

Ewa Kujawska-Lis

What is in the name or what is lost when Dickensian surnames are translocated

Acta Neophilologica 6, 57-68

2004

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Ewa Kujawska-Lis
Katedra Filologii Angielskiej
UWM w Olsztynie

WHAT IS IN THE NAME OR WHAT IS LOST WHEN DICKENSIAN SURNAMES ARE TRANSLOCATED

When translating a text the translator is faced with the dilemma of how to deal with proper names, and especially surnames. If the text is defined as the so-called non-artistic translation (a scientific or political text, for instance) there is less of a problem since proper names in such texts are as a rule translocated, i.e., they remain untranslated. However, when one deals with an artistic translation in which proper names have particular functions translating them becomes more problematic. A proper name in a literary work can have a creative function (co-creation of various senses in the fictional world), an intertextual function (especially authentic names which are present in the fictional world and which provide multiple references) and an informative, sociological or expressive function. Generally, since a given proper name has several functions the translation should mirror the one which is most functional, i.e., the one which most enriches the fictional world.¹

There are several techniques for translating proper names. Names can be adapted, i.e., integrated into particular cultures and languages. This is especially true for universal names which belong to different times and space and/or literary traditions and which refer to one object or person but are adapted to various languages, for instance Don Kichote, Don Kiszot, Don Quixote or Don Quijote.² Adaptation can have different forms, such as phonetic transposition (transcription, e.g., Szekspir from Shakespeare or transliteration, e.g., rendering the Chinese characters as Bejing or Peking) or grammatical endings (Szekspira, Szekspirem). Another translation strategy used when dealing with proper names is translocation or transferring a given name in its original form from the source language to the target

¹ See: A. Cieślukowa, *Jak "ocalić w tłumaczeniu" nazwy własne*, in: M. Filipowicz-Rudek, J. Konieczna-Twardzikowska (ed.), *Między oryginałem a przekładem. II Przekład, jego tworzenie się i wpływ*, Kraków 1996, Universitas, p. 319.

² *Ibidem*, p. 313.

language. Finally, a translation of a proper name may be attempted, especially when one deals with the so-called telling names or nicknames.

From the perspective of the translator of a literary text, the last two strategies, translocation and translation proper are of great importance. These two strategies stand at the opposing ends of Lawrence Venuti's dichotomy between foreignization and domestication. In simple terms, the translator needs to make a conscious decision whether they want to leave the author at peace and "send the reader abroad" or leave the reader at peace and "bring the author home".³ When the text is domesticated every cultural aspect of it is transposed from the source culture to the target culture, so that the reader is not aware that they are dealing with a translation. When the text is foreignized, the reader is faced with the elements of the source culture so that they must make an effort to detect the exotic. As Anna Legeżyńska stresses, one of the basic elements, or signals, of the exotic or foreign in a translation is retaining the proper names in their original form.⁴

This paper does not attempt to make an evaluation of the two techniques. Nor does it intend to translate Dickensian proper names, although some examples of possible translations into Polish shall be provided. What it seeks to do is to determine what is encoded in Dickensian surnames and consequently what is lost by the reader if those names are translocated. Since the number of fictional characters created by Dickens reached 989,⁵ it would take a substantial study to analyse all his fictional proper names (an attempt, although not dealing with all the names, was made by G. L. Brook⁶). Thus this paper is limited only to one group of characters, the representatives of the legal profession, and deals in most detail with one novel, *Bleak House*.

Proper names in any literary work are always the result of the author's conscious creative decisions. An author can use authentic proper names existing outside the fictional world and superimpose them on their created world, thus adapting them for their artistic purposes. Or, they can invent totally fictional names which are either realistic, resembling authentic names, or purely creative, for instance grotesque or telling names. Both imaginary and authentic names which evoke certain associations or connote certain phenomena have a creative function in a literary work. They formulate, together with other elements, the fictional world and its ideological vision.⁷ Although a reader is rarely able to distinguish between authentic and realistic-like names, they are aware of the particular choice of such names and can attempt decoding their function.

