

**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého**

**Issues of Musical Translation:  
Case Study of the *Avenue Q* Musical Translation**

**(Bakalářská práce)**

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**Toby Švédů**

**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

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Case Study of the *Avenue Q* Musical Translation**

**Problematika překladu muzikálových textů:  
případová studie překladu muzikálu *Avenue Q***

**(Bakalářská práce)**

**Autor:** Toby Švédů, Angličtina se zaměřením na komunitní tlumočení a překlad

**Vedoucí práce:** Mgr. Josefína Zubáková, Ph.D.

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně a uvedl úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.*

*V Olomouci dne*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Musical Theatre.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 General Information.....	11
1.2 Musical, Opera and Operetta.....	11
1.3 History of Musical in America .....	12
1.4 History of Musical in the Czech Republic .....	13
<b>2 Musical Translation Theory .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Theatre Play Translation .....	16
2.1.1 Naturalness, Playability, Speakability .....	16
2.1.2 Language .....	18
2.2 Song-lyrics Translation .....	20
2.2.1 Popular Music.....	20
2.2.2 Musical.....	22
<b>3 Avenue Q .....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 Brief Background .....	25
3.2 Structure and Story .....	25
3.2.1 Act One .....	25
3.2.2 Act Two.....	26
3.3 Problems to be Considered Before Translation.....	27
<b>4 Translation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5 Translation Commentary.....</b>	<b>81</b>
5.1 Libretto and Adaptation Changes .....	81
5.1.1 Characters.....	81
5.1.2 Names .....	82
5.1.3 Naturalization .....	83

5.1.4	Language .....	84
5.1.5	Humour .....	87
5.1.6	Expressivity .....	89
5.1.7	Exclamations .....	90
5.2	Song Lyrics .....	92
5.2.1	Rhyme .....	92
5.2.2	“What Do You Do with a B.A. in English?” .....	93
5.2.3	“It Sucks To Be Me” .....	93
5.2.4	“If You Were Gay” .....	98
5.2.5	“Purpose” .....	99
5.2.6	“Everyone’s a Little Bit Racist” .....	101
5.2.7	“Mix Tape” .....	103
	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>106</b>
	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>109</b>
	<b>Works cited .....</b>	<b>112</b>
	<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>117</b>
	<b>Annotation.....</b>	<b>118</b>
	<b>Anotace.....</b>	<b>118</b>

## Introduction

*“They may not have any legs of their own, but darned if those fuzzy creatures aren’t still standing, long after more full-bodied competition has bitten the dust.”*

Ben Brantley for the New York Times, 2009

Singing and dancing are integral parts of musical theatre. But what happens when you add puppetry, screen projection and adult topics? On the first glance, *Avenue Q* might not catch an adult’s eye. After all, the posters depicting fuzzy, colourful puppets are more likely to attract children thinking these characters belong to their favourite TV shows. Upon entering the theatre, one is surprised by songs that take the audience back to the times they spent watching Elmo on television and listening to educational songs about the alphabet and equality within their friend group. As one listens further, the laughter prevails, even though, at the end, one is laughing at themselves rather than at the puppets and actors on the stage.

The original idea behind *Avenue Q* was simple – Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx (authors of the songs) wanted to create a television parody show of the *Sesame Street* (a 1969 children’s show with puppets) with an adult twist, full of songs that would resemble the catchy educational tunes. The original concept was transformed into a theatre release with the help of Jeff Whitty (author of the libretto) and in the end, the author tandem “defied all conventions and broke the mold of modern musical theatre” (Tom Millward, 2016).

The musical is unique for its fusion of human actors and puppets whose puppeteers are fully visible, yet ignored by the actors and, to an extent, by the audience. It adds short bits of projection which resemble the short explanatory bits of the *Sesame Street* series. The whole idea of an educational show resemblance grants *Avenue Q* an aspect of nostalgia, as, according to Brantley (2009), “there are still plenty of young people around who were weaned on the “*Sesame Street*” worldview and who still have its gentle melodies lodged in their heads”. In the 2016 review, Tom Millward (2016) points out that this resemblance allows the viewers to relate to what is happening on the stage, as “[...] seeing humans living in harmony (or disharmony) together on the same street joyously awakens the child within. But then you are reminded how adult you have become, absorbing musical numbers about pornography, homosexuality, racism

and that quest we all undertake on a daily basis – finding your purpose in life”. These are the problems both the fluffy and the human characters tackle during the show. It is funny, smart, relatable and the topics stay timeless in the United States even after fifteen years. But, despite the story being strongly culturally bound to America, the topics deserve to be talked about in the Czech Republic, too.

The question of why this musical should be translated into Czech is in place. Although it is easier to take a foreign motive and turn it into a new, original musical, *Avenue Q* might find its audience in the Czech Republic because of the Internet. Since the musical saw its premiere at the dawn of the Internet age, the songs turned out to be an international viral hit amongst the English-speaking millennials/generation Z, even though most of them never had the chance to see the actual musical. The Czechs are familiar with the *Sesame Street* to an extent, as it has been broadcasted in the Czech Republic, and those who missed it are for sure familiar with its Czech counterpart – *Studio Kamarád*, which works on similar principles. The musical should be able to wake up nostalgic feelings in the Czech spectators, just like it does in the American ones. Because of that, the adaptation might be suitable for broad audiences, even though those familiar with the songs due to the previous Internet viral wave might be in advantage.

The aim of this thesis is to introduce possible approaches to musical theatre translation and, subsequently, to create a translation of selected parts of an American musical *Avenue Q* while applying the approaches and strategies discussed in the theoretical part. Theatre translation, and especially musical translation, is a field lacking theoretical materials. A musical translator has no manual to follow when translating such a complex text. This thesis thus combines theoretical approaches and methods from the theatre translation field and the song-lyrics translation field, to create a unified work that future musical translation works can be based on. These approaches and methods are then applied to a translation of the *Avenue Q* musical.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the musical genre itself in both American and Czech context. This allows better understanding of the genre, its different backgrounds in the two cultures and the difference between musical theatre and similar theatre genres such as opera or operetta.

Chapter two focuses on theoretical approaches to musical translation. The topic of musical translation is often neglected and the number of works



focusing solely on musical is not high. Even though there are translation theory works focusing on drama translation and on song-lyrics translation separately, they usually do not unify these two genres together to form a theory for musical translation itself. For this reason, this chapter is divided into two parts focusing on the theatre play translation and the song-lyrics translation separately. The first part of this chapter focuses on theatre plays. It summarizes the current and previous approaches to this kind of translation, as proposed by Windle (2011), it focuses on “playability” and the approaches of Espasa (2014) or Bassnett (1985, 1991) towards it. It also focuses on possibly needed changes in language, humour and adaptation, as proposed by Link (1980) or Farrell (1996). This part is to be applied on the translation of the musical libretto. In the song-lyrics translation part, songs are first divided into genres, as proposed by Bosseaux (2011). This part focuses mainly on “singability” and the Pentathlon principle. Franzon suggests in his article for *The Translator* that “the ambiguous term ‘singability’ can be defined as a musico-verbal fit of a text to music, and that this musico-verbal unity may consist of several layers – prosodic, poetic and semantic-reflexive” (2008, 373). He also suggests that, assuming a song has four properties and music has three, a translator has, in theory, five options to choose from while translating (2008, 373), all of which this thesis examines. Low’s Pentathlon Principle (2005), on the other hand, describes the five characteristics of a song, which a translator should take in consideration and balance as well as possible.

The third chapter of this thesis continues in the introduction of the *Avenue Q* musical itself. This introduction of the musical’s background serves as a foundation for the actual translation. It discusses the origins of the musical, from the opening of the Off-Broadway production in 2003 through its most successful Broadway era, to its final Broadway performance and the play’s resurrection as an Off-Broadway production once more. It introduces not only the storyline and the structure, but also possible adaptation problems, such as the multicultural cast that might be problematic to achieve in the Czech Republic or the appropriate amount of naturalization needed for the adaptation to work. It also mentions the approaches other European theatre companies took in tackling such problems.

Chapter four contains the *Avenue Q* translation itself. This translation covers scenes one to seven of the first act, except for the song “The Internet Is For Porn”

in scene five. The source text can be found as a loose attachment at the end of the thesis.

The fifth chapter of this thesis is a translation commentary of the *Avenue Q* translation. Based on the problems outlined in chapters two and three, examples of problematic parts are provided in the commentary along with the translation strategies used while dealing with them, this time in more depth. Since this translation aims to serve as a possible theatre adaptation, the dialogic part focuses on creation of lines that are easy to pronounce in Czech and on the naturalness of language. The song translation aims for balance of five different criteria of the Pentathlon Principle – singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm and rhyme, as suggested by Low (2005, 185). Solutions in the question of extra-linguistic problems are based mostly on the approaches of other European theatres which adapted *Avenue Q* for their audiences in the past.

# 1 Musical Theatre

This chapter aims to define the musical genre and outline the differences in its development between America, as the country musical theatre originated in, and the Czech Republic.

## 1.1 General Information

The name itself, “musical”, is a shortening of the original genre name – “musical comedy”, which is already not fitting, considering the first predecessor of a musical play was, according to Vaněk (1998, 6), an 1866 joint production of a French ballet and a theatre play called *The Black Crook*, which was not a comedy at all.<sup>1</sup> Glenn Litton admits he rather uses the term “musical theatre” (1996, XII), which is a commonly used term today. In the Czech terms, “muzikál” is commonly used to describe musical theatre and Vaněk, aware of the lack of a definition that is both accurate and brief, quotes the name of Ivan Osolobě’s tetralogy, *Divadlo, které mluví, zpívá a tančí* – a theatre which talks, sings and dances – in order to describe it (1998, 18).

## 1.2 Musical, Opera and Operetta

Along with *The Black Crook*, Vaněk pinpoints seven different genres that are thought to be the predecessors of American musical theatre – ballad opera, féerie (or extravaganza), the minstrel show, burlesque, vaudeville, operetta and revue, the oldest of which had its premiere in America in 1751 (1998, 6 -10). For a modern theatre viewer, operetta and opera would seem like the two closest genres to a musical. However, they are not interchangeable. While opera is a fully sang performance (and sang in a specific way), operetta is shorter, lighter and uses spoken word in between the songs. Musical, as opposed to opera and operetta, uses not only acting and singing, but adds dancing as well. It can work with many different music genres, as opposed to the classical music usually heard in opera. In translation, this means working with different phrasing when it comes to the song-lyrics.

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<sup>1</sup> Vaněk considers *The Black Crook* a thriller, while Smith calls it a “splashy combination of French Romantic ballet and German Romantic melodrama” (1996, 2).

### 1.3 History of Musical in America

The first play to be considered a musical by most of the experts is the 1927 *Show Boat* written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein and based on Edna Ferber's novel of the same name. According to Vaněk (1998, 15), it introduced music theatre in a brand-new light. Until then, American society gladly accepted an easy plot and light topics, since such plays were easy to understand. The uniqueness of this play is best described by Nathan Hurwitz (2014, 112), who explains that, while audiences were used to plays of the 1920s opening with a light-hearted up-beat scene simply introducing the setting of the play, *Show Boat* struck the audience right upon the opening of the curtain with Hammerstein's lyrics about African American workers at the Mississippi river. The opening scene alone foreshadowed *Show Boat* would deal with topics unheard of in a musical before, starting with racial struggles<sup>2</sup> and ending with addictive gambling (Hurwitz 2014, 112 – 113). In Hurwitz's words: "Based on the success artistically and commercially *Show Boat* should have set the next trend for the musical theatre, establishing a model that other musical theatre artists would eagerly copy" (2014, 113). Unfortunately, October 29, 1929 marked the start of the Great Depression, as well as a decline of musical theatre popularity in favour of film. Musical theatre production as set by *Show Boat* was too expensive, while everyone was able to save up for a movie ticket.

Vaněk points out that throughout the Great Depression, social criticism started moving from drama to musical, the quality of which increased, and a big turn came in 1943 with what is considered the first true musical theatre play (*Show Boat* was still considered mostly an operetta by some) (1998, 15). According to Hurwitz, the opening of Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers' *Oklahoma!* was the main event of musical theatre history of the 1940s, being the final play to unify all the components (singing, dancing, acting) into one compact play (2014, 139). Due to its heavy themes and precise execution, Vaněk considers *Oklahoma!* the play to change musical theatre forever – musical theatre became a genre sui juris and finally broke free from its reputation of frivolous fun (1998, 16).

As music genres evolved, musical theatre evolved with them. As generations changed and the popularity of jazz was replaced by rock and roll, the premiere

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<sup>2</sup> According to Hurwitz (2014, 113), *Show Boat* was the first musical where people of colour were portrayed with respect.

of rock musicals such as George Ragni, James Rado and Galt MacDermot's *Hair* came in 1967, subsequently followed by Richard O'Brien's *Rocky Horror Show* of 1973 or *Godspell*, written by Stephen Schwartz with an opening night set in 1979 (Vaněk 1998, 29). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, rock opera started mixing with rock musical, which gave birth to plays such as the legendary *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, theatre experienced a gradual decline in popularity, which Oxoby attributes to its departure from light entertainment, which was becoming the domain of film and television, and the high cost of tickets. However, if we jump all the way to the 1990s, musical was actually the most popular form of theatre of the period, mostly due to Broadway making an effort to bring it closer to the general audience (Oxoby 2003, 197 – 198). However, Oxoby also mentions that the audience mostly enjoyed plays from the 1980s, such as *Cats* (Andrew Lloyd Webber) or *Phantom of the Opera* (Andrew Lloyd Webber, Charles Hart, Richard Stilgoe), and after new original plays with quite disappointing outcomes such as the *Sunset Boulevard* (Andrew Lloyd Webber) and *Passion* (Stephen Sondheim), the true success of the 1990's musical theatre only came with the 1998 Broadway release of *The Lion King* (Tim Rice, Elton John) and *Rent* (Jonathan Larson), which opened in 1996 and was one of the most successful Broadway musicals ever (2003, 198 – 199). All these plays set the ground for the success of later productions such as *Avenue Q*, with which this thesis deals later.

#### **1.4 History of Musical in the Czech Republic**

Vaněk sets the arrival of musical theatre to the Czech Republic in 1928, when Oldřich Nový, an actor, singer and director, presented a musical comedy *No, No, Nanette* (Vincent Youmans, Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel). After that, however, due to the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, which caused the ties with America being cut, the Czech audiences had to wait for twenty years, until Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich presented their own version of *Finian's Rainbow* under the name *Divotvorný hrnec* (1998, 18 – 19).

Until then, according to Vaněk, Czech theatre was known mainly for operetta plays. During the communist regime, various actors banned from drama plays moved to operetta and musical and, since American plays would be considered

a provocation to the regime, Italian musicals found their place on the stages of Czechoslovakia, namely *Un paio d'ali*, which premiered in Prague in 1958 under the name *Když je v Římě neděle*, and *Buonanotta Bettina*, which premiered in 1960 under the name *Dobrou noc, Bettino* (both plays were created by Pietro Garinei and Sandro Giovannini) (1998, 21). *My Fair Lady* was successfully introduced to Czech audiences in 1964, followed by *Hello, Dolly* two years later, marking the arrival of American plays to the Czech Republic. As of Czech titles, in 1967, Jan Schneider and Bohuslav Ondráček's play *Gentleman* premiered in Musical Theatre Karlín, being the first musical to have a proper audition, as Vaněk pinpoints, and discovering such musical stars as Josef Laufr, Václav Neckář or Eva Pilarová. Musical comedy in film soon spiked, giving us such titles as *Kdyby tisíc klarinetů*, *Starci na chmelu*, *Dáma na kolejích*, adding *Trhák* or the very successful *Noc na Karlštejně* in the 1970's. (1998, 24 – 25).

In the 1980s, musical theatre had its legitimate place on the Czech theatre scene, however, as Vaněk reminds us, it was kept alive mostly by the time-proven successful plays, rather than from the addition of new pieces (1998, 26). In the 1990s, adaptations of older plays such as *Les Misérables* (translated by Zdeněk Borovec) in 1992, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (translated by Michael Prostějovský) in 1995 or *Hair* in 1998, shared the stage with new Czech musical plays, namely, *Dracula* (Egon Kulhánek, Richard Hes, Karel Svoboda) in 1995, or the controversial *Krysař* (Daniel Landa) in 1996. The musical theatre production continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, bringing us original Czech titles such as *Johanka z Arku* (Ondřej Soukup, Gabriela Osvaldová, Jíří Hubač), *Kleopatra* (Michal David), or a new kind of musicals based on discographies of singers and music bands, such as *Děti ráje* (Michal David, Sagvan Tofi) or *Osmý světadíl* (Elán, Boris Filan, Peter Pavlac, Ján Ďurovčík). In addition, present-day Czech audiences seem to enjoy even musical plays that are not critically acclaimed.

