every character is voiced by a different Czech dubber, and thus the financial burden is even heavier) and time (there is now a minimum of delay between the American premiere and the Czech one) movies are screened in the original language with Czech subtitles. It is not unusual that some people find it problematic, as it is not always easy to pay attention to subtitles and to the movie action itself simultaneously, which may lead to lowered enjoyment from the movie. The non-adult audience, however, still continues to watch dubbed children's movies, as not every child is capable of reading the written dialogues. It is believed, that gradually and

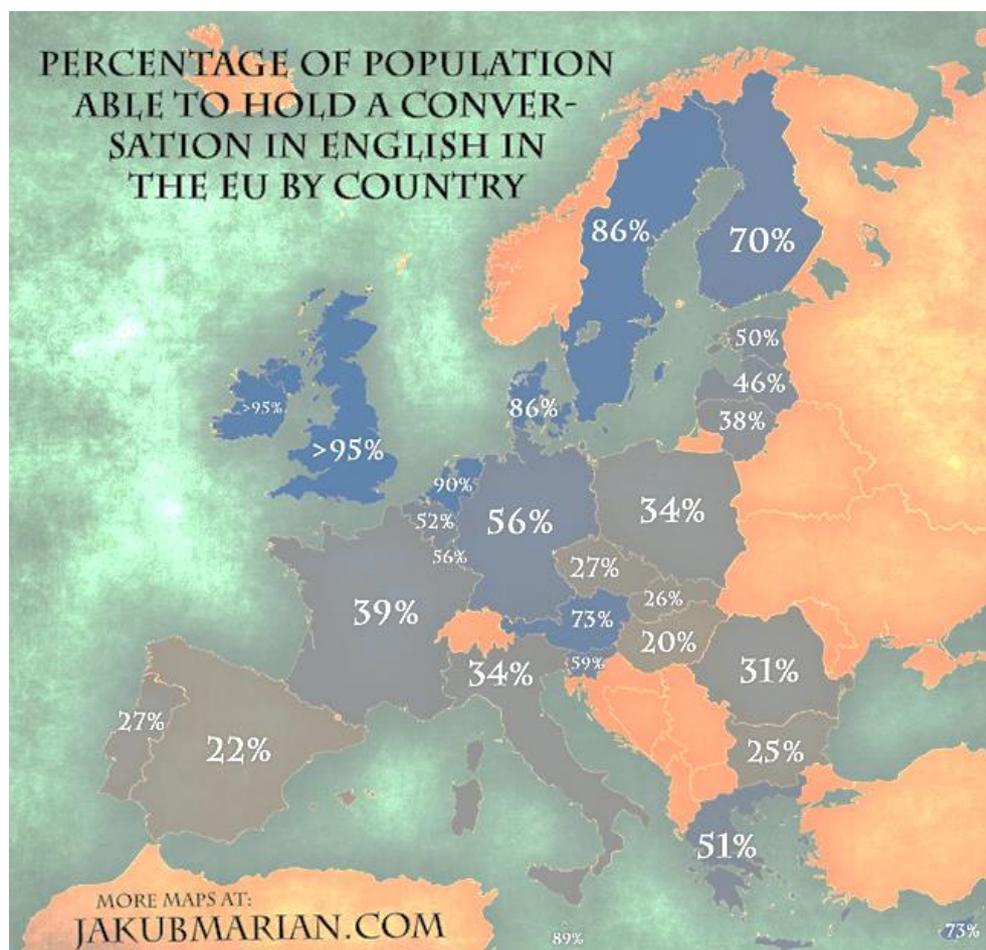
eventually all foreign movies shown on television will be provided with subtitles.

Dubbing has also its subdivision. During *voice-over* the dubber's voice is laid over the muffled original voice. This is commonly done in documentaries, TV news and various shows (such as the scientific reality show *Mythbusters* or the game show *Fort Boyard*, both on Czech channel Prima COOL). The difference from the standard dubbing is that the voice-over is usually of a slightly worse quality, serving only as a basic means of understanding the program.

Naturally, the use of voice actors has its pros and cons, and it largely depends on specific members of the audience. Opinion vary from one person to another, one likes to brush up his/her English, the other one has no language aspirations and finds difficult to enjoy the program when not watching in his/her mother tongue. With the power of the Internet and satellite broadcasting the accessibility of the natural, spoken English is much easier, which is good news for the first group mentioned above, the English language buffs.