³ See: A. Pisarska, T. Tomaszkiwicz, *Współczesne tendencje przekładoznawcze*, Poznań 1998, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, p. 62.

⁴ A. Legeżyńska, *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie*, Warszawa 1986, PWN, p. 13.

⁵ J. R. Greenfield, *Dictionary of British Literary Characters*, in: P. Schlicke (ed.), *Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens*, Oxford 1999, Oxford University Press, p. 74.

⁶ See: G. L. Brook, *The Language of Dickens*, London 1970, Andre Deutsch.

⁷ See: A. Cieślukowa, op. cit., p. 312.

Dickens used several techniques to shape his fictional characters. He himself believed that "every writer of fiction, though he may not adopt the dramatic form, writes in effect for the stage".⁸ Thus his characters were very powerfully sketched but generally using rather simple artistic devices. On the whole, his characters "define themselves through their speech and distinctive private language".⁹ Dickens was very fond of attaching a particular, often easily memorable phrase to a given character to distinguish him or her from the multitude of others (Wemmick's "portable property" in *Great Expectations*). He also devised varied idiolects for his characters. These were often closely related both to the social background and the professional involvement of a character (such as the cross-examination-like speech of Jaggers, the lawyer of *Great Expectations*). Another technique of characterisation is acute awareness of facial expressions and gestures which function as revealing inner feelings. Dickens was also prone to use caricature or to define a character by a single defining trait. In addition, he often attached animal imagery when describing a particular character (feline imagery for Carker of *Dombey and Son*), pointing to his or her personality or depicting the environment invested with a character's attributes (Mrs Pipchin's and Doctor Blimber's schools reflect the personalities of their owners in *Dombey and Son*).

Apart from these, Dickens was working in the tradition of the 18th century novel, one of the most characteristic linguistic features of which was character-revealing names. He was fond of this device and adopted it widely yet creatively. He created names which ranged from easily decipherable, farcical, of unusual vowel and consonant quality, or providing a changing perspective on a character through providing him or her with numerous nicknames. The most distinctive function, apart from specific Dickensian humour, was to identify the most characteristic personality or professional trait of a given person to include him or her within a larger social perspective of the representatives belonging to the same social or professional background.¹⁰ The most obvious examples include Blaze (*Blask* literally or *Błyszczyk*, *Błyskotka*, *Błyskalski* if one attempts a more creative translation, the last being most naturally Polish) and Sparkle (*Połysek*, *Iskra* or *Migotek*, respectively), jewellers in *Bleak House*; or Sowerberry (*Siewiec*) and Mould (*Pleśń* literally or *Pleśniewski* if an adaptation to Polish name endings is sought), undertakers of *Oliver Twist* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. In *Hard Times* a teacher is named M'Choakumchild (*Dławibachor* according to Apollo Korzeniowski¹¹). Another function given to a character's name is to determine

⁸ Dickens's Speeches, in: P. Schlicke, op. cit., p. 76.

⁹ P. Schlicke, op. cit., p. 76.

¹⁰ See: P. Schlicke, op. cit., p. 79.

¹¹ K. Dickens, *Ciężkie czasy na te czasy*, translated in 1866 by Apollo Korzeniowski, Warszawa 1955, Czytelnik, p. 20. Although Korzeniowski translates most of the first names, he leaves the surnames untranslated, providing occasionally explanations in the footnotes. The problem with *Dławibachor* is that *bachor* (brat) is much stronger than a neutral "child". It also compromises on the Scottish prefix "perhaps, a reference to the

their role in the novel. One such example can be detected in *David Copperfield*, where Dickens gives both of David's school friends evocative names to signify their roles in the novel. Steerforth pilots others to destruction (*Nawigacki*), whilst Traddles is permanently downtrodden and persecuted (*Deptalski*, *Deptuła* or *Deptak*, although well-domesticated all imply that Traddles is the one who imposes himself on others; thus a more free translation could be provided: *Popychadło*) by the sadistic Creakle, the schoolmaster (*Zgrzyt* seems to sound unpleasant enough and could further connote implied meanings connected with Creakle the tender-hearted Model Prison Magistrate).