## 2 Musical Translation Theory

Discussing the musical theatre translation theory, Åkerström (2010, 2) proposes the idea that “translation” is not the correct word to use when it comes to working with musical song lyrics and that “more apt descriptive phrases for this process would probably be ‘text arrangement’ or ‘interpretation’.” Subsequently, Michael Prostějovský adds to this in the 2011 interview for a Czech theatre magazine *Musical-opereta*, saying that “a ‘song-lyrics interpreter’ is a servant of three masters – the author of the original libretto, the music and the Czech language, which is the cruellest master of them all.”<sup>3</sup> According to Franzon, a professional translator does not even come across a song translation as often, as for example a songwriter (2008, 373 – 374). But, even though it seems like a difficult task, “even a tone-deaf translator can learn something about it” (Low 2005, 193).

As of today, there is no comprehensive translation theory focusing strictly on musical theatre plays. In the past, translation theory considering music in theatre was opera-centric and “put emphasis on inviolable adherence to the music, on the requirements of the singers, and on absolute respect for the composers” (Franzon 2008, 374). Franzon also mentions Gorlée, Apton and Low, who have dealt with the theory of music translation, of which Low starts distinguishing between song-lyrics meant for paper and meant for stage (2008, 374). Unfortunately, a modern song translation may require more fields of focus than those listed above, and, unlike opera, musical theatre consists not only of song lyrics to be sung, but also of dialogues to be spoken. There are works focusing on translation of song lyrics in specific musicals, such as Åkerström’s *Translating song lyrics, a study of the translation of the three musicals* (2010), but even this piece does not unify the song-lyrics translation with the translation of dialogue. Thus, the following parts focus on song-lyrics translation and theatre play translation separately.

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<sup>3</sup> Original quote: “‘Přebásník‘ je však sluhou tří pánů. Tedy autora původního libreta, hudby a češtiny, která je pán ze všech nejkrutější.” Note that he uses the word “přebásník” for a translator of song lyrics, for which I decided to use the term “song lyrics interpreter”, which is not by a long sight as poetic as the Czech original but serves our purpose.

## **2.1 Theatre Play Translation**

Even though Windle (2011, 1) speaks about the importance of theatre and theatrical texts in the human culture and notes that there are many significant works of drama that have been translated into many languages, he also reminds us of Bassnett and Lefevere's (1998, 90, 107) pessimism about the theatre play field not getting as much space in the world of translation theory as other genres do.

According to Windle, there are essential differences between the theatre play translation and translations of other genres, but there are also differences in the theatre play translation field itself (2011, 1). Link (1980, 24) speaks further about some differences between prose and drama. According to him, even though a drama play lacks a narrator describing and explaining the action, it gives the audience a sense of presence and participation. However, because of the lack of narration, a printed-out text of a theatre play is not a complete representation of the play, as the narration is supposed to be given to the audience through the production (Link 1980, 24). Windle argues that the changes necessary for transferring a play from script to the stage might be so harsh that the "very term 'translation' acquires great elasticity of meaning, with some blurring at the edges" (2011, 2). Terry Hale (2000, 65) mentions that a translator might apply cultural adaptation and insert changes to a theatre play translation with a heavier hand than to a novel translation, and, similarly, Joseph Farrel (1996, 54 – 55) adds that such practice would not be acceptable in a novel translation, where the translator would most likely be shamed for it, but with a theatre play, skipping, re-writing and substituting happens so often, it is not such a big problem anymore. In the theatre play translation field, Windle differentiates plays and translations "written primarily for stage performance from those intended as much for readers as for the stage" (2011, 1).

The following chapter focuses mainly on the translation for stage as the usual reason for translating a play is for it to be acted out in a new production.

### **2.1.1 Naturalness, Playability, Speakability**

The aim of a theatre play translator is, according to Espasa (2014, 53), to stay invisible – she points out that a good translation acts like an original text, which can be achieved only through the use of natural language that is easy



to pronounce. She compares the arguments about text fluidity to similar arguments in the theatre practice sphere about ‘naturalism’ and ‘artificiality’ in performance, adding that “when literary critics comment on the quality of a translation, they tend to do so in terms of fluency. They tend to praise a fluid, transparent, invisible translation, which hides the fact that it is indeed a translation” (Espasa 2014, 53).

Speakability in general is what Jerzy Zawiejsky discusses as working with one’s ears instead of relying on the written word – reading the lines out loud and focusing on the flow and naturalness of the dialogues (1955, 435). The importance of speakability and naturalness of the dialogues is stressed out also by Roger Shattuck (1961, 191), who complains about the lack of good performable translations of French plays, or Sidney Monas (1961, 189), who comments on a similar situation of English translations of Russian plays. Robert W. Corrigan adds that “it is only when the sense of speakability is achieved that we have theatre” (1961, 104). However, Windle points out that, in the past, this approach of putting speakability on the first place came hand in hand with putting the playwright before an actual translator and the “knowledge of the original language has at times ranked low in the hierarchy of prerequisites for the task” (2011, 3).

On this behalf, Espasa (2014) mentions Susan Bassnett (1985, 91), who proposes that a good theatre play translation is a collaborative translation between either native speakers of both the languages used, or between the translator and a person from the respective theatre company that will present the play, as by this, “playability” will not be separated from the translation itself. Similarly, Link stresses out the “necessity for co-operation between playwright, translator, dramatic advisor, stage manager, and scholar” (1980, 24) for translation and subsequent adaptation of a play. However, in her later article from 1991, Bassnett contradicts her words by rejecting the concept of “playability” altogether, as she sees it as an excuse to lower the status as a translator as opposed to a status of a playwright – she gives an example of a translator being requested to do a word-for-word translation, so that a well-known playwright could re-write the script into its performable form (1991, 101). Espasa (2014, 58) thus concludes upon these findings that playability of a theatre play might be easily decided by the highest-ranked person in the theatre company, depending on what the company is looking for. However, Zawiejski proposes a certain qualification of the theatre play translator, as such translator should have “a sense of drama and a deeper awareness

of the particular features of plays as a separate literary genre” (1955, 435) and Farrell adds that “the best person to stand in for a playwright is another playwright” (1996, 54).

Lastly, Stanisław Barańczak stresses out that the worst thing that can happen to a translator is when the audience remains silent after a line that was supposed to be funny. His approach to theatre play translation is that once there is humour present, it automatically assumes the first place among all the other values and characteristics – according to him, every comic relief and humorous remark is placed in the original text for a reason and should be dealt with accordingly (1994, 197). He proposes a strategy in which, when dealing with such situation in the translation, the original text should be put aside while the translator keeps in mind the original intention of the text and tries to transfer this intention along in its broader meaning into the translation (1994, 195). Windle, however, adds that this approach might cause a significant shift from the original as “Barańczak does not attempt to define any limits” (2011, 7).

### **2.1.2 Language**

Considering the language-related aspects of theatre play translation, Gostand (1980, 2) lists idiom, slang, tone and style as some of the examples of what a translator has to deal with, adding that “irony, double entendre, word-play and puns must be communicated if the spirit of the original is not to be lost”. Link points out that communication between the actor and audience is not possible only through spoken word, as “if the opera is sung in a language I do not understand, I may still follow the outline of the plot in the acting and in the music” (1980, 26). However, focusing on the language-based communication, Link presents a good basic explanation as of what to focus on.

Considering the language of a play, according to Link (1980, 27) it can be either poetic or non-poetic (either a non-poetic standard or a colloquial speech), contemporary, archaic or a dialect speech. Needless to say, these qualities should reflect in the target text according to their use in the source text (unless the theatre company wishes otherwise). According to Link (1980, 25), contemporary language can refer either to the language used during the time the author writes the play, or the language used during the play’s production.

He also proposes an interesting idea that when the language contemporary to the origin of the play becomes incomprehensible to the new audience, transforming the play into the present-day language is a process similar to translation between two different languages (1980, 27). He notes the paradox emerging from a situation where a language of a play can no longer be considered a present-day language but is still understood by people – in this situation the “translation” into a modern language is not advised (1980, 27).

As of the issues of poetic/non-poetic language, Link (1980, 28 – 29) states that “to use poetic or non-poetic language on the stage is often a matter of convention which is apt to change in time. Poetic language usually does not change as fast as non-poetic language but the convention to use it at all may become obsolete”. He adds that the less a non-poetic text is stylized, the faster the language changes occur over time, and, the other way around, standard language is the one to change the least. While Link points out that poetic language allows the play to isolate itself from reality, non-poetic and mainly colloquial and dialect speech allows characters to specify their reality to a detail at a cost of falling from reality to the past as soon as the language changes. In this case, Link recommends gradually changing the colloquial language of characters according to the time the play is being produced, which is a strategy practised even by actors themselves on rehearsals. Speaking of dialect on its own, Link advises a dialect used in a source text should be translated accordingly, as it usually adds to the characteristics of a certain character in the play, or neutralized, if it is a dialect not spoken anymore or not necessary to translate (1980, 28 – 29). According to Link, there is also a similarity in tackling the playwright’s intention to set a play in a historical era and the intention to set a play in a different country. When it comes to archaic language, it can be quite easily replicated in the target text, however, when it comes to the country setting, one of the options is using a few words or lines in the foreign language (Link 1980, 29 – 30).

In general, there is no particular problem with translating a source text written in contemporary language into a target text written in contemporary language as well. However, as Link (1980, 31) points out, the problem comes when a contemporary language is to be translated in a later period of time and there might be yet more problems when the text is to be translated for a different culture,

especially when the author uses a lot of allusions. The amount of knowledge the audience has to have in order to get the full experience out of a play can be quite big. Link mentions for example the knowledge of a historical background of a country the play is set in, its customs or traditions, which can even change over time. This can cause trouble when a translator does not change these bits for the target audience and “for the same reason, information of foreign countries, is usually much more detailed” (Link 1980, 31). According to Link, there is, however, a difference between allusions in a comedy play, where they serve a purpose of causing a laugh, and in a drama play. In comedy, these allusions often serve a purpose of bringing the audience back to reality for a split second, usually by remarking something of interest of the group the play is presented for (for example mentioning a place in the city the play is being performed at, even though the play is set in a whole different time and place) and should be changed accordingly. Link, however, also admits, that the easiest way to deal with complicated allusions is to skip them (1980, 31 – 32).

## **2.2 Song-lyrics Translation**

According to Bosseaux, not much attention had been given to song translation in the past (2011, 1). She, however, shows that even though this topic did not get much space in the most significant translation theory publications, lately, the topic of song translation is gaining importance, such as in Kuhlweck and Littau’s 2007 *Companion to Translation Studies*, which contains a chapter about opera translation, or the *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation* from 2005, edited by Gorlée, which contains eight essays focusing on vocal translation in different music styles (2011, 1).

Bosseaux (2011, 2 – 7) divides the song-lyrics translation into types according to the music style it deals with into translation of opera, popular songs, musicals, sung poetic texts and surtitling. Since opera and sung poetic texts do not concern us in musicals and surtitling serves as a non-singable text, further on we will focus on songs in popular music and musicals.

### **2.2.1 Popular Music**

In relation to popular music, Bosseaux (2011, 4) mentions Peter Low and his Pentathlon principle (2005). According to this principle, a song has five characteristics (singability, sense, naturalness, rhyme and rhythm) which a translator should try to balance as best as possible. He also notes that if “dramatic effectiveness” is added to the five characteristic, the new “hexathlon” can be used for translating opera as well (Low 2005, 211).

Low (2005, 193) approaches singability as performability – the ability to be sung by a singer. He points out that whether a song is easy or hard to sing is easier determined by singers themselves than the translators, but even a translator might find the spots causing difficulties by simply reciting the verses out loud and knowing the properties of the language (2005, 193). He gives examples of matching long/short tones with words containing long/short vowels and different consonant clusters, as words with short vowels such as “the” have to be changed to “these” when falling on a long note, or, similarly, the word “little” might be replaced with “tiny”, which allows better singability (Low, 2005, 193). Another aspect of singability is, according to Low (2005, 193), emphasizing certain words – the emphasis might be put on the given word by the author in the music sheet and the same word must fall on the same note in the translation due to the gradation of the music piece. He considers the naturalness a “duty to the audience” as the song translation is supposed to be understandable and effective right from the start and on the first listen (2005, 195). As of sense, a certain adaptability is in place (Low 2005, 194). In Low’s words:

“It is not that meaning ceases to be an important criterion (...). However, our definition of acceptable accuracy can be wider here than in other translating. Thus a precise word maybe replaced by a near-synonym, a narrow term by a superordinate term, a particular metaphor by a different one which functions similarly in the context. (...) In a genre where syllable-count is important, the need to stretch sense arises just naturally.”  
(2005, 194)

Then, of course, the question of syllable-count is in place. Here Low (2005, 197) suggests that matching the syllable-count of the target text

with the one of the source text is indeed sought, but changes in the count, when done right, at the right spot and for a good reason, are acceptable. He even admits a slight change in the melody might be a good idea, to which Franzon (2008, 384) adds that “splitting, merging or adding notes and splitting or creating melismata are minimal ways in which music can be adjusted to fit the lyrics”, but the change should be always as minimal as possible and, as mentioned above, even such small changes might not be allowed by the original creators in the end. Low (2005, 197) also reminds us that a syllable-count is not to be mistaken for rhythm of a song. You can translate a verse brilliantly with the same syllable-count and even with the stresses at the same places when the verse is read out loud. But then you might realize one of the long notes falls to an unacceptable place, such as the middle of a word or on a consonant. That is why Low (2005, 197 – 198) says that rhythm works differently with a song and with a poem. Low (2005, 199) explains that it is good to free oneself from the idea of creating only perfect rhymes at the exact spots where they can be found in the source text, as working with other options such as half-rhymes or off-rhymes might open the door to many more valid strategies that might be lost with the primary focus on perfect rhymes. Lastly, Low’s approach to “logocentric”<sup>4</sup> songs is to “favour sense over singability or rhythm because the words (and their author) deserve to receive high priority” (2005, 200).

### **2.2.2 Musical**

Unfortunately, Bosseaux admits that if there are only a few works dedicated to translation of opera or popular music, there are even less works dedicated to musicals (2011, 5).

She, however, pays attention to Johan Franzon’s functional approach, which “singles out various functional units to be taken into consideration when translating a stage musical” (2011, 6). These units then “raise the attention from the textual surface to the level of the intentions of the original author and of the context where it performs a function” (Franzon 2005, 267). To create a translation corresponding to the source text in its “presentation as a staged narrative to music” (2005, 267),

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<sup>4</sup> “Logocentrism” is “a view defending the general dominance of the word in vocal music” (Gorlée 2005, 8)

Franzon aims for transferring the “qualities of rhymes, vowel sounds, semantic, stylistic, or narrative content” (2005, 266) of the source text into the translation.

The crucial question laying in front of a song translator is: “Is the translation going to be singable or not?” (Franzon 2008, 374). This question helps the translator decide what properties the translation must contain. For example, as opposite to a musical play translation, a song translated in subtitles will most likely not contain rhymes and might not even fit the syllable count, due to the restrictions of a subtitle translation as a whole (such as a number of characters on the line and the reader’s speed). It is important to note, however, that, according to Franzon, singability is not only a matter of actually singing the song, it rather refers to the way the song performs as a whole and is closely tied to the *skopos* theory (2008, 375). Giving an example from the musical theatre perspective, a song can be fully “singable” at a rehearsal, but the lyrics can later turn out to be unpronounceable by a performer who has to focus on dancing as well. Another example might be a perfectly “singable” song not fitting into the narrative of the musical due to the change of meaning in translated lyrics.

Franzon thus proposes five different choices in the song-lyrics translation: “Leaving the song untranslated, translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account, writing new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics, translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly (...), adapting the translation to the original music” (2008, 376). The choice depends not only on the languages used, but also on the contract between the translator and the original creators of the song and the demand of the theatre company or audience. For example, the idea of not translating song lyrics might seem strange, but Åkerström (2010, 6) gives an example of the *MAMMA MIA!* musical adaptation in Sweden, where there was a specific demand for the famous ABBA songs to stay untranslated. In the Czech context, *Osmý světadíl* has a libretto written in Czech while the songs stay untranslated and are sung in Slovak because they are well known. One way or another, the function and performance, along with the meaning of the original lyrics, should be always taken in consideration while translating a singable text (Franzon 2008, 389).

At first glance, the initial goal of a song translation seems to be matching the translation with the original melody. However, especially with combinations

of unrelated languages, fulfilling this task completely often becomes impossible. As a song in a musical play usually needs to match the narrative and frequently moves the narrative itself forward, the overall sense of the original lyrics should stay unchanged. However, as Low suggests, a song translation is “a case where mere loyalty to the source text will not produce good functional results” (2005, 186). There is no excuse for turning a wonderful musical piece into a random cluster of notes in the score sheet for the sake of saving every single word of the source text in the translation.

Based on the approach of Franzon (2005, 2008) and Low (2005), the reasonable choice for a translator working with songs in a musical theatre play seems to be matching the translation with the original melody and making slight adjustments to the melody to make the target language work naturally in it, while keeping in mind the supposed balance of all five aspects of the source text. No matter what style the music is, “the emphasis is on performance” (Bosseaux 2011, 8). In other words, the translation can be as accurate and thoughtful as possible, but if it is not singable and performable, it is not a working translation.

Bosseaux also mentions that next to the previously mentioned approaches and works focusing on the words and music, there are also approaches working with a “broader cultural or historical perspective, placing songs in a sociocultural context” (2010, 8). Works implementing these approaches focus on placing the songs “within the source and target cultures” along with the music and lyrics themselves, which represents the “new turn that audiovisual translation has taken” (Bosseaux 2011, 8). Such approaches are applied for example by Klaus Kaindl (2005) in his polysystem theory (2011, 9), or Susam Sarajeva for whom a song is “a format of intercultural communication” (2006, 255).



## **3 Avenue Q**

### **3.1 Brief Background**

*Avenue Q* is a musical play in two acts, created by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx (original concept, music and lyrics), the librettist Jeff Whitty and originally directed by Jason Moore. It premiered on March 19, 2003, as an Off-Broadway production which Matthew Murray (2009) jokingly describes as “an adult riff on *Sesame Street* with a cast of nobodies holding puppets for over two hours” and thus being “the most unknown of quantities when it opened”.

In the same year, *Avenue Q* had its opening on Broadway and over the years new versions of the production were staged in Las Vegas, England, Australia, Portugal, Poland and Germany. Due to its success, *Avenue Q School Edition* was released as an adaptation suitable for high school theatre departments. The first and main production of the musical finished its long Broadway run in 2009 and returned to the Off-Broadway production, where it remains until today.

The original Broadway production won three 2004 Tony Awards in the Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score categories and received several more award nominations including the 2005 Grammy nomination for the Best Musical Show Album.

### **3.2 Structure and Story**

The musical is divided into two acts and twenty-three scenes and contains twenty-one musical numbers altogether. Dialogues and songs are interrupted by on-screen cartoons in a form of explanatory sketches similar to those in *Sesame Street*. Despite the play having twelve main characters, the number of actors (including puppeteers) usually varies from seven to eleven, since some of the actors often play and voice two or more characters.

#### **3.2.1 Act One**

Act One consists of twelve scenes and there is a total of twelve musical numbers.

We meet Princeton (a puppet), a university graduate searching his life purpose and for a place to live (“What Do You Do with a B.A. in English?”) We are immediately introduced to the rest of the cast – a substitute teacher Kate

Monster (a puppet), an unemployed wannabe comedian Brian (a human actor) and his Japanese wife Christmas Eve (a human actress), the republican banker and closeted homosexual Rod (a puppet) with his roommate and best friend Nicky (a puppet), and the superintendent and former child TV star Gary Coleman (a human actor, usually portrayed by a woman), who sing about their misfortunes (“It Sucks to be Me”). We are also, in speech, introduced to the local pervert, Trekkie Monster. Princeton decides to move in.

We witness the first argument between Nicky and Rod concerning homosexuality and, before being interrupted by the Bad Idea Bears, Princeton starts his journey on discovering the purpose of his life. In his hunt for answers about other people’s purposes, he makes a faux pas when he asks whether Kate and Trekkie are related because of their identical last name and we enter a musical number explaining that “Everyone’s a little bit racist”. The growing relationship between Princeton and Kate escalates on a date and leads to a night spent together, which unfortunately leads to Kate losing her job as she oversleeps the next morning. On Brian and Christmas Eve’s wedding, Nicky and Rod enter yet another argument that leads to Nicky being kicked out of their apartment and, eventually, Princeton breaks up with Kate.

### **3.2.2 Act Two**

Act Two consists of eleven scenes and contains a total of nine musical numbers.

Act Two opens with Princeton being depressed due to the unemployment and breaking up with Kate. After Brian’s attempt to cheer him up, he ends up going home with Lucy. Kate tries to give Princeton a second chance, but her apology note gets in Lucy’s hands and she discards it. After we see Nicky desperately trying to find a new place to live, Kate waits for Princeton on top of the Empire State Building, expecting Princeton to come as she asked him to in the note. At the same time, under the Empire State Building, Lucy informs Princeton she is no longer interested in him. Angry, Kate throws Princeton’s lucky penny down and it hits Lucy in the head, knocking her out. Later, in the hospital, Kate realizes Princeton did not receive the note and did not stand her up.

Princeton apologizes and confesses he still has not found the purpose of his life. Kate confesses that she has to abandon her dream of a Monster School.

At the same time Nicky tries to convince Rod for the last time to take him back, but to no avail.

As everything on Avenue Q seems to be turning to worse, Princeton decides to help Kate with her dream of a Monster School and starts collecting money. In the end, Trekkie donates millions of dollars to help. The neighbourhood presents the new school to Kate, who is moved by the effort, Christmas Eve and Brian announce they are moving out of Avenue Q, Rod announces he is gay and Nicky introduces Rod to Ricky (who looks exactly like Nicky but is gay), so that he can move back in with Rod. Christmas Eve reveals that it was Princeton who raised all the money and Princeton and Kate get back together. Princeton is sad about not having a purpose in life, but the others assure him that it does not matter as many never discover it anyways and he can be never sure what life might bring him.

### **3.3 Problems to be Considered Before Translation**

*Avenue Q* tries to make its story as relatable as possible, its cultural bounding is undeniable and thus its adaptation brings several obstacles, whether it is the cultural references in the script or problems with the adaptation production itself. This chapter outlines some of the issues which will be dealt with in depth in chapter five. It also gives some examples of solutions other European theatres introduced when dealing with such issues.

As mentioned in the introduction, whether this translation is relevant for the Czech audience and, subsequently, where it should be performed, was taken into consideration. With its topics and presentation, *Avenue Q* might not attract the classical theatre and classical musical lovers. However, in the Czech Republic, the heavier topics of *Avenue Q*, such as racism and hate towards minorities, homosexuality and immigration, are becoming relevant. We can only theorize whether *Avenue Q* would be understood and accepted in the Czech Republic at the time of its creation, but it seems like the society is, now more than ever, ready for its heavy topics and black humour.

The original *Avenue Q* website states that the show is appropriate for audiences from teenagers up, even though the exact age from which children should be allowed to see it is not stated and is the parents' responsibility. This approach should be maintained in the Czech adaptation, too. Teenagers

and university students are likely to be familiar not only with the cultural setting and topics, but also with the musical itself due to its, already mentioned, Internet fame. Despite this, with the right amount of naturalization, the overall meaning of the musical remains understandable for broader audiences and thus, no one is excluded from the experience (except for children, as this musical contains vulgar language and adult topics).

On the question of location, Stephen Quigley in his article *When Avenue Q Goes Local: Racism and the Production of Plays that Joke about Race* (2014) explains that, as the story is set in New York, where many of the covered topics are dealt with more openly, *Avenue Q* and similar plays might be received very differently in other regions where the issues are still considered taboo. *Avenue Q* might thus be more appropriate for bigger cities than for smaller towns and villages.

*Avenue Q* has the advantage of being partially a puppet show. This way, it is insignificant whether the actress of Kate Monster has blonde or black hair because the main focus goes to the puppet which stays the same. However, with the human cast, a number of problems emerged with the different adaptations due to the multiracial characters of the musical – there is Christmas Eve, the Japanese immigrant, and Gary Coleman, a former African American child TV star.

Staying in America, Quigley (2014) witnessed such a problem during a local production in Greenville, South Carolina, where Christmas Eve was casted as a white woman, probably due to a lack of Asian actors in the region. He points out that “the actress, in pyjamas, heavy eye makeup, and with hair sticks spiking out of her hair bun talked and sang with a high choppy tonal dialect short on prepositions” and, upon watching the one Asian woman in the audience, he noticed that she “did smile and nod at some of the jokes, but there was also a great discomfort about her as well, and at times she looked away or failed to laugh – perhaps a realization that she was the Other in the room. The joke was on her.” He also pinpoints that the theatre company would in no way dare to do this with Gary Coleman – an African American character.

In Europe, theatre companies also dealt with this issue, some more and some less successfully. The German production of the Deutsches Theater München also decided to give the role of Christmas Eve to a white actress. The same approach was taken by the Musical Theatre them. D. Baduszkowej in Gdynia, Poland, where

Christmas Eve was portrayed by a white actress, while Gary Coleman was fully substituted by the character of Piotr S. – the only similarity with the original character is that Piotr, just like Gary Coleman in the original production, is being portrayed by an actress instead of an actor.<sup>5</sup> The best solution seems to come from Portugal – in the 2017 adaptation of the Trindade Theatre in Lisbon, Christmas Eve is fully substituted by a Muslim woman and Gary Coleman by a national celebrity Saul Ricardo.

Noting that the Czech Republic is nowhere near as multicultural as New York, where the musical originated, it is obvious that these casting problems will emerge even in the capital city. Japanese is not the ethnicity Czechs have linked to immigration and Gary Coleman is an unknown name in a country, where the TV show *Diff'rent Strokes* was never introduced. Therefore, substitution of these two characters seems like a more logical and easier step than trying to find a suitable cast for them.

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<sup>5</sup> This adaptation fully naturalized the whole cast, giving the characters Polish names.

## 4 Translation

### DĚJSTVÍ PRVNÍ

#### SCÉNA PRVNÍ – ÚVOD / PROMOCE / NA ULICI

*Přehra doprovázená videem*

##### 1 – Znělka Avenue Q

###### HLASY

SLUNCE SVÍTÍ A JE KRÁSNÝ DEN,  
VŠECHNY DĚTI BĚŽÍ HRÁT SI VEN.  
ALE NÁJEM NEMÁŠ ZAPLACEN –  
CO NADĚLÁŠ?  
DŘEŠ JAK MEZEK ZA NÍZKÝ PLAT,  
V PRÁCI PŘEŽÍVÁŠ JEN TAK TAK,  
VEČER NEZBÝVÁ NIC NEŽ SBOHEM VŠEM DÁT  
A JÍT NA AVENUE Q! ZPĚT NA AVENUE Q!  
VŠICHNI UŽ JSOU TU.  
MÁŠ MLÁDÍ A JISTOTU: SVŮJ BYT NA AVENUE Q!  
BYT NA AVENUE Q.  
SVŮJ BYT NA AVENUE Q!

*Přichází Princeton v promoční čepici.*

##### 2 – Úvod (K čemu mi je bakalář z anglistiky / Tak těžký to mám)

###### PRINCETON

K ČEMU MI JE BAKALÁŘ Z ANGLISTIKY?  
HLAVNĚ, ŽE CHOMSKÉHO ZNÁM.  
ZA ČTYŘI ROKY A STRESY Z VYSOKÝ  
JEN ZBYTEČNEJ PAPÍR TEĎ MÁM.

BEZ ZKUŠENOSTÍ SE NA CHVÍLI POSTÍM.  
SVĚT SE TAK STRAŠLIVÝ ZDÁ.  
ALE STEJNĚ SI MYSLÍM,  
ŽE CIZÍM I MÍSTNÍM  
ŽIVOT ZMĚNÍM PRÁVĚ JÁ!

*Reflektory osvítlí Avenue Q, prostou, zchátralou ulici na nejvzdálenějším  
vnějším okraji New York City. Na jedné z budov visí nápis: „Byt  
k pronájmu.“*

*Brian vynáší odpadky na ulici. Přichází Kate Příšerová.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Dobré ráno, Briane!

**BRIAN**

Nazdar, Kate Příšerová.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jak to jde?

**BRIAN**

Jsem zklamanej!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Co se děje?

**BRIAN**

Vyrazili mě z té cateringové agentury.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

To mě mrzí!

**BRIAN**

Mě taky! Koukni na mě! Už je to deset let, co jsem dodělal školu, a vždycky jsem si myslel –

*Zarazí se.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Co?

**BRIAN**

Ale nic, je to hloupost.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ale no tak!

**BRIAN**

*(zpívá)*

KDYŽ JSEM BYL MALÝ, JÁ MĚL JEDEN SEN –

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jaký?

**BRIAN**

ŽE STANU SE TELEVIZNÍM KOMIKEM.

TEĎ JE MI DVAATŘICET A PODÍVEJ,

KDE JSEM. ACH JO.

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM,

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM,

KDYŽ ANI PO TŘICÍTCE

POŘÁD NEJSEM ZAMĚSTNÁN.

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM.



**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ty si myslíš, že to máš těžký?

**BRIAN**

To si piš.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Vždyť to jsou jen prkotiny!

*(zpívá)*

JSEM PĚKNĚ CHYTRÁ  
A KRÁSNÁ SLEČNA

**BRIAN**

To je pravda!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Díky!

PO UMĚNÍ A HUDBĚ VŽDYCKY LAČNÁ.  
MÁ LÁSKA K OSTATNÍM JE NEKONEČNÁ,  
TAK PROČ  
JEN JÁ NEMÁM CHLAPA?  
KURVA!  
TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

**BRIAN**

Já taky!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM.

**BRIAN**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM.  
UŽ NECHCI BEJT BRIAN –

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

A KATE –

**BRIAN**

BEZ ZAMĚSTNÁNÍ –

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

BEZ PŘÍTELE BEJT.

**OBA**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM.

*Vchází Rod a Nicky, hádají se.*

**BRIAN**

Hej, Nicky, Rode, mohli byste nám s něčím pomoci? Máte chvíli?

**ROD**

Jistě.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Kdo má horší život, já nebo Brian?

*Nicky a Rod si vymění pohledy.*

**NICKY A ROD**

My dva!

**ROD**

BYDLÍME SPOLU,

**NICKY**

DVA MLADÍCI TROUFALÍ.

**ROD**

NEJLEPŠÍ KÁMOŠI –

**NICKY**

ODE DNE KDY JSME SE POZNALI.

**ROD**

PROTO VÍ ZE VŠECH NEJLÍP, JAK MĚ VŽDY DOPÁLÍ!  
KAŽDÝ DEN JE UTRPENÍ!

**NICKY**

PŘEHÁNÍŠ, TAK TO VŮBEC NENÍ!

**ROD**

JSI NEPOŘÁDNÝ  
A SPÁVÁŠ BEZ PYŽAMA.

**NICKY**

Jó?

A TY ZAS ŽEHLÍŠ SI  
I PONOŽKY SE SLIPAMA.

**ROD**

TO KVŮLI TOBĚ SI U NÁS PŘIPADÁM  
JAK BLB!

**NICKY**

NEJSI SÁM,  
V TOMHLE PEKLE JSEM I JÁ!

**ROD**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

**NICKY**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

**BRIAN**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

**VŠICHNI**

JE TU NĚKDO, KOMU ŽIVOT SKVĚLÝ PŘIPADÁ?

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM.

*Taneční pauza.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

DA DA DA DA DA –

**BRIAN**

DA DA DA DA DA –

**NICKY**

DA DA DA DA DAA –

**ROD**

DA DA DA DA.

*Opakují „DA DA DA“ ještě jednou.*

*Z okna vystrčí hlavu Lama.*

**LAMA**

Briane! Co tam děláš?!

**BRIAN**

Do háje.

*Okno se zavře, Brian pokrčí rameny a tancuje dál.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

DA DA DA DA DA –

**BRIAN**

DA DA DA DA DA –

**NICKY**

DA DA DA DA DAA –

**ROD**

DA DA DA DA.

*Lama vychází ze vchodových dveří.*

**LAMA**

Co se všichni tak radujete?

**NICKY**

Naše životy stojí za hovno!

**LAMA**

Vaše životy stojí za hovno? To jako vážně? Ha!

BYDLÍM V TÉTO ZEMI  
UŽ PŘES DVACET LET  
PŘIJELA JSEM ZE SÝRIE  
KDYŽ MI BYLO SOTVA PĚT  
A TEĎ NA MĚ POKŘIKUJÍ  
AŽ SE VRÁTÍM ZPĚT

PRÝ MĚ TU NECHTĚJÍ  
PRÝ JSME VŠICHNI ZLODĚJI  
MÉHO SNOUBENCE Z KAŽDÉ PRÁCE VYLIJÍ  
MÁM VYSTUDOVANOU PSYCHOLOGII  
ALE NECHODÍ MI KLIENTI  
PROTOŽE SE BOJÍ, ŽE JE VYHODÍM DO POVĚTRÍ!  
TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!  
TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!  
A, VĚŘ MI, POD HIDŽÁBEM VÁŽNĚ BOMBU NESCHOVÁM  
TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!

*Vchází Princeton.*

**PRINCETON**

Promiňte?

**BRIAN**

Zdravíčko!

**PRINCETON**

Nerad vás obtěžuju, ale hledám místo k bydlení.

**LAMA**

Proč zrovna tady?

**PRINCETON**

No, začal jsem na Avenue A, ale zatím jsem nenarazil na nic, co bych si mohl dovolit. Tady to ale vypadá o moc levnější! Jé, a koukněte – tady zrovna někdo nabízí podnájem!

**BRIAN**

Musíš si promluvit se správcem. Hned ti ho zavolám.

**PRINCETON**

Fajn, děkuju!

**BRIAN**

Hej, Gary!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Už jdu! Už jdu!

*Na scéně se dramaticky objevuje Gary Coleman na požárním žebříku.*

**PRINCETON**

Ty bláho! To je Gary Coleman!

**GARY COLEMAN**

To si piš!