The Czech linguist Jakub Marian examined the Eurobarometer report from 2012 and from the data provided by the European Commission he created the map below (Marian).

It can be clearly seen that countries such as Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Denmark all have a high percentage of people who are able to hold a conversation in English. Especially remarkable is Finland, which is geographically quite remotely placed from the closest English-speaking countries (the UK and Ireland) and, moreover, Finnish is not a Germanic language (in contrast with Swedish, Dutch and Danish).



Picture 1: The map by Jakub Marian shows an interesting phenomenon: basically all the European countries that do not use dubbing methods have better English-language skills than the Czech Republic (retrieved from www.jakubmarian.com)

Of course, dubbing is not the only reason why so few Czechs are able to communicate in at least an acceptable level of English. It is only one of the reasons, since the difference between the countries that dub and do not dub in terms of English language skills is sometimes quite significant, as shows Marian's map. Undoubtedly, the deciding factor is the school education system, which has been for a long time criticized in the Czech Republic (the school-leaving examinations reveal the faults in foreign languages and mathematics teaching), while in Finland highly acclaimed. But movies, videos and TV programs may definitely serve as a contributive extracurricular activity (which are not compulsory in the Czech Republic).

The abandoning of dubbing in the Czech Republic is highly improbable, since the dubbing tradition is indeed one of the national treasures, and Czechs are rather unwilling to switch to subtitles only.

Cowen also notices, that "many cultures cannot easily synthesize the imported product, which thus maintains an appearance of being foreign and intrusive" (Cowen 140). On the example of series and movie, it means that some words or dialogues cannot even be properly translated into Czech because it would lose the point and so they remained in the original form. For instance, in one of the episodes of *The Simpsons*, Homer shouts angrily, "This is worse than the contemporary American soccer!" By chance, Czech football team was doing just as bad as the American one, so the passage was translated as "Tohle je horší než současný český fotbal!" and the meaning was maintained. But sometimes the translation is not possible. Another very simple example can be provided by the movie *Miss Congeniality*. At one point Gracie Hart says "With all this foil in my hair I'm getting HBO," and it was translated as "Na tohle chytanu i HBO." Even though the majority of audience knows what HBO stands for, there are people who do not. It is still a penetration of a foreign word, which is, in addition, an Americanism that did not have any equivalent in Czech, as there was not any all-movie channel at the time (2000) yet. The person who does not know the meaning of "HBO" had to find out what it means in order to better understand Gracie's utterance.

To sum up, dubbing is also one of the means either to accelerate or slow down the process of Americanization. But this type of Americanization may be undoubtedly very contributive, as the absence of dubbing may substantially improve the ability to speak English fluently, which is, in these days, quite a useful thing.

3.5 Linguistic aspect 2: TV terminology

Regarding Americanization from TV linguistics point of view, the

influence of the United States on Czech television is very little. All Czech networks agree upon an unwritten rule or rather, a convention, that if there is a spoken word directly from the employees (reporters, anchors, announcers, hosts) of the TV station, they should use the standard Czech without an excessive use of loanwords and foreign vocabulary in general.

If there is an English word that does not have its equivalent in Czech, for example, *a squatter* or *stalking*, it is not translated for the sake of accuracy or time-saving (the word is long in Czech but short in English). Sticking to the example of *a squatter*, Czech TV anchor would have to say rather an awkward and overly long phrase 'a person who occupies an abandoned building without permission'. The English terminology is quite actively used by TV sports commentators: to make the speech more flowery, they tend to use, say, *icing* instead of *zakázané uvolnění*.

The most influenced area is, however, the one hidden from the viewer's eyes. It is the TV slang and terminology used mostly among its employees that includes words such as (in the brackets there are Czech equivalents that are used very rarely) *prime time* (the period of time when the number of viewers reaches its highest rank; usually from 7 pm to 11 pm; *hlavní čas*), *preview* (*upoutávka*), *highlight* (*hlavní zpráva*), *tight shot* or *close-up* (a very detailed shot of a person's face; *záběr zblízka*), *shot* (*reportáž*), *spot* (*reklama*), *headline* (*krátká zpráva*), *promospot* (*upoutávka na webový odkaz formou grafiky*), *live* (*živý vstup*), and a wide range of technical terms for various television devices. Some of the slang words are absolute Americanisms, such as already mentioned *split screen*, *split frame* or *split image*, which is purely American invention first introduced on American TV/film. There are some barbarisms, too, such as *handka* (microphone).