Dickens took particular care in his choice of names and there was rarely a chance play in his decisions. For instance, as the notes the author made whilst writing *David Copperfield* reveal, originally "Harden" was the name he devised for David's step-father. Later he began to play with the idea of murder and created two additional names: "Murdle" and "Murden", to finally arrive at the name actually used in the novel "Murdstone".¹² Harry Stone presents an interpretation of Dickens's imagination and links between various names. The critic traces the development of the name Merdle (*Little Dorrit*) as a variation on Murdstone:

"Mr. Merdle, like Mr. Murdstone, is a surrogate father who exploits and betrays his trusting progeny – in this case the childlike investors who clamour to give him money. The changed spelling of his name (changed from "Murdle" to "Merdle"), while leaving the original pronunciation untouched, delicately distances Merdle's connection with murder and accentuates his kinship with the French word merde (...)."¹³

The analysis continues by tying the character to murder, since his ruin causes the deaths of innocent victims and culminates in self-murder. Stone further develops the links between names and particular characters to consider "Headstone" and "Durdles", showing continuity in Dickens's imaginative associations (Murdstone – Merdle – Headstone – Durdles). Any attempt at retracing such an imaginary progression in a target language seems to be a translator's worst nightmare.

However, in his extensive study of the language of Dickens, Brook points to Dickens's note-books which include lists of Christian names along with the sources of their origins. The list includes Bradley Headstone. This "inventory" is followed by a list of available names (170) without any indication of the sources, and includes Merdle, ready for use.¹⁴ Stone may have over-

fact that England at that time imported large numbers of trained teachers from Scotland, or it may be a way of associating him and his educational ideal with the "Scotch feeloosofers" and economists identified in the public mind with the hard-headed utilitarianism being attacked in "Hard Times". (P. Collins, *Dickens and Education*, London 1963, Macmillan, p. 149) These additional, extra-textual references are lost in Korzeniowski's translation.

¹² H. Stone, *What's in a Name: Fantasy and Calculation in Dickens*, in: *Dickens Studies Annual* 1985, vol. 14.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

¹⁴ See: L. G. Brook, *op. cit.*, pp. 210–211.

stated his case, but he definitely demonstrates that Dickens's choice of names was not incidental. The fictional surnames are supposed to evoke certain associations in the primary reader and denote specific phenomena which are lost on the reader of translation if they are translocated. The bulk of the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the primary reader differs significantly from that of the reader of the translation as the two operate in two different languages. When we translate a text we assume that the target reader does not know the source language (hence the need for a translation), so their ability to decode what is implied by the proper name is severely handicapped in comparison to the primary reader's.

This can be demonstrated by analysing some of the surnames Dickens gave to the fictional representatives of the legal profession. In a long gallery of fictional lawyers, Dickens paints various types of human vices rather than trying to create convincing, life-like characters. Critics have often noted that Dickens draws his characters in such a vivid way that it is difficult to believe that they are only fictional creations.¹⁵ However, the representatives of institutions, and of certain professions, he treats differently. Those who are associated with institutions are characterised in institutional terms rather than as independent human beings, as if they were signs rather than fully developed characters. Lawyers constitute a category of individuals whose characterization is consistent with their profession, although within this group Dickens paints some highly independent characters.

Interestingly, in his fiction Dickens used names identical, or slightly changed, which appear in the cash book of the law firm where he used to work;¹⁶ these include Weller,¹⁷ Bardell, Corney, Rudge and Newman Knott (changed into Noggs in *Nicholas Nickleby*). However, the real names Dickens came across during his stint with the legal firm are not applied to his fictional lawyers. This group of characters is generally given telling names: Muttonhead, Buzfuz, Snubbin, Dodson, Fogg in *The Pickwick Papers*. These English names are generally self-explanatory, especially Muttonhead