JSEM GARY COLEMAN,  
DĚTSKÁ TELEVIZNÍ STÁR,  
MĚL JSEM SPOUSTU PENĚZ,  
KTERÝ MI MŮJ TÁTA VZAL!  
TERČEM ŠPATNEJCH VTIPŮ OD VÁS VŠECH  
JSEM SE STAL,  
ALE JSEM TU

Váš správce!

NA AVENUE Q!

**VŠICHNI**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁŠ!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jsi na tom nejhůř!

**VŠICHNI**

TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁŠ

**BRIAN**

Hned se cejtím líp!

**GARY COLEMAN**

PROČ LIDI NA ULICI KŘIČÍ NA MĚ

„To je ten černoch z televize!“

*(chvíle ticha)*

Už je to starý.

**VŠICHNI**

TĚŽKÝ TO MÁŠ.

NA AVENUE Q (NA PRD JSEM JÁ)

NA AVENUE Q (NA PRD JSEŠ TY)

NA AVENUE Q (NA PRD JSME MY)

ALE TEĎ JSME TU SPOLU!

VŠICHNI SPOLU JSME

NA AVENUE Q,

ŽIJEM NA AVENUE Q,

VŠICHNI UŽ JSME TU!

NEŽ DOSÁHNEM SVÝCH SNŮ,

ŽIJEM NA AVENUE Q

**PRINCETON**

Tak tohle je život!

**VŠICHNI**

ŽIJEM NA AVENUE Q

**NICKY**

Bude se ti tu líbit.

**VŠICHNI**

ŽIJEM NA AVENUE Q



**GARY COLEMAN**

Tady máš klíče!

**VŠICHNI**

VÍTEJ NA AVENUE Q!

*Hudba končí. Nicky a Rod odchází.*

**BRIAN**

Tak jak se jmenuješ?

**PRINCETON**

Princeton.

**BRIAN**

Nazdar, kamaráde, já jsem Brian. Tohle je moje snoubenka.

**LAMA**

Já jsem Lama. A ty jsi roztomilý! Sekne ti to! Máš někoho?

**PRINCETON**

Ne –

**LAMA**

*(ukazuje na Kate)*

Ona taky ne.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

*(v rozpacích)*

Ale no tak, Lamo!

**BRIAN**

To je Kate Příšerová. Bydlíme ve stejné bytovce.

**PRINCETON**

Ahoj!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ahoj!

*Rozletí se okno Trekkieho Příšery. Ten z okna vyhodí pytel odpadků, který s hlasitou ránou dopadne na chodník.*

**GARY COLEMAN**

Trekkie!

**BRIAN**

Dobré ráno, Trekkie!

**TREKKIE PŘÍŠERA**

Na řeči nemít čas. Mít práci.

*Zabouchne okno.*

**BRIAN**

A to byl Trekkie Příšera.

**LAMA**

Je to úchyl. Moc se s ním nezahlazuj.

**GARY COLEMAN**

Pojď dovnitř, chlapče, ukážu ti to tam.

**PRINCETON**

Paráda!

*Během jejich odchodu*

**GARY COLEMAN**

O tuto vybranou adresu už vyjádřilo zájem mnoho významných lidí.

**PRINCETON**

Fakt?!

**GARY COLEMAN**

To si piš.

*Odchází ze scény.*

**LAMA**

Tak co říkáš, Kate Příšerová? Je roztomilý, že?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ano –

**LAMA**

Tak po něm skoč! Mužům se líbí agresivní ženy!

*(K Brianovi, kterého postrčí.)*

Ty! Najdi si práci!

**BRIAN**

Hned jdu na to!

*Odbíhá pryč.*

**LAMA**

*(ke Kate)*

Vidíš?

*Lama jde dovnitř, Kate se zadívá směrem, kterým odešel Princeton a poté ji následuje.*

2a – Za Nickym a Rodem

## SCÉNA DRUHÁ – U NICKYHO A RODA DOMA

*Rod sedí ve svém elegantním bytě, čte si knihu.*

**ROD**

Ach! Klidné odpoledne, jen já se svou oblíbenou knihou, „Nejlepší muzikály sedmdesátých let“. Žádný spolubydlící, který by mě otravoval. Může to snad být ještě lepší?

*Vesele vchází Nicky.*

**NICKY**

Nazdar, Rode!

**ROD**

Ahoj, Nicky.

**NICKY**

Hej, Rode, nevěřil bys, co se mi ráno stalo v metru. Byl tam jeden chlápek, co se na mě usmíval a trochu jsme pokecali –

**ROD**

Moc zajímavé.

**NICKY**

Byl fakt moc přátelskej a, víš, myslím, že po mě jel. Myslím, že si asi myslel, že jsem gay!

**ROD**

*(nesvůj)*

Ehm, takže, hm, proč mi tohle říkáš? Proč by mě to mělo zajímat? Nezajímá mě to. Co jsi měl dnes k obědu?

**NICKY**

Rode, nemusíš se hnedka brá–

**ROD**

Já se nebráním! Proč by mě měl zajímat nějaký homosexuál, kterého jsi potkal?  
Snažím se tu číst.

*Po chvíli ticha se Rod vrací ke své knize.*

**NICKY**

Nic jsem tím nemyslel, Rode, jen si myslím, že bysme měli být schopní si o tomhle otevřeně promluvit.

**ROD**

Nechci o tom mluvit, Nicky! Tahle konverzace skončila.

*(zvukový předěl)*

SKONČILA!

3 – Kdybys byl Gay

**NICKY**

Dobře, dobře. Ale jen abys věděl:

JESTLI JSEŠ GAY,  
TO JE OUKEJ.  
VŽDYŤ JE TI HEJ,  
TAK UŽ TO NESKRÝVEJ.  
KDYBYCH JÁ SNAD  
MĚL CHLAPY RÁD  
TAK BYCH SE NESTYDĚL  
ŘÍCT, ŽE JSEM GAY  
(JÁ NEJSEM GAY).

## ROD

Nicky, prosím! Snažím se číst...

*(Nicky na Roda zírá.)*

Co?!

### NICKY

KDYBYS GAY BYL,  
JÁ BYCH TĚ KRYL  
A ZAŘÍDIL,  
ABY SES NETRÁPIL  
VÍM, ŽE I TY  
BYS TU BYL VŽDY  
KDYBYCH SE NESTYDĚL  
ŘÍCT: VÍŠ CO? JSEM GAY!  
(JÁ NEJSEM GAY)

JSEM ŠŤASTNÝ,  
ŽE TĚ TU MÁM.

TAK PROČ BY MI MĚLO VADIT,  
S KÝM SI VNOCI UŽÍVÁŠ?

Ale, není!

KDYBYS BYL GAY  
VOLAL BYCH „HEJ!“  
ABYS VEN ŠEL  
NA LÁSKU NEZANEVŘEL

BUDU TI RÁD  
OPAKOVAT  
JAK NA KOLOVRÁTKU,

### ROD

Nicky –  
Nicky, snažím se číst!  
Nicky –!  
Á!  
Co?  
Vážně?

*Noc na Karlštejně,  
Trhák...*

Nicky, to je nechutný!

Ááá!  
Nech mě bejt!  
La la la la!  
Ááá!

ŽE JE TO VPOŘÁDKU,  
A TY SE KLIDNĚ SMĚJ,  
A S KÝM CHCEŠ SI U NÁS UŽÍVEJ,  
JSEŠ GAY!

Já nejsem gay!

**NICKY**

Kdybys byl gay.

**ROD**

Á!



## SCÉNA TŘETÍ – PRINCETONŮV BYT

*Gary nese dovnitř krabice a štos dopisů. Princeton jej následuje.*

**PRINCETON**

Hele, Gary, děkuju za pomoc se stěhováním!

**GARY COLEMAN**

V pohodě! A koukni, už tu máš první poštu!

**PRINCETON**

Páni, díky!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Co to v těch krabicích máš? Něco zajímavýho?

**PRINCETON**

Rodiče mi poslali všechny věci z domova!

**GARY COLEMAN**

To je od nich milé! Tak tady k tomu máš účet za nájem, za energie, za kreditku, internet, telefon, dopis ohledně studentský půjčky –

**PRINCETON**

Pane Bože!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Máš peníze?

**PRINCETON**

No, zítra začínám pracovat –

*Zvoní telefon. Gary ho zvedne.*

## GARY COLEMAN

Gary Coleman.

*(k Princetonovi)*

To je pro tebe.

*Předá mu telefon.*

## PRINCETON

*(Slyšíme vřavu na druhém konci linky.)*

Ehm, haló? Jé, dobrý den!

*(nadšeně ke Garymu)*

Volají z práce!

*(do telefonu)*

Nemůžu se dočkat, až zítra všechny poznám – pardon, skoro vás neslyším. Aha. Říkáte „snižování stavů“? Ale jak mě můžete vyhodit, když jsem ještě ani ne – Ne, počkejte, nezavěšujte! Prosím! JAK MÁM TAKHLE ŽÍT?

*(Druhá strana zavěsí.)*

Haló?

## GARY COLEMAN

No tak, chlapče, netvař se tak smutně. Dám ti radu. Nikdy nepodceňuj dlouhodobé plánování. Když tě život srazí na kolena, nesmíš zůstat sedět na zadku a nenech život jen tak plynout. Víš, co se říká – když přeskládáš písmenka ve slově „nezaměstnaný“, dostaneš slovo „příležitost“!

## PRINCETON

Co?

*Gary se usměje a odchází.*

## PRINCETON

Možná, že to je příležitost! Možná, že mi není souzené sedět do konce života v nějaké pitomé kanceláři! Možná – možná má můj život nějaký hlubší smysl!

*Z ničeho nic ožije video obrazovka.*

## DĚTSKÝ HLAS

Co je to smysl života?

3b – Malá smyslná hudba

## HLAS

Smysl života udává našemu životu směr. Může to být práce, rodina, honba za vzděláním nebo penězi. Každý má svůj vlastní smysl života. Nejlepší je, že smysl života dává tvému životu význam.

## DĚTSKÝ HLAS

Taky bych jeden takový chtěl!

4 – Smysl života

## PRINCETON

*(zpívá)*

SMYSL  
DRŽÍ TĚ NAD VODOU  
ON PONDĚLÍ DO NEDĚLE  
SMYSL  
JEN TEN TI ZAPÁLÍ  
KOUDEL PŘÍMO U PRDELE.

KAŽDÝ UŽ SVŮJ SMYSL NAŠEL,  
TAK CO JE S MÝM?

*(Zvedne ze země desetník.)*

Hele, to je desetník! A je z roku, kdy jsem se narodil! To musí být –

ZNAMENÍ!  
NEVÍM, KDE HLEDAT MÁM,  
ALE SMYSL MUSÍM NAJÍT.  
MŮŽE SE, KDE CHCE, SCHOVÁVAT,  
STEJNĚ HO ZKUSÍM NAJÍT.  
PAK ŽIVOT MŮJ DOSTANE SPÁD  
NECHCI UŽ ČEKAT, JÁ MUSÍM ZNÁT  
POSLÁNÍ SVÉ  
A PAK BUDU RÁD.

*Přidávají se krabice.*

**KRABICE A OSTATNÍ**  
NAJDE SVÉ POSLÁNÍ!

**PRINCETON**  
NAJDU SVÉ POSLÁNÍ

**KRABICE A OSTATNÍ**  
NAJDE SVÉ POSLÁNÍ

**PRINCETON**  
POLICAJT, UČITEL,  
NEBO KONOPÍ PĚSTITEL!  
ZA MĚSÍC, ZA ROK SNAD,  
BUDU SVŮJ SMYSL ZNÁT!  
KONEC VŠECH NESNÁZÍ,

VELKÁ ZMĚNA PŘICHÁZÍ!  
NAJDU SVÉ POSLÁNÍ!

**KRABICE A OSTATNÍ**  
NAJDEŠ SVÉ POSLÁNÍ!

**PRINCETON**  
NAJDU SVÉ POSLÁNÍ –  
NEPOLEVÍM, Z POSLEDNÍCH SIL  
POBĚŽÍM KLIDNĚ I STOVKY MIL.  
SVÉ POSLÁNÍ NAJDU  
A S NÍM I SVŮJ CÍL.  
NAJDU SVÉ POSLÁNÍ!  
NAJDU NAJDU NAJDU!  
JÉ JÉ!  
A S NÍM I SVŮJ CÍL.

*Potlesk, odchod.*

4a – Smysl: Odchod

**KRABICE**  
NAJDE SVÉ POSLÁNÍ

## SCÉNA ČTVRTÁ – NA ULICI

*Na plátně: SMYSL ŽIVOTA. Princeton hledí na plátno.*

*Přichází Lama.*

**LAMA**

Smyslem mého života je pomáhat lidem v nalezení sebe sama.

*Odchází. Objeví se Brian.*

**BRIAN**

Smyslem mého života je rozesmívat lidi. A pořádně na tom vydělávat.

*Brian odchází. Objeví se Gary.*

**GARY COLEMAN**

Nejvíc se bojím toho, že už jsem svého smyslu života dosáhl. Teď mám radost, když můžu vyjít na ulici aspoň se špetkou důstojnosti.

*Gary odchází. Světla se rozsvítí a míří na Princetona.*

*Přichází Kate Příšerová*

**PRINCETON**

Jé, ahoj, Kate Příšerová!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Princetone! Ahoj!

**PRINCETON**

Kate, můžu se tě na něco zeptat?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jasně!

**PRINCETON**

Jaký je smysl tvého života?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Páni! No, jsem asistentka učitelky v mateřské škole.

**PRINCETON**

Dobře, ale co je smyslem tvého života? Tvůj sen! Tvoje životní mise!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Takové věci nikdy nikoho nezajímají!

**PRINCETON**

Mě ano!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

*(červená se)*

Tak když už se ptáš – Ne! Nemůžu. Vždyť tě ani neznám!

**PRINCETON**

Ale no ták!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Tak dobrá.

*4b – Smysl života Kate Příšerové*

*(hovoří do zvonivé hudby)*

Když jsem ještě byla malá Příšerka, vždy jsem si přála mít zvláštní místo, kam bych mohla jít. Zvláštní školu, která by byla jen pro Příšery. Média zmiňují jen to špatné, co děláme, ale právě chlupatí lidé jsou některými z nejproduktivnějších osob naší společnosti! Proto je mým snem otevřít speciální školu jen pro Příšery, kde se malé příšerky budou moci stát součástí světové komunity. To je ve zkratce smysl mého života.

*(Hudba končí. Zvukový předěl.)*

Ale nejsem žádná šprtka! Miluju srandu a párty –

**PRINCETON**

Takže tě bere všechno kolem Příšer, co?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Mhm.

**PRINCETON**

Znáš Trekkieho Příšeru z druhého patra?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Mhm.

**PRINCETON**

On se jmenuje Trekkie Příšera a ty jseš Kate Příšerová.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ano.

**PRINCETON**

Jste oba Příšerovi.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ano.



**PRINCETON**

Jste příbuzní?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

*(v šoku)*

Prosím? To jsi mě teda překvapil, Princetone! Podle mě to je rasistické!

**PRINCETON**

Promiň! Jen jsem se zeptal.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Je to ožehavé téma. Ne, všichni Příšerové nejsou příbuzní. Co se mi tu snažíš říct? Vypadáme podle tebe všichni stejně?

**PRINCETON**

Ne, vůbec ne. Omlouvám se. Asi to bylo trochu rasistické.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

To teda. Měl bys být mnohem opatrnější, když dojde na ožehavá témata, jako je rasa.

5 – Rasista je tak trochu každý

**PRINCETON**

A koukněme, kdopak to mluví!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Co tím myslíš?

**PRINCETON**

A co ta škola, o které jsi mluvila?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Co s ní?

**PRINCETON**

Mohl by tam chodit někdo jako já?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ne, nemáme rádi lidi jako jsi ty –

*(zalapá po dechu)*

**PRINCETON**

Vidíš?!

*(zpívá)*

JSI TROCHU RASISTICKÁ

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

A RASISTA JSI I TY!

**PRINCETON**

ASI TEBE I MĚ SE TO TÝKÁ

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

A NE KAŽDÝ SI TO SNADNO PŘIPUSTÍ

**PRINCETON**

TO NENÍ FÁMA

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

A MEZI NÁMA,

MYSLÍM, ŽE

**OBA**

RASISMUS SE OBČAS TÝKÁ KAŽDÉHO Z NÁS  
I PŘES TO VŠAK NEVOLÍME ÚTOČNÝ HLAS  
PTEJ SE JEHO, NEBO MĚ,  
ALE KAŽDEJ VIDÍ BAREVNĚ  
RASISMUS JE NÁPLŇ NAŠICH DNŮ  
KAŽDÝ Z NÁS JE PLNÝ  
PŘEDSUDKŮ

**PRINCETON**

Žádný velký předsudky, jako koho radši zaměstnáme, nebo od koho si radši koupíme kebab.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ne!

**PRINCETON**

Ne, jen malé předsudky, jako, že Vietnamci ve večerkách by se měli do prdele naučit česky!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Přesně!

**OBA**

RASISMUS SE DNESKA TÝKÁ KAŽDÉHO Z NÁS  
ALE S KAŽDÝM ČERNÝM VTIPEM SE NÁM HNED ŽIJE  
SNÁZ  
NENÍ PĚKNÉ SE JIM SMÁT,  
ALE NEJDE TOMU ODOLAT.  
KAŽDÝ V SOBĚ TROCHU PRAVDY MÁ.  
KAŽDÝ ČLOVĚK ASPOŇ  
JEDEN ZNÁ.

**PRINCETON**

Hele, zastav mě, jestli už tenhle znáš. Padá letadlo a na palubě je jen jeden padák.

A je tam rabín, kněz, a...

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

A ČERNOCH!

*Gary Coleman vykoukne zpoza plotu.*

**GARY COLEMAN**

O čem to mluvíš, Kate?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Já –

**GARY COLEMAN**

Ty vyprávíš vtip o černochovi!

**PRINCETON**

Ale, Gary, každéj přece vypráví vtipy o černoších.

**GARY COLEMAN**

Já ne.

**PRINCETON**

Jasně, že ty ne, ty jseš černej. Ale určitě vyprávíš vtipy o Židech!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Jasně.

*(rozesměje se)*

Pitomí Židi!

**PRINCETON**

A nemyslíš si, že je to trochu rasistický?

**GARY COLEMAN**

A sakra, no asi jo.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

JSI TROCHU RASISTICKÝ.

**GARY COLEMAN**

A RASISTA JSI I TY.

**PRINCETON**

BYLI JSME TAKOVÍ VŽDYCKY

**GARY COLEMAN**

A DOKONCE I JÁ SI TO PŘIPUSTÍM

**PRINCETON A KATE**

JE TO SMUTNÝ FAKT,

**GARY COLEMAN**

JSME LIDSKÉ BYTOSTI, A TAK  
RASISTA JE TAK TROCHU KAŽDÝ–  
I JÁ!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

I JÁ!

**PRINCETON**

I JÁ!

**GARY COLEMAN**

I JÁ!

NENÁVIST UŽ DÁVNO NENÍ JENOM BÍLÁ

**VŠICHNI**

KDYŽ SI PŘIZNÁ KAŽDÝ Z NÁS,  
ŽE S RASISEM SE ŽIJE SNÁZ,  
HNED NÁM SPOLU BUDE MNOHEM LÍP  
STAČÍ JENOM JEDEN  
ŠPATNÝ VTIP

**PRINCETON**

Ježíši, já se cejtím dobře!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Jó, to byl aspoň pořádněj, poctivej černocho.

**PRINCETON**

Kdo?

**GARY COLEMAN**

Ježíš Kristus!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ale Gary, Ježíš byl bílej!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Ne, Ježíš byl černej.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ne, Ježíš byl bílej!

**GARY COLEMAN**

Ne, jsem si docela jistej, že byl Ježíš černej!

**PRINCETON**

Děcka – Ježíš byl Žid!

*Všichni se smějí, vchází Brian.*

**BRIAN**

Nazdar, čemu se tak smějete?

**GARY COLEMAN**

Rasismu!

**BRIAN**

Bomba!

*Na scénu vstupuje Lama.*

**LAMA**

BRIANE! Mazej zpátky a konečně zalij ten dorodendoron!

**PRINCETON**

Co to má bejt?

**BRIAN**

Ehm. Náš rododendron.

*Všichni se smějí.*

Hej, nesmějte se! Kolik jazyků umíte vy?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ále, nech to plavat, Briane!

**RASISTA JE TAK TROCHU KAŽDÝ –**

**BRIAN**

Já ne!

**PRINCETON**

Že ne?

**BRIAN**

Ne!

KOLIK ORIENTÁLNÍCH ŽEN MÁŠ TY?

**LAMA**

Cože? Briane!

**PRINCETON**

HELE, KÁMO, DOBŘE VÍŠ,  
ŽE TUHLE V JEDNU Z NÁS NEZMĚNÍŠ

**LAMA**

VÍM, ŽE NEMYSLÍŠ TO NIJAK ZLE,  
ALE SLOVO „ORIENTÁLNÍ“  
MĚ FAKT ŠTVE!

**BRIAN**

Promiň, miláčku! Miluju tě.

**LAMA**

A já miluju tebe.

**BRIAN**

Ale i ty jsi rasista.

**LAMA**

Ano, já vím.



ŽID OPLÝVÁ PENĚZI  
A BĚLOCH ZASE MOCÍ  
A CIGÁNA SE BOJÍM, KDYŽ JDU KOLEM METRA V NOCI

### **PRINCETON**

Já taky!

### **KATE MONSTER**

Já taky!

### **GARY COLEMAN**

Já taky, a to mně ani nemá co ukrást!

### **VŠICHNI**

RASISTA JE TAK TROCHU KAŽDÝ, I TY  
A STEJNĚ JAKO TY UŽ JE S TÍM KAŽDÝ SŽITÝ.  
KDYŽ SI PŘIZNÁ KAŽDÝ Z NÁS,  
ŽE S RASIZMEM SE ŽIJE SNÁZ,  
A S KOREKTNOSTÍ NEBUDEŠ SE SRÁT,  
O TO  
BUDEŠ  
VŠECHNY  
MÍT VÍC RÁD

### **LAMA**

Rasista je tak trochu každý.

*Dohra.*

5a – Rasistická dohra

## SCÉNA ČTVRTÁ a) – POKRAČOVÁNÍ

*Princeton je sám.*

**PRINCETON**

Cítím, že dneska se svému smyslu života vážně blížím.

*5a – 1 – Policista na přechodu (a spol.)*

**DĚTSKÉ HLASY**

Policista na přechodu!

**PRINCETON**

Ne, to přece nejsem já.

*Vidíme Princetona, jak v salonu dělá staré paní manikúru.*

**DĚTSKÉ HLASY**

Manikérka!

**PRINCETON**

To taky ne.

*Vidíme Princetona jako klauna na dětské oslavě.*

**DĚTSKÉ HLASY**

Klaun!

**PRINCETON**

Skoro, ale pořád není to ono –

5b – Skoro...

(zvoní zvonek)

Počkat – Myslím, že je to tu! Už to skoro mám! Smysl mého života! Je to – Je to –

5c – Poťouchové

**MÉĎOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ**

Nazdar, Princetone!

**MEDVĚDICE**

To jsme my!

**PRINCETON**

Co jste zač?

**MÉĎOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ**

Jsme Méd'ové Poťouchové!

**MEDVĚDICE**

Jsme tvoji kamarádi!

**MEDVĚD**

Kam se chystáš?

**PRINCETON**

Jsem na mizině. Takže, zatímco budu hledat smysl života, najdu si i práci!

**MEDVĚDICE**

Přišly ti peníze od vašich?

**PRINCETON**

Jo.

**MEDVĚDICE**

Tak to máš spoustu peněz!

**MEDVĚD**

Měl bys oslavovat!

**MEDVĚDICE**

Musíš si nějak udělat radost. Kup si pivo!

**MEDVĚD**

Jo! Kup si pivo!

**PRINCETON**

Neměl bych utrácet peníze rodičů za pivo.

**MEDVĚD**

*(velmi smutný)*

Aha. No tak dobrá.

**MEDVĚDICE**

Jsem moc smutná, když pomyslím, že si neužiješ žádnou zábavu.

**MEDVĚD**

Chce se mi brečet.

**MEDVĚDICE**

*(pláče)*

Jsem moc smutná. Občas si přeju být mrtvá.

**PRINCETON**

Víte co? Možná bych si pár piv koupit mohl.

**MĚDOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ**

Hurá!

**MEDVĚDICE**

Proč ne rovnou basu?

**MEDVĚD**

Basu piv!

**PRINCETON**

Nemůžu si koupit celou basu!

**MEDVĚDICE**

Ale máš malý rozpočet!

**MEDVĚD**

Proděláš, když je budeš kupovat po jednom!

**PRINCETON**

To máš pravdu. Páni, děkuju! Koupím si celou basu!

**MĚDOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ**

Hurá –! Tak zatím, Princetone!

*Medvědi odchází.*

**PRINCETON**

Zatím! Teda, ti jsou roztomilí. Je dobré vědět, že máte přátele, kterým na vás záleží.

## SCÉNA PÁTÁ – BYT KATE / NA ULICI

*5d – Hovor pro Kate*

*Dvakrát zazvoní telefon, Kate hovor přijme.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Prosím?

*Na druhé straně scény se objeví stará, scvrklá paní.*

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

Dobré ráno, Kateřino. Hovoří tvoje šéfová.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Dobré ráno, paní Kakáčová!

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

Jak zajisté víš, příští týden mne čeká transplantace srdce a potřebuji, abys ráno učila v mé třídě. Nejspíš budu potřebovat na zotavení čas alespoň do oběda.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Budu je učit úplně sama?

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

Věřím ti, Kateřino. A můžeš si i vybrat, co je budeš učit.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Páni – Děkuji, Lýdie!

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

Kateřino, když mne oslovuješ křestním jménem, klesá mi u dětí autorita.

**KATE PÍŠEROVÁ**

Omlouvám se, paní Kakáčová.

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

Děkuji.

*Paní Kakáčová zmizí.*

**KATE PÍŠEROVÁ**

*(k publiku)*

Konečně!

## SCÉNA ŠESTÁ – NA ULICI

*Na scéně jsou Lama a Rod.*

**LAMA**

Ahoj, Rode, jak žiješ?

**ROD**

Dostal jsem pozvánku na vaši svatbu, Lamo!

**LAMA**

A přijdeš?

**ROD**

Tady máš mé potvrzení účasti.

*Podává jí obálku. V okně se objeví Brian, v ruce drží pozvánku.*

**BRIAN**

Miláčku? Co to tady čtu, že se budeme brát?

**LAMA**

Ber to jako oslavu s překvapením.

**BRIAN**

Paráda!

*Zavře okno.*

**ROD**

*(trochu smutně)*

Je skvělé, že máš v životě někoho, koho miluješ.



**LAMA**

Je všechno v pořádku, Rode?

**ROD**

Lamo, ty jsi psycholožka, že?

**LAMA**

Mám dva magisterské tituly!

**ROD**

Takže pomáháš lidem s různými problémy, že?

**LAMA**

Nikdo ke mně pro pomoc nechodí. Vždycky někdo přijde, hodinu si povídáme, pak odejde a už se nikdy nevrátí. A já si říkám: Proč? To zvládnou každého napravit během jedné schůzky? Možná jsem moc dobrá. Možná musím pomáhat postupně. Proč se ptáš, Rode? Potřebuješ pomoc?

**ROD**

No, mám jednoho kamaráda –

**LAMA**

Nickyho?

**ROD**

Ne, ne – jiného kamaráda. A mám dojem, že má velký problém. Mám dojem –  
Mám dojem, že je

*(zašeptá)*

gay.

**LAMA**

A co je na tom špatného? Podívej, Rode, gayové obohacují naše životy o umění, filozofii a literaturu už stovky let.

**ROD**

Ale můj kamarád není umělec – je republikán. A investiční bankéř.

**LAMA**

Aha. No, tak mu řekni, ať to nikomu neříká, takhle je nám k ničemu.

*Chvilé ticha.*

**ROD**

Tak dobře! Výborně! Děkuju za radu!

**LAMA**

Jo, ale já bych takového kamaráda teda nechtěla.

**ROD**

Ještě jednou díky!

**LAMA**

Měj se.

*Jde domů.*

**ROD**

Ty taky!

*(Zvukový předěl. K publiku:)*

Do háje.

## SCÉNA SEDMÁ – BYT KATE

7 – CD

*Kate je sama.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ach, Princetone.

*(zpívá)*

LÍBÍM,  
JÁ SE MU LÍBÍM.  
ALE ZNAMENÁ TO,  
ŽE MÁ MĚ RÁD?  
ZÁJEM BY MĚL,  
TO ZJEVNÉ JE.  
BUDEME MILENCI  
NEBO PŘÁTELE?

*Zvonek.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Dále!

*Vchází Princeton.*

**PRINCETON**

Nazdárek, Kate!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Princetone! Ahoj!

**PRINCETON**

Hele, procházel jsem starý alba a našel jsem pár písniček, co by se ti mohly líbit, tak jsem ti je vypálil.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jé, to je milé! Můžu ti něco nabídnout? Pítí? Něco k jídlu?

**PRINCETON**

Vlastně, mohl bych si u tebe odskočit?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jasně, klidně běž.

**PRINCETON**

Děkuju!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

CÉDÉ  
ON MI DAL CÉDÉ.  
ON PRO MĚ OBĚTOVAL  
SVŮJ VOLNÝ ČAS!  
OBČAS, KDYŽ NĚKDO  
TĚ V LÁSCE MÁ,  
PAK NÁZVEM PÍSNĚ  
TI VODÍTKO DÁ.

Podívejme...

„PŘÍTEL GUMP“  
„KAMARÁD“  
„MÁŠ VE MNĚ PŘÍTELE“

Do háje...

Ale koukej!

„LÁSKY ČAS“  
„CO DŘÍMÁ V NÁS“  
„Z JEDNÉ POSTELE“

Ach, Princetone! Tak přece mě má rád!

„KŘEČEK A KRTEK“  
„ŠPEKOUNI PRYČ“  
„ŽÍT A NECHAT ŽÍT“  
CO TO MÁ BÝT?

*Princetone se vrací*

**PRINCETON**

Heleď, Kate, být sebou bych tam teď na chvílku nechodil.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Princetone, děkuju za ty písničky. Zrovna jsem koukala na první půlku.

**PRINCETON**

A už ses dostala ke druhé?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ještě ne.

**PRINCETON**

Ta druhá je super! Koukej:

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

„STÍN KATEDRÁL“  
„ZEJTRA MÁM“  
„JEN PRO TEN DNEŠNÍ DEN“

Miluju Kristiána!

**PRINCETON**

Dalo se to.

„TAK RUKU MI DEJ“

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

„YESTERDAY“

**PRINCETON**

„DLOUHÁ NOC“ A „SEN“

Ten od Lucie, ne od Erika a Barbary.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Stejně neznám ani jeden.

„CHTĚL JSEM MÍT“

**PRINCETON**

„JEN S TEBOU BÝT“

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

„STŮJ, PŘI MNE STŮJ“

Pěkný výběr.

**PRINCETON**

Ještě je tam jedna...

„CHTĚL BYCH BÝT VÍC NEŽ PŘÍTEL TVŮJ“

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Princetone, to je tak milé! Nikdy jsem od žádného kluka nic tak krásného nedostala.

**PRINCETON**

To mám radost, že se ti líbí. Ale už budu muset jít. Chci udělat jedno taky pro Briana a Lamu a Garyho a pro Nickyho a Roda a Trekkieho Příšeru a pro všechny!

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Aha...

**PRINCETON**

A, no –

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ano?

**PRINCETON**

Co děláš dneska večer?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Budu opravovat slohovky. Ale psali je předškoláci, takže budou krátké. Proč?

**PRINCETON**

Všichni se chystají do kavárny na koncert jedné takové zpěvačky, nechceš jít se mnou?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Jako na rande?

**PRINCETON**

Jasně! Na rande. Bude to boží.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Moc ráda přijdu!

**PRINCETON**

Tak se tam uvidíme.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Fajn!

**PRINCETON**

Fajn, tak ahoj.

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Ahoj!

**PRINCETON**

Ahoj!

*Odchází.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ**

Má mě rád!



## **5 Translation Commentary**

### **5.1 Libretto and Adaptation Changes**

This chapter focuses on the libretto translation, which is based on the theoretical approaches to theatre play translation discussed previously in chapter 2.1. However, this chapter will be partially focusing on the adaptation changes as well, as these have to be considered before the process translation itself begins.

When there are too many exotic elements in the translation or when the translation is linguistically too similar to the source text, Popovič proposes that the audience might view it as suspicious. He proposes the term “translativity”, which is a form of equivalence between the source text and the translation, thanks to which the audience can realize the relation between the domestic and the foreign culture. These relations are usually polar opposites and Popovič gives the example of neutralization and exoticization or folklorization and urbanization (Popovič 1975, 31, 63, 64). The story of *Avenue Q* takes place in New York, USA. Because the Czech audience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to an extent familiar with American culture, the goal is not to fully transfer the story into Czech environment, but rather to find balance between the American and Czech culture, so that the audience is not overwhelmed by neither of them. The play should not make the audience feel like they are watching a story of Americans about Americans. The audience should feel at home and should be able to relate to the story. For this reason, even though the setting, along with some cultural references, is maintained, a lot of the jokes are applied on the Czech environment, as this way the audience can feel involved with the story. In other words, in terms of translativity, the balance between exoticization and naturalization is in place.

#### **5.1.1 Characters**

Changes in the cast might be required considering the characters of Christmas Eve and Gary Coleman.

In this translation, the Japanese character Christmas Eve was substituted by a Muslim woman Lama, in the manner of the Trindade Theatre in Lisbon (the 2017 production), where the character was replaced with Muslim Mary. This character is more topical to the contemporary Czech society and its perception of immigrants and racial/religious issues.

The character of Gary Coleman stays untranslated and unchanged. Even though many celebrities, both Czech and international and of different ethnicities (such as Dominik Feri, Ben Cristovao, Rey Koranteng, Radoslav Banga or Lindsay Lohan), were considered for the translation, the final substitution will most likely require cooperation of the translator and the theatre company aiming for adaptation, as it will depend on the company's casting possibilities.

### 5.1.2 Names

Names such as Brian, Rod or Nicky do not necessarily require a translation as they do not carry any characteristic traits and they can be used in Czech and with Czech pronunciation without problems.

The names of Kate Monster and Trekkie Monster carry a characteristic trait – their last name Monster distinguishes them from other puppets. The Monsters are, as it arises from the dialogue preceding the “Everyone’s a Little Bit Racist” musical number, a different race. While the names Kate and Trekkie<sup>6</sup> are usable in Czech as they are, the last name was translated, creating a clear understanding of who Kate Příšerová and Trekkie Příšera are. The -ová form of Kate’s last name was chosen to bring the character closer to the real world, as “Kate Příšera” sounds like a fairy tale character rather than a real-life Czech human being. In Scene Five, Kate is called by her full name by her boss. In this particular case, the Czech equivalent of the name – Kateřina – is used, as “Katherine” is not easy to pronounce with a Czech pronunciation and the English pronunciation would sound intrusive.

Princeton falls into the same category as Kate and Trekkie – Princeton being the name of a University, it signals the character is a freshly graduated university student. However, following this method in Czech, it seems too clumsy to translate the character as “Masaryk”, “Baťa”, “Palacký” or simply Karel. For this reason, Princeton stays Princeton in the translation, maintaining the connotation for the part of the audience familiar with American culture.

The Bad Idea Bears and Mrs. Thistlewat require a full translation. In the musical, the Bad Idea Bears are creatures that talk others into bad behaviour and foolish action and this expression found its way into the every-day English

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<sup>6</sup> According to the puppet wikia website, Trekkie was originally supposed to be a Star Trek fan, but this idea was later dropped due to possible copyright claims from Paramount. Despite that, his name was unchanged in the final version.

language. They were translated as *Méd'ové Po'ouchové*, the expression “po'ouch” originating in the 2010 Miloš Kratochvíl's children book *Modrý Po'ouch* about a creature of the same traits as the Bears. Mrs. Thistlewat's name serves as a joke in the script. Picking up a real Czech last name that would appear as both funny and inappropriate, Mrs. Thistlewat became paní Kakáčová. Her first name Lavinia is only mentioned once in the musical and the decision to replace it with a Czech name was made because the English first and Czech last name do not sound natural together and the unusual English name could be overheard by the audience. Mrs. Thistlewat is supposed to be an old woman, as mentioned in the script notes, thus an old Czech name Lýdie was chosen.

The last name requiring attention is Christmas Eve. The name is not translated, as the character is fully replaced in this translation by a Syrian woman. The new character got the name Lama, a real Arabic name that sounds similarly ridiculous in Czech as Christmas Eve does in English.

### 5.1.3 Naturalization

Even though the translation does not aim for a full transfer of the play to the Czech environment, some of the references to American culture have to be changed, in most cases to maintain a joke that would not be understood otherwise.

Such occurrences emerge for example in Scene Two, where Rod talks about reading his favourite book – “Broadway Musicals of the 1940's” and later references two of the musicals, *High Button Shoes* and *Pal Joey* in the song “If You Were Gay”. In this case the book was changed to “The Best Musicals of the 70's” and the two musicals, which would be most certainly unknown to the audience, were switched to *Noc na Karlštejně* and *Trhák*, two Czech television musicals at least one of which the audience should be familiar with.

In the song “Everyone's a Little Bit Racist”, the jokes about Polacks are replaced by jokes about Jews, which are closer to the Czech environment, and the remark about smelly taxi drivers is replaced by a remark about gypsies, which is also a stereotype specific for the Czech Republic.

The whole song “A Mix Tape”, consisting almost entirely of song titles that have to be substituted for Czech ones, requires special care. This song will be discussed in depth in chapter 5.2.7.

#### 5.1.4 Language

The language used in the libretto is non-poetic, non-stylized and the majority of the characters uses colloquial American English, which is replicated in the translation to achieve language naturalness, as suggested by Espasa in chapter 2.1.1 considering the naturalness, playability and speakability.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 12)

(1) **NICKY:**

*Hey Rod, you'll never guess what happened to me on the subway this morning. This guy was smiling at me and talking to me –*

**ROD:**

*That's very interesting.*

**NICKY**

*He was being real friendly, and you know, I think he was coming on to me. I think he might've thought I was gay!*

**NICKY**

*Hej, Rode, nevěřil bys, co se mi ráno stalo v metru. Byl tam jeden chlápek, co se na mě usmíval a trochu jsme pokecali –*

**ROD**

*Moc zajímavé.*

**NICKY**

*Byl fakt moc přátelskej a, víš, myslím, že po mě jel. Myslím, že si asi myslel, že jsem gay!*

In Nicky's lines, as demonstrated in (1), there are expressions of colloquial Czech, such as "chlápek" or "pokecali", "he was coming on to me" is translated as "že po mě jel", instead of a more standardized "měl o mě zájem" or "líbil jsem se mu". The morphology of the word "přátelskej" is also non-standard, as it uses the suffix "-ej" instead of the standard "-ý".

Similarly, Princeton speaks quite casually during the talking parts in Everyone's A Little Bit Racist. It is logical to use colloquial Czech in this case, as everyone is having fun and laughing in this situation. In (2), Princeton's lines

again use morphology to create a more colloquial language, such as in the word “každej” instead of “každý” found in standard Czech, and, similarly, “jseš” instead of “jsi”.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 23)

(2) **PRINCETON:**

*Well, yeah, Gary, but lots of people tell black jokes...*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*I don't.*

**PRINCETON:**

*Of course you don't. You're BLACK! But I bet you tell Polack jokes, right?*

**PRINCETON:**

*Ale, Gary, každej přece říká vtipy o černoších.*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*Já ne.*

**PRINCETON:**

*Jasně, že ty ne, ty jseš černej. Ale určitě říkáš vtipy o Židech!*

On the other hand, Kate Monster tends to slip into standard English, for example in her monologue about the dream school she wishes to open. Standard English is also used during the video projections which try to mimic the style of children's TV shows and where the adult voice gives explanations and definitions. These parts are translated into standard Czech. Standard Czech is used also in the case of Mrs. Thistlewat.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 30)

(3) **MRS. THISTLETWAT:**

*As you may know, I have an appointment for heart replacement surgery next week, and I need you to teach my class in the morning. I will probably need until the lunch break to recover.*

**PANÍ KAKÁČOVÁ**

*Jak zajisté víš, příští týden mne čeká transplantace srdce a potřebuji, abys ráno učila v mé třídě. Nejspíš budu potřebovat na zotavení čas alespoň do oběda.*

In (3), Mrs. Thistlewat's speech is translated into standard Czech, using words such as “zajisté” and “alespoň”, which are not frequently used in spoken language – the more frequent choices would be “jistě” and “aspoň”. Similarly, the language is marked by morphology as well, as the word “potřebuji” uses the right suffix “-i” instead of the more frequent suffix “-u”, commonly heard in spoken Czech.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 20)

(4) **KATE MONSTER:**

[...] *So my dream is to start a special school, only for Monsters, where little Monsters can become part of the global community. So that, in short, is my purpose.*

[...]

*But I'm not an egghead! I like to have fun, and party*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

[...] *Proto je mým snem otevřít speciální školu jen pro Příšery, kde se malé příšerky budou moci stát součástí světové komunity. To je ve zkratce smysl mého života.*

[...]

*Ale nejsem žádná šprtka! Miluju srandu a párty –*

In (4) we can see the end of Kate Monster's speech about her purpose. The speech itself seems like something Kate memorized after thoroughly thinking about it, picking the best and most fitting words. Thus, it is translated in standard Czech, as demonstrated on the word “moci” in this excerpt. It is, again, the ending “-i” that gives the speech a formal feel. However, here, the standard Czech version of the modal verb was used because of the pronunciation issues as well – “moci stát” contains a consonant cluster c – t – s – t, which would be harder to pronounce and restrict the natural flow of the language.

As a contrast, after this well prepared, cultivated speech, Kate slips into more colloquial language to convince Princeton she is not boring. The word “egghead” was translated as “šprtka”, a feminine gender form of “šprt”, into Czech. “Miluju” takes the ending “-u” instead of “-i” and “party” is not translated as a “večírek” but takes the English-based form “párty”, which is more casual.

The language-related needs of a character, as mentioned by Espasa (2014, 55 – 56), can in this case be applied to Christmas Eve and Trekkie Monster. However,

Christmas Eve does not concern the translator as her character, along with her Japanese dialect, was replaced by Lama, whose language in the translation is also colloquial Czech.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 10)

(6)

**TREKKIE MONSTER:**

*Me no time to talk. Me busy.*

**TREKKIE PŘÍŠERA:**

*Na řeči nemít čas. Mít práci.*

Trekkie Monster, on the other hand, speaks ungrammatically, uses wrong pronoun forms, omits auxiliary verbs and uses mostly present tense<sup>7</sup> to express even past and future. Similar effect was achieved by using infinitive verb forms in the translation, as demonstrated in (6).

### 5.1.5 Humour

Preservation of jokes in *Avenue Q* is crucial. Even though the musical works with serious topics, the humour is prevalent in most parts, in both the song lyrics and the libretto, and erasure of the jokes might mislead the audience into thinking some of the controversial topics are discussed in a serious manner.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 16)

(7) **GARY COLEMAN:**

*[...] if you rearrange the letters in "unemployed", it spells "opportunity!"*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*[...] když přeskládáš písmenka ve slově „nezaměstnaný“, dostaneš slovo „příležitost“!*

In (7) Gary tries to give Princeton a life advice after Princeton loses his job. Rearranging letters to get words fitting such joke is a complicated task, however, as Gary's joke is already purposefully nonsensical in the original, there is no need

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<sup>7</sup> Trekkie's speech improves in the songs, where he uses more tenses, however the songs were not translated in this thesis.

for such work and the words “unemployed” and “opportunity” can be translated directly into “nezaměstnaný” a “příležitost”.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 22)

(8) **PRINCETON:**

*No, just little judgments like thinking that Mexican busboys should learn to speak goddamn English!*

**PRINCETON**

*Ne, jen malé předsudky, jako, že Vietnamci ve večerkách by se měli do prdele naučit česky!*

As Czech audience has no experience with Mexican busboys, Princeton’s remark would not be understood. In this case, even though the setting of the musical is New York, it is fitting to proceed according to Link (1980) and bring the audience back to their own reality by a joke aimed at their own environment. Thus, in (8) the Mexican busboys become Vietnamese shopkeepers known for their bad knowledge of Czech.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 25)

(9) **CHRISTMAS EVE:**

*BRIAN! You come back here! You take out lecycuraburs!*

**LAMA:**

*BRIANE! Mazej zpátky a konečně zalij ten dorodendoron!*

While Christmas Eve speaks with a Japanese dialect in English, Lama, living in the country since she was a child, lacks such dialect. In (9) she, however, has to make a mistake so that the others can laugh at her and Brian can object that she speaks more languages and should not be laughed at. As a result, instead of sending Brian to take out the trash, Lama wants him to finally water their rhododendron and has trouble pronouncing the word, which is a likely problem a non-native speaker would have in Czech.

Lastly, even though the captions in the script do not find their way to the audience, in this musical they can make the work more enjoyable and entertaining for the actors, as some of them are witty and original.



In (10) the caption announcing a background music to be played is a pun on Mozart's *Little Night Music* and was translated accordingly. Similarly, the "Racist Playoff" (Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 26) is translated as "Rasistická dohra".

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 16)

(10)

*3b – A Little Purpose Music*

*3b – Malá smyslná hudba*

### 5.1.6 Expressivity

Levý (2011, 114) proposes that "translators generally tone down the expressive tendencies of the original [...]; however, it is the psychology inherent in the activity of translating that is behind the tendency for translators themselves to opt for generalisation, neutralisation and repetition." When translating from English into Czech, vulgar language would usually be toned down in the target text, mainly because the curse words in the two languages, though having a similar meaning, possess different levels of vulgarity. This phenomenon can be observed on the first curse word present in the musical – Kate Monster's "fuck" in her part in "It Sucks To Be Me". In normal circumstances it would be translated as "sakra", a curse word not as strong as "fuck" but serving the same purpose of a complaint or expressing annoyance. However, In *Avenue Q*, the vulgarisms are put into opposition to its cartoon-like stylization and they serve as one of the factors differentiating the show from the children's TV shows. Many times, including this particular Kate Monster's use of "fuck", they add a shock value. For this reason, some of the vulgarisms of the original are translated with strongly vulgar expressions in Czech as well. However, in cases where the shock value was not intended or needed, the expressivity was toned down, such as with Brian's "oh, shit" in "It Sucks To Be Me" being translated as "do háje". Similarly to other aspects considered in regard to the translation, the aim was to achieve balance by toning the expressivity down in some cases as well as emphasizing it in other cases.

### 5.1.7 Exclamations

The English original, being a text meant for being spoken out, is full of exclamations and interjections, most of which can and should be translated. In this case it is important not to focus on translating the word itself, but to find an acceptable counterpart in Czech which can be used in a similar situation.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 10)

(11) **PRINCETON:**

*No kidding!*

**PRINCETON:**

*Fakt?!*

In example (11), Princeton is left in disbelief after Gary tries to convince him the address he is about to move to is an interest of many important people. In the translation, the exclamation changed into a question. Even though a more accurate translation would be “Kecáš!” (“You’re kidding!”), it is unlikely for Princeton to use it since he appears to be polite and grateful in the opening scene. “Kecáš!”, along with expressing surprise, accusing Gary of lying, which is not desirable here. Instead, “Fakt?!”, a spoken Czech version of “Opravdu?” (“Really?”) is used.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 20)

(12) **PRINCETON:**

*Aww, come on!*

**PRINCETON:**

*Ale no ták!*

When Princeton tries to convince Kate Monster to share her dreams with him, he uses an expression of endearment “aww”, which does not have a Czech counterpart. In (12), the expression “Ale no tak!” is used, giving the same sense of urgency as the original “come on”. However, the long vowel of “aww” is replicated at the end of the Czech line by making the usually short “a” in “no ták” long. This way the urgency of the expression is made even stronger.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 25)

(13) **BRIAN:**

*Cool!*

**BRIAN:**

*Paráda!*

Prior to the exclamation in (13), Brian is told he is getting married with Christmas Eve/Lama. He is not surprised, he simply accepts the information, being excited as his fiancée advises him to “think of it like a surprise party” (Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 25). In the translation, expressions such as “Bomba!” or “Super!” were considered. However, “Bomba!” could be easily overheard, as it contains “m” followed by “b”, which might be harder to pronounce loudly. “Super!” works better, but the translator was looking for a Czech word for the translation. “Paráda!” on the other hand contains three syllables with three open vowels that are easy to pronounce loudly, which eliminates the risk of being overheard.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 29)

(14) **BAD IDEA BEARS:**

*Yaaaaay!*

**MĚDOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ**

*Hurá!*

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 29)

(15) **BAD IDEA BEARS:**

*Yaaaaay! See you around, Princeton!*

**MĚDOVÉ POŤOUCHOVÉ:**

*Hurá –! Tak zatím, Princetone!*

The Bad Idea Bears use the exclamation “Yaaaaay!” to express joy. In the first case it is as a reaction to Princeton promising he would get some beer, in the second case to celebrate the fact Princeton would get a whole six-pack. Two translations were considered for this expression of joy in Czech – “Jupí!” and “Hurá!”. At first,

the two possibilities were altered in examples (14) and (15). However, the “Yaaaay!” is a signature phrase of the Bad Idea Bears and should thus remain the same in all (or at least most) cases. Although, “Hurá!” is used in Czech more often as a congratulatory cheer (similarly to the English “hip hip hooray!”), the Bad Idea Bears’ purpose is to be as loud and annoying as possible and since “Hurá!” contains an open vowel at the end it allows for a loud and long exclamation for the actors.

## **5.2 Song Lyrics**

The aim of the translator was to create a singable translation so that the original melodies could be used in the Czech adaptation. This was achieved through following the rules set by Franzon (2008) and Low (2005) in the theoretical part.

This chapter starts with a short part focusing on rhyme, as advised by Low (2005), as the decision about the right use of rhymes is crucial for the translation process itself. Then the commentary focuses on the songs separately. Following Franzon’s five choices in song-lyrics translation, there were only two choices valid in this case. As the lyrics had to maintain its meaning and conform to the original melody, the mixture of translating the lyrics with adjusting them to the original music and translating the lyrics while changing the music accordingly was used, with the former approach prevailing overall. The interventions in the original melody usually include no bigger changes than adding/removing a single tone or rearranging the tones to move the stress to a different syllable. There are, however, also occasions calling for more significant changes, such as adding a whole verse of lyrics and melody into the song. Remembering Low’s approach to adaptability in song lyrics, the translator’s goal was to transfer the over-all idea, not the meaning of each word, and thus to maintain the same function. How this was achieved will be demonstrated on the songs and their problematic parts.

### **5.2.1 Rhyme**

As demonstrated in the following part, rhymes form a significant portion of the original text. Rhymes used in the translation are in many cases, as demonstrated for example in (17), not perfect rhymes. This decision is based

on Low's findings described in chapter 2.2. Low (2005, 199) notes that focusing solely on creation of perfect rhymes can lead to failure in conveying the overall meaning of the piece. Perfect rhymes are thus sacrificed in order to keep the story of the translation as close to the original as possible.

### 5.2.2 “What Do You Do with a B.A. in English?”

This song acts as an introduction for Princeton. The melody did not require any changes after the translation, but the first two verses were changed into an inside joke originating at the translator's university. Note that the text in the brackets next to the Czech translation is an English back-translation (this applies to all examples in chapter 5.2).

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 1)

(16) **PRINCETON:**

*WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A B. A. IN ENGLISH?*

*WHAT IS MY LIFE GOING TO BE?*

**PRINCETON:**

*K ČEMU MI JE BAKALÁŘ Z ANGLISTIKY? (WHAT IS THE B.A. FROM ENGLISH GOOD FOR?*

*HLAVNĚ, ŽE CHOMSKÉHO ZNÁM THE MAIN THING IS THAT I KNOW CHOMSKY)*

Princeton is a student of English studies, which fits to the Czech stereotype that students of the Faculty or Arts cannot find a job afterwards. Because of his study field, a remark about the American linguist Noam Chomsky could be inserted as a reminder of the translator's own studies. This addition does not change the overall meaning of the song, Princeton remains just as hopeless in Czech as he is in English.

### 5.2.3 “It Sucks To Be Me”

To better demonstrate the approaches mentioned in 2.2, mainly Low's (2005) approach to the use of rhymes, let us look at the beginning of Brian's part in this musical number.

In the example (17), the main idea of Brian's life story is maintained in the translation – he was a child hoping to become a comedian on TV, he is thirty-two, his dream did not come true and he feels like being Brian is not easy.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 2)

(17) **BRIAN:**

*WHEN I WAS LITTLE  
I THOUGHT I WOULD BE  
A BIG COMEDIAN ON LATE NIGHT T.V.  
BUT NOW I'M THIRTY-TWO AND AS YOU CAN SEE  
I'M NOT. OH WELL.  
IT SUCKS TO BE ME...*

**BRIAN:**

<i>KDYŽ JSEM BYL MALÝ</i>	<i>(WHEN I WAS LITTLE</i>
<i>JÁ MĚL JEDEN SEN</i>	<i>I HAD ONE DREAM</i>
<i>ŽE STANU SE TELEVIZNÍM KOMIKEM</i>	<i>TO BECOME A TV COMEDIAN</i>
<i>TEĎ JE MI DVAATŘICET A PODÍVEJ</i>	<i>NOW I AM THIRTY-TWO AND LOOK</i>
<i>KDE JSEM. ACH JO.</i>	<i>WHERE I AM. OH WELL.</i>
<i>TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM...</i>	<i>I HAVE SUCH A HARD LIFE...)</i>

On this part, we can also demonstrate Low's approach to rhymes. The combination "sen" – "komikem" – "jsem" forms assonance, the words (and the last syllable of the middle word) contain the same vowel, but different consonants. It is not a perfect rhyme, but in this case, it allows for a bigger choice of words and helps cover the already set topic without losing the overall meaning. Such thing would be more disturbing in a poem, but the sung form conceals the imperfection just enough not to bother the listener. The use of half-rhymes and assonance applies to the whole translation.

One of the main challenges in this song is translating the punch-line. "It sucks to be me" could be more accurately translated as "Být mnou stojí za prd" or "Je to na nic, být mnou" in Czech. However, both these expressions come across as clumsy, both language-wise and pronunciation-wise, and they do not match the original melody. Proposed shortened versions "Je na nic být já" or "Je na prd být já" both match the syllable count and "já" at the end of the verse is easy to sing on the long note. However, they were rejected because they do not go with Low's idea of naturalness of language and the latter option contains a hard to pronounce consonant cluster p-r-d-b. In the end, "Tak těžký to mám" was chosen as it conveys the original meaning, it does not contain clusters of consonants which makes it easy to pronounce and has a long vowel at the end to be sung on the long note.

There are no differences in melody as of changing the pitch, however, the Czech translation needs to be phrased differently. In line four, the “two” in “thirty-two” is the longest syllable and the note that belongs to the word “and” in the original has to be added to the end of the word “dvaatřicet” in the translation. The long tone cannot fall on the syllable “tři”, as the phrasing would be unnatural to Czech. The best option would thus be to remove the tie between the eighth and quarter note on the syllable “two” and join the notes together in two quarter notes and two eighth notes with a rest at the end of the line, as demonstrated in (18).

(Lopez, Marx, Oremus 2003, 5)

(18)



Figure 1: *It Sucks To Be Me* - original



Figure 2: *It Sucks To Be Me* - translation

Similar situation emerges with the last line. The original melody is divided into two couples of notes – “it sucks” and “to be”, where the long “sucks” and “be” match the syllables “těž” and “to” in the translation. The phrase “tak těžký” cannot be sung to the original melody, as there is a consonant cluster k-t, which does not allow such a quick change, and the word “těžký” cannot be split with a tie between the notes, as it, again, creates phrasing unnatural for Czech. The possible solution is presented in (19), where, in the translation, the quarter and eighth notes alternate, allowing to put stress on the beginning of words and creating natural word flow.

(Lopez, Marx, Oremus 2003, 6)

(19)

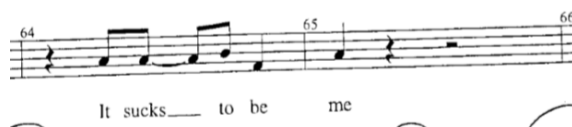


Figure 3: *It sucks to be me – original 2*



Figure 4: *It sucks to be me – translation 2*

This musical number introduces the majority of the characters to the audience. One of the challenges was introducing the new character Lama, whose life story had to be changed to fit not only the narrative, but also the language use of the character.

(20) **LAMA:**

[...]

<i>BYDLÍM V TĚTO ZEMI</i>	<i>(I'VE LIVED IN THIS COUNTRY</i>
<i>UŽ PŘES DVACET LET</i>	<i>FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS</i>
<i>PŘIJELA JSEM ZE SÝRIE</i>	<i>I CAME FROM SYRIA</i>
<i>KDYŽ MI BYLO SOTVA PĚT</i>	<i>WHEN I WAS LESS THAN FIVE</i>
<i>A TEĎ NA MĚ POKŘIKUJÍ</i>	<i>AND NOW THEY YELL AT ME</i>
<i>AŤ SE VRÁTÍM ZPĚT</i>	<i>TO GO BACK</i>
<i>PRÝ MĚ TU NECHTĚJÍ</i>	<i>THEY SAY THEY DON'T WANT ME HERE</i>
<i>PRÝ JSME VŠICHNI ZLODĚJI</i>	<i>THEY SAY WE'RE ALL THIEVES</i>
<i>MÉHO SNOUBENCE Z KAŽDÉ PRÁCE</i>	<i>MY FIANCÉ GETS FIRED FROM</i>
<i>VYLIJÍ</i>	<i>EVERY JOB</i>
<i>MÁM VYSTUDOVANOU</i>	<i>I HAVE GRADUATED</i>
<i>PSYCHOLOGII</i>	<i>IN PSYCHOLOGY</i>
<i>ALE NECHODÍ MI KLIENTI</i>	<i>BUT I HAVE NO CLIENTS</i>
<i>PROTOŽE SE BOJÍ, ŽE JE VYHODÍM</i>	<i>BECAUSE THEY'RE WORRIED</i>
<i>DO POVĚTRÍ!</i>	<i>I'LL BLOW THEM UP!</i>
<i>TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!</i>	<i>I HAVE SUCH A HARD LIFE!</i>
<i>TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!</i>	<i>I HAVE SUCH A HARD LIFE!</i>
<i>A, VĚŘ MI, POD HIDŽÁBEM</i>	<i>AND, TRUST ME, I CAN'T HIDE</i>
<i>VÁŽNĚ BOMBU NESCHOVÁM</i>	<i>A BOMB UNDER A HIJAB</i>
<i>TAK TĚŽKÝ TO MÁM!</i>	<i>I HAVE SUCH A HARD LIFE!)</i>



This translation is loosely based on the 2017 Portuguese adaptation. Even though the full musical is not available on the Internet, the theatre company has published the song “Na Merda Estás Tu” (“It Sucks To Be Me”) on YouTube in late 2017. Luckily, it is the song where the characters introduce themselves and thus we know that the Portuguese version replaced Christmas Eve with Muslim Mary, a woman who came to Brazil with her parents when she was a child and has been dealing with racism and accusations of being a terrorist ever since. The character lacks any dialect<sup>8</sup>. The translation drew inspiration from this change and instead of Japan, Lama comes from Syria, a country known to the Czech audience for producing refugees heading to Europe. Lama moved when she was a child as well, thus the problem with Christmas Eve’s Japanese dialect does not apply to her (even though she has a problem pronouncing the word “rododendron” in the musical number “Everyone’s a Little Bit Racist”). A structural change was also made according to the Portuguese version – the verse “Protože se bojí, že je vyhodím do povětří” was added for the song to cover all the topics needed to understand Lama's situation and to provide a bigger gradation before dropping back to the playful chorus.

This musical number also introduces Gary Coleman, which is convenient mainly for those audiences unfamiliar with the actor.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 7)

(21) **GARY COLEMAN:**

*I'M GARY COLEMAN*

*FROM TV'S 'DIFF'RENT STROKES'*

*I MADE A LOTTA MONEY THAT GOT*

*STOLEN BY MY FOLKS!*

*[...]*

*TRY HAVING PEOPLE STOPPING YOU TO ASK YOU*

*“What you talkin’ ‘bout, Willis?”*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*JSEM GARY COLEMAN,*

*DĚTSKÁ TELEVIZNÍ STÁR,*

*MĚL JSEM SPOUSTU PENĚŽ,*

*KTERÝ MI MŮJ TÁTA VZAL!*

*(I'M GARY COLEMAN,*

*A CHILD TV STAR*

*I HAD A LOT OF MONEY*

*THAT WERE TAKEN BY MY DAD*

---

<sup>8</sup> A loose translation of the song from Portuguese to English was made by Marcos Sous.

<p>[...]  <i>PROČ LIDI NA ULICI KŘIČÍ NA MĚ</i></p> <p>„To je ten černoch z televize!“</p>	<p>[...]  <i>WHY DO PEOPLE ON THE STREET YELL AT ME</i></p> <p>“That’s the black guy from TV!”)</p>
--	---

The initial strophe serves as an introduction, which is replicated in the translation, however, the TV show *Diff’rent Strokes* is crossed out as the show was never introduced in the Czech Republic and is very little known. Generalization is used, and Gary becomes a former “child TV star” instead. A similar problem emerges later when Gary mentions people repeatedly reminding him the catch phrase his character used in the TV show. Again, as the TV show is unknown, and the catch phrase was never translated into Czech, generalization was used and people meeting Gary on the street simply recognize him as an actor.

#### 5.2.4 “If You Were Gay”

The only noticeable issue in translating this song was, again, the punchline at the end of every strophe.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 13)

(22) **NICKY:**

[...]  
*BECAUSE YOU SEE  
 IF IT WERE ME  
 I WOULD FEEL FREE  
 TO SAY  
 THAT I WAS GAY  
 (BUT I’M NOT GAY)*

**NICKY:**

<p>[...]  <i>KDYBYCH JÁ SNAD  MĚL CHLAPY RÁD  TAK BYCH SE NESTYDĚL  ŘÍCT, ŽE JSEM GAY  (JÁ NEJSEM GAY)</i></p>	<p><i>(IF, PERHAPS, I  LIKED GUYS  I WOULDN’T BE ASHAMED  TO SAY I WAS GAY  (I AM NOT GAY))</i></p>
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In (22), Nicky speaks about his own homosexuality and a potential coming-out, only to negate his words at the end of every strophe. The last verse is joined to the rest of the strophe with a conjunction “but”, which maintains coherence of the text, but is unusable in the Czech translation. The Czech conjunction “ale” would add two syllables to the verse and the verse would become hard to sing. However, this can be solved by the acting. In the original production, at the end of every strophe, Nicky turns to the audience and whispers the last verse to them. As there is a break in the acting, the break in lyrics is fitting.

### 5.2.5 “Purpose”

“Purpose” used in the context of this musical, means the purpose of life. The closest counterparts in Czech are “smysl života” and “životní poslání”. As demonstrated in the examples, both these expressions are used in the translation in different parts.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 16)

(23) **PRINCETON:**

*PURPOSE:*

*IT'S THAT LITTLE FLAME*

*THAT LIGHTS A FIRE*

*UNDER YOUR ASS*

*PURPOSE:*

*IT KEEPS YOU GOING STRONG*

*LIKE A CAR WITH A FULL TANK OF GAS*

**PRINCETON:**

*SMYSL*

*DRŽÍ TĚ NAD VODOU*

*ON PONDĚLÍ*

*DO NEDĚLE*

*SMYSL*

*JEN TEN TI ZAPÁLÍ*

*KOUDEL PŘÍMO U PRDELE.*

*(PURPOSE*

*IT KEEPS YOU ABOVE THE WATER*

*FROM MONDAY*

*TILL TUESDAY*

*PURPOSE*

*ONLY THAT WILL LIGHT*

*THE TOW AT YOUR ASS)*

In (23), the word “smysl” is used, as it matches the syllable count with “purpose.” Unfortunately, standing alone, “smysl” loses its meaning of the “purpose of life”. However, as the purpose of life – “smysl života”

is discussed in the video projection before the song, the meaning of the word “smysl” should be apparent to the audience even when it is used alone here.

The first and second half of the strophe is switched meaning-wise in the translation. The reason is that the use of a vulgarism in the first part sounds too harsh, while in the second half it creates a gradation.

In (24) “poslání” is used to better match the syllable count, again, without the adjective “životní”, but, again, the meaning is apparent from the context of the song.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 17)

(24) **PRINCETON:**

[...]

GOTTA FIND OUT, DON'T WANNA WAIT!

GOT TO MAKE SURE THAT MY LIFE WILL BE GREAT!

GOTTA FIND MY PURPOSE

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

**PRINCETON:**

PAK ŽIVOT MŮJ DOSTANE SPÁD

(THEN MY LIFE GAINS A MOMENTUM

NECHCI UŽ ČEKAT, JÁ MUSÍM ZNÁT

I DON'T WANT TO WAIT, I MUST KNOW

POSLÁNÍ SVÉ

MY PURPOSE

A PAK BUDU RÁD.

AND THEN I'LL BE HAPPY)

Due to the changes in phrasing, “Purpose” was a song containing subtle melody changes.

(Lopez, Marx, Oremus 2003, 5)

(25)

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff starts at measure 33 and ends at measure 34. The lyrics under the first staff are: "life will be great! Got - ta find MY". The second staff starts at measure 35 and ends at measure 36. The lyrics under the second staff are: "pur - pose".

Figure 5: Purpose - original



Figure 6: Purpose - translation

As demonstrated in (25), the four syllables of “life will be great” are reduced to three in the Czech “musím znát” and the A note falling on “will” in the original is fully crossed out. Instead, the G note is stretched further for the syllable “sím” in Czech. The four syllables of “gotta find my” are again reduced to three in “poslání” and the original structure is replaced by three eighth notes. Finally, the last word “purpose” is replaced with a one-syllable word “své”, which is stretched over two notes to avoid more melody changes.

### 5.2.6 “Everyone’s a Little Bit Racist”

Despite trying to avoid consonant clusters and hard-to-pronounce words, the translation of “Everyone’s a Little Bit Racist” is the song most demanding on proper pronunciation. In the translation the words “rasista” and “rasistický” are unavoidable and verses such as “ale s každým černým vtípem se nám hned žije snáz” are hard to pronounce in the high speed. According to the score, the song should be played in Moderato and when sung with the original Broadway production recording, it is singable and understandable, despite that, a recommendation to slightly slow the song down for the Czech adaptation is in place.

In this song there were also two instances where switching the position of a rhyme was necessary. In (26) the original rhyme group “do” – “true” – “you” is split in the translation. “Připustí” stays paired with the rhyme two verses above – “i ty”, while the next two verses propose a new rhyme “fáma” – “náma”.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 22)

(26) **PRINCETON:**

*YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT RACIST*

**KATE MONSTER:**

*WELL, YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT TOO!*

**PRINCETON:**

*I GUESS WE'RE BOTH A LITTLE BIT RACIST*

**KATE MONSTER:**

*ADMITTING IT IS NOT AN EASY THING TO DO*

**PRINCETON:**

*BUT I GUESS IT'S TRUE*

**KATE MONSTER:**

*BETWEEN ME AND YOU*

**PRINCETON:**

*JSI TROCHU RASISTICKÁ*

*(YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT RACIST*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*A RASISTA JSI I TY!*

*AND YOU ARE A RACIST TOO!*

**PRINCETON:**

*ASI TEBE I MĚ SE TO TÝKÁ*

*I GUESS IT APPLIES TO YOU AND ME*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*A NE KAŽDÝ SI TO SNADNO PŘIPUSTÍ*

*AND NOT EVERYONE ADMITS IT EASILY*

**PRINCETON:**

*TO NENÍ FÁMA*

*THAT'S NOT A RUMOUR*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*A MEZI NÁMA*

*AND BETWEEN US)*

The second case is located at the repetition of the melody of the first strophe. As demonstrated in (27), here, instead of rhyming all three verses or, again, only the last two, the rhyme is at the first and the last verse instead. This, too, illustrates the use of half-rhymes and off-rhymes as advised by Low (2005, 199).

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 23)

(27) **GARY COLEMAN:**

*I THINK THAT I WOULD HAVE TO AGREE WITH YOU.*

**PRINCETON & KATE MONSTER:**

*WE'RE GLAD YOU DO,*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*IT'S SAD, BUT TRUE!*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*A DOKONCE I JÁ SI TO PŘIPUSTÍM* (AND EVEN I ADMIT IT TO MYSELF)

**PRINCETON A KATE:**

*JE TO SMUTNÝ FAKT,* *IT'S A SAD FACT*

**GARY COLEMAN:**

*JSME LIDSKÉ BYTOSTI* *WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS)*

### 5.2.7 “Mix Tape”

The biggest challenge naturalization-wise was the song “A Mix Tape”. Firstly, the name of the song is changed to “Cédé” in the translation. This is based on the step the original Off-Broadway production has taken recently – replacing the outdated cassette in Kate’s hand by a CD as a way of actualization of the musical (Kuehn 2013).

The song consists almost solely of song names, the majority of which, unfortunately, is unknown to a Czech viewer. The task here was rather to appropriately substitute than translate the song names.

(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 39)

(28) **KATE MONSTER:**

*“YOU’VE GOT A FRIEND”*

*“THE THEME FROM ‘FRIENDS’”*

*“THAT’S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR”*

*[...]*

*“A WHOLE NEW WORLD”*

*“KISS THE GIRL”*

*“MY CHEIE AMOUR”*

*[...]*

*“I AM THE WALRUS”*

*“FAT BOTTOM GIRLS”*

*“YELLOW SUBMARINE”*

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

“PŘÍTEL GUMP”	(“FRIEND GUMP”
“KAMARÁD”	“A FRIEND”
“MÁŠ VE MNĚ PŘÍTELE”	“YOU’VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME”
[...]	
“LÁSKY ČAS”	“TIME OF LOVE”
“CO DŘÍMÁ V NÁS”	“WHAT SLUMBERS IN US”
“Z JEDNÉ POSTELE”	“FROM ONE BED”
[...]	
“KŘEČEK A KRTEK”	“A HAMSTER AND A MOLE”
“ŠPEKOUNI PRYČ”	“AWAY WITH FATTIES”
“ŽÍT A NECHAT ŽÍT”	“LIVE AND LET LIVE”
CO TO MÁ BÝT?	WHAT’S THAT SUPPOSED TO BE?)

The lines are divided into thematic groups. On the example (28) we see that the first three lines cover songs about friendship, the next three cover the theme of love and the next three are thematically random, with the second one being taken as a remark on her weight by Kate (in the original adaptation (2003), Kate looks at her bottom, horrified, after this line). The task to substitute the song names with Czech ones required searching through Internet song databases and looking for Czech love songs. Some of the original songs, such as “A Whole New World”, do not hold their meaning in their name, but are so iconic the audience has them linked with love. As much as the chosen songs in translation might not be as iconic as those mentioned in the original, their names are self-describing and serve the purpose of showing Princeton’s feelings.

In (29), the first line references the title song of the movie Titanic. Despite both the movie and the song being well-known in the Czech Republic, in the translation they were replaced by a 1939 Czech movie *Kristián* and its romantic title song “Jen pro ten dnešní den”, as such a major reference kept in English might seem distracting in a song where everything else is Czech. On the other hand, The Beatles’ hit “Yesterday” is kept in the translation, as the song is so well known in the Czech Republic is already embedded in the Czech vocabulary, it does not carry any special meaning that needs to be explicitly explained in the song and can be well pronounced even with Czech pronunciation.



(Lopez, Marx, Whitty 2003, 41)

(29) **KATE MONSTER:**

*"MY HEART WILL GO ON"*

*I loved Titanic!*

**PRINCETON:**

*It was all right.*

*"SHE'S GOT A WAY"*

**KATE MONSTER:**

*"YESTERDAY"*

**PRINCETON:**

*"GOODNIGHT SAIGON"*

*From the Russia concert!*

**KATE MONSTER:**

*Don't know that one.*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*"JEN PRO TEN DNEŠNÍ DEN"*

*Miluju Kristiána!*

**PRINCETON:**

*Dalo se to.*

*"TAK RUKU MI DEJ"*

**KARE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*"YESTERDAY"*

**"PRINCETON:**

*"DLOUHÁ NOC" A "SEN"*

*Ten od Lucie, ne od Erika a Barbary!*

**KATE PŘÍŠEROVÁ:**

*Stejně neznám ani jeden.*

"Goodnight Saigon" was replaced by two in the translation, the latter acting as a base for the following line. Instead of having Princeton enthusiastically explain that the song was played at a concert in Russia, the translation uses the fact that there are two famous songs called "Sen", one by the Slovak duo Erik and Barbara, and the other by a Czech band Lucie. Kate, however, does not know any of them.

## Conclusion

*Avenue Q* is a 2003 American musical written by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx (songs) and Jeff Whitty (libretto). Through the use of puppets, video projections with explanations and catchy tunes in the musical numbers, it tries to mimic a children's TV show, such as the *Sesame Street*. With its placement in New York and with the topics covered in the story, the musical is deeply culturally bound in the American culture. Despite being fifteen years old, the musical has never been introduced to the Czech audiences, but the right time might be just now, as the Czech Republic is getting more familiar with the topics discussed in the musical, such as homosexuality, racism and immigration. However, to do so, there are certain steps that need to be done during the translation process to allow the Czech audience to fully understand and enjoy the musical. And such steps should be considered not only with this particular case, but with every musical translation.

The aim of this thesis was to introduce possible approaches to musical translation and to apply them to the translation of selected parts of the *Avenue Q* musical. However, upon researching papers relevant to the topic, the realization about the lack of a complex approach considering musical translation was made. Works of authors such as Johanna Åkerström (2010) do deal with musical translation, however, they focus on specific musical plays. There is a significant lack of a summary of theoretical approaches to such kind of translation. For this reason, the approaches discussed in chapter two had to be divided into two parts – one concerning the theatre play translation and the other concerning the song-lyrics translation, to reflect on the fact that a musical script consists of a libretto and song lyrics.

The theoretical part concerning theatre translation used Windle's (2011) work to give an overview of the translation approaches and then it focused on Espasa's (2014) approach to naturalness of language in a theatre play along with Link's (1980) methods of working with allusions or the language of a play. Among others, it also outlined the possible methods in translating humour according to Barańczak (1994) or methods used in adaptation itself. In the song-lyrics translation part, the overview was given by Bosseaux (2011), who, among others, introduced Johan

Franzon (2008) introducing his five choices in song-lyrics translation and Peter Low (2005) introducing his Pentathlon principle.

Subsequently, all these approaches were either applied to the translation, or they were at least considered during the process of translation. In the particular case of *Avenue Q*, the stress was put on creating a natural sounding, playable translation, as suggested by Espasa (2014) or Bassnett (1985, 1991, 1998). The translation also worked with Link's (1980) approach to allusions and Barańczak (1994) approach to humour when translating and maintaining the original jokes. As of translativity, the goal was set to find a balance between naturalization and exoticization, so that the musical is easy to understand by the Czech audience, but so that its story can still be set in America, rather than being transferred to the Czech Republic. The translation also acknowledged some adaptation changes that are closely tied to the translation itself, mainly a change of one of the characters – Christmas Eve – into a brand new one – Lama – under the influence of the Portuguese 2017 adaptation. Following Low's (2005) approach to rhymes in translation, the choice was made to free the translation of the strict use of perfect rhymes which lead to the creation of more translation possibilities and a bigger chance of maintaining the main thoughts of the original text. Low's (2005) Pentathlon principle and Franzon's (2008) choices in song-lyrics translation were the most used approaches in the song-lyrics translation, which is considered in the commentary. As of Low's (2005) Pentathlon principle, achieving harmony between the five aspects - singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm and rhyme – was the main goal. As of Franzon's (2008) choices in song-lyrics translation, two of the offered choices were used in this case: translating the lyrics with adjusting them to the original music and translating the lyrics while changing the music accordingly. Due to this approach, the translation had to be, in some cases, adjusted to fit the original melody, while in other cases the melody was adjusted to fit the new text. Even though there was no need for creation of brand new melodies, there was a need for different stress placements in the Czech songs that were worth noting down along with the examples of problematic parts of the translation itself.

The aim of this thesis was to introduce possible approaches of musical translation and, subsequently, to apply them to a translation of selected parts of the musical *Avenue Q*. The theoretical part served as a great building block

to base the translation on. Through combining the newly acquired theoretical knowledge with the practical work, better decisions could be made as of which of the approaches were useful and truly applicable on translation. Despite only scratching the surface of all the possible issues, this thesis can now serve as a unified introduction to the musical translation and demonstrates how the introduced theoretical approaches and methods can be, to a degree, applied. At the same time, this thesis created a partial translation that, after finishing, can be used for a future adaptation of the *Avenue Q* Czech release.

## Summary

*Avenue Q* je Americký muzikál, který se ostatním muzikálovým produkcím vymyká nejen propojením živých herců a loutek, jejichž loutkovodiči jsou plně viditelní publiku, ale i tragikomickým pojetím vážných témat, jako je rasismus, homosexualita a dospívání. Cílem autorského duha Roberta Lopeze a Jeffa Marxe bylo vytvořit produkci, která by svou vizáží a chytlavými melodiemi připomínala dětské pořady typu *Sezame, otevři se*, avšak určenou pro dospívající a dospělé publikum. Za pomoci libretisty Jeffa Whittyho se jim to nakonec v roce 2003 podařilo. Děj muzikálu se odehrává v New Yorku, a zatímco některá témata jsou univerzální, jiná zase silně vychází z americké kultury. I přesto, že tento muzikál slaví již patnácté narozeniny, na českých pódiiích doposud nebyl oficiálně uveden. Nyní by mohl být správný čas na českou adaptaci, jelikož české publikum je dnes víc než kdy jindy seznámeno s americkou kulturou a začíná se otevírat tématům, o kterých tento muzikál pojednává.

Nicméně, překlad muzikálu není jednoduchým úkolem, o to více, když jde o hru plnou narážek na odlišnou kulturu. Proto si tato práce dává za cíl vytvořit souhrn teoretických přístupů k překladu muzikálu a aplikovat je na překlad částí muzikálu *Avenue Q*, jmenovitě obrazů jedna až sedm, s výjimkou písně „Internet Is For Porn“ z obrazu pátého.

I přesto, že autoři jako Johanna Åkerström (2010) pracují ve svých pracích s tématem muzikálového překladu, věnují se většinou překladu určitého muzikálu. Vzhledem k chybějícím materiálům, které by celistvě shrnovaly teorii překladu muzikálových her, je druhá kapitola rozdělena na dvě části, z nichž jedna se věnuje překladu divadelních textů a druhá překladu textů písňových.

V teoretické části pojednávající o překladu divadelních textů nám se shrnutím překladatelských přístupů pomáhá Windle (2011). Dále se tato část zabývá tématem hratelnosti a představuje autory, jako je Eva Espasa (2014) zaměřující se mimo jiné na přirozenost jazyka a Franz Link (1980), pojednávající o práci s jazykem a narážkami v textu. Tato část také zmiňuje možné metody překladu humoru podle Barańczaka (1994). Pojítkem této části je pojem hratelnost, který v ní je také vysvětlen. V části o písňovém překladu podává shrnutí Charlotte Bosseaux (2011), a dále jsou představeni mimo jiné také Johan Franzon (2008), který pojednává o pěti možnostech při překladu písňového textu, a Peter Low (2005) se svým

Principem pěti – tedy udržení rovnováhy mezi přirozeností jazyka, významem, zpěvností, rýmem a rytmem. V celé části se odráží problematika zachování zpěvnosti výchozích textů.

Následovně jsou tyto postupy zváženy a patřičně aplikovány na překlad samotný. V případě muzikálu *Avenue Q* je kladen důraz na vytvoření přirozeně znějícího a hratelného překladu, tak jak správný divadelní překlad popisuje Espasa (2014) či Bassnett (1985, 1991, 1998). Překlad dále pracuje s Linkovým (1980) přístupem k aluzím a uplatňuje i Barańczakův (1994) postup při zachování a překladu vtipů. Z hlediska překladovosti panuje snaha docílit rovnováhy mezi domestikací a exotizací tak, aby byl překlad českému publiku srozumitelný, ale zároveň zachoval americké prostředí bez nutnosti přesouvat celý děj do České republiky. Překlad se dále zabývá některými adaptačními změnami, které jsou s překladem úzce propojeny, zejména změnou jedné z hlavních postav (Christmas Eve) na postavu nově vytvořenou – muslimku Lamu. K této změně došlo pod vlivem portugalské adaptace z roku 2017. Z hlediska rýmu je překladatelský proces oproštěn od přísného dodržování použití dokonalých rýmů, což vede k vytvoření více překladatelských možností a k lepšímu zachování hlavních myšlenek originálu. V části překladu písňových textů je nejčastěji využit Lowův (2005) Princip pěti spolu s Franzonovými (2008) pěti možnostmi překladu písňového textu. Z těchto pěti možností jsou na překlad muzikálu *Avenue Q* aplikovatelné dvě – překlad písňových textů a úprava překladů tak, aby byly aplikovatelné na melodii, a překlad písňových textů s úpravou melodie tak, aby byla aplikovatelná na nový text. Některé části překladu jsou proto upraveny tak, aby byly aplikovatelné na původní melodii, zatímco jiné části vyžadují úpravu melodie tak, aby byla aplikovatelná na nový text. Přestože nebylo zapotřebí vytvářet zcela nové melodie, některé části překladu vyžadovaly rozdílné umístění důrazu a přízvuku, což je v komentáři zaznamenáno po boku ostatních překladatelsky problematických částí. Díky dodržování Lowa (2005) Principu pěti je dosaženo alespoň částečné rovnováhy mezi zpěvností, významem, přirozeností, rytmem a rýmem. Aplikovány jsou také postupy Linka (1980) v ohledu adaptace narážek a vtipů. Ty jsou v překladu buďto ponechány, jelikož působí univerzálně pro obě kultury, nebo jsou domestikovány, a to vždy tak, aby bylo docíleno rovnováhy mezi těmito dvěma přístupy.

Cílem této práce je představit existující přístupy k překladu muzikálu a dále je aplikovat na překlad muzikálu *Avenue Q* tak, aby byla zachována zpěvnost a hratelnost textu a aby byl text adaptovatelný v České republice. Kombinace teoretických znalostí a praktického překladu vede k lepšímu uvědomění toho, které z přístupů jsou aplikovatelné v praxi. I přesto, že se tato práce dotýká daného tématu pouze relativně povrchně, může sloužit jako sjednocený úvod do problematiky překladu muzikálu a demonstruje jakým způsobem a do jaké míry mohou být zmiňované teoretické přístupy uplatněny. Zároveň je v rámci práce vytvořena část překladu, který by po dokončení mohl sloužit jako výchozí text k adaptaci muzikálu *Avenue Q* v České republice.

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## List of Figures

Figure 1: It Sucks To Be Me - original .....	95
Figure 2: It Sucks To Be Me - translation.....	95
Figure 3: It sucks to be me – original 2.....	96
Figure 4: It sucks to be me – translation 2 .....	96
Figure 5: Purpose - original.....	100
Figure 6: Purpose - translation .....	101

## **Annotation**

Author	Toby Švédů
Department	Department of English and American Studies, FF UP
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Language	English
Abstract	The aim of this thesis is to introduce possible approaches to the musical translation and, subsequently, to apply them on a translation of parts of the <i>Avenue Q</i> musical with the focus on singability and playability of the translation.

## **Anotace**

Jméno a příjmení autora	Toby Švédů
Název katedry a fakulty	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, FF UP
Název bakalářské práce	Problematika překladu muzikálových textů: případová studie překladu muzikálu <i>Avenue Q</i>
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Počet příloh	1
Klíčová slova	muzikál, Avenue Q, muzikálový překlad, divadelní překlad, písňový překlad, zpěvnost, hrátelnost
Jazyk práce	Angličtina
Abstrakt	Cílem této práce je představit přístupy k muzikálovému překladu a aplikovat je na překlad

částí muzikálu *Avenue Q*, který usiluje o zachování zpěvnosti a hrátelnosti textu.