But there is a very perceptible feature that is inspired by the American style of news broadcasting: a friendly talk. The anchor speaks to the viewer as if he/she knows him/her or sits on the sofa right next to him/her. The anchor uses

many idioms or facial expressions to support his/her speech and to evoke empathy in the audience. These are things that were for a long time avoided on Czech television. Looking at the old footage of TV news it can be clearly seen how stiff and unnatural the anchors were. However, the journalist ethics do not approve of such a fashion, as the anchor should be an unbiased, highly objective person who should not impose his views or feelings to the audience. An eminent German journalist Günther Anders was predicting this development already in TV's beginnings in 1956: "The television viewer, although living in an alienated world, is made to believe that he is on a footing of the greatest intimacy with everything and everybody" (Marc 30).

The state-owned Czech Television avoids such a tendency, but the commercial stations, especially TV Nova, developed a taste for it. Moreover, long ago the network also included 'animal insight' that is broadcasted in the final section of the news. This idea was first introduced by the American NBC and soon it became a norm for many news programs all over the world. It is rather disputable whether this is an apt way of finishing the news program, as it trivializes all the possible bad news that came before the 'happy animal section'. But on the other hand, it is only the consequence of American nature and their belief that in the end everything should be all right, everyone should be happy just like nothing ever happened. And one must admit that after news about wars and diseases it is quite pleasant to see a cheerful puppy drooling into the camera.

TV Nova is often criticized for its apparent inspiration in American TV, but the numbers speak differently. In June, *Televizní noviny*, as the prime time news program is referred to, oscillated around the number of 1.5 million viewers on a regular basis ("Top 50"), which are numbers the rival stations cannot even dream of.

4 CONCLUSION

The United States of America are, undoubtedly, the world power of television broadcast. Countries all over the world, including the Czech Republic, buy or find inspiration in American shows. Almost seventy-year-long history of television broadcast proved that the American formats are successful and liked by the audience and the native production often cannot compete with them, which is especially remarkable on Czech television. By means of various analyses provided in the thesis, it was established that American producers put so much effort, enthusiasm and financial means into television and movie business, that their products often overshadow even the most ambitious projects of other countries. The Czech Republic struggles with the lack of financial resources and good ideas for a long time and thus the only solution is to let the local television to be Americanized.

It was also confirmed that America's influence is more beneficial than harmful. There are many programs on Czech TV that would not have been even broadcasted if it had not been for American television. Czech TV networks are, by virtue of American ideas and inventions, able to measure viewer ratings and analyze the demographic composition of the audience, which is also very useful for entities that advertise on TV. Thanks to reality shows and its variations, it became much more interesting and compelling to observe how boundless the human possibilities are (*The Amazing Race*) and how strong the human spirit is (living for three months in a confined space in *This Is the Life*). Without talent shows, which were hugely popularized in America, many talented individuals would not have been able to be shot to fame and it would be much harder to find such talents. Without sit-coms, there would not be so much laugh in front of the TV screens.

Even though there are occasionally protests against the surfeit of America on television, it is essential to realize that the United States are not responsible for individual preferences and decisions. If the viewer decides to watch the

program and he/she likes it, it becomes not so important for him/her (or at least for the majority of audience) whether the program is American or Czech.

It is indisputable that American television significantly contributed to the Czech one. Mostly, it was a beneficial contribution, which enriched the television entertainment. Nonetheless, Czech television has to find a balance between accepting the foreign programs and formats and creating its domestic ones that should be principally entertaining and well-written. It must be remembered that national identity, conventions and traditions should not be overshadowed by foreign influence, no matter how enticing the influence is. The author of this thesis strongly believes that in the Czech Republic there are many capable and talented people with wonderful plans and ideas that could be compared to the American ones or be even better. The important thing is that the television broadcast is constantly developing, therefore there is still hope.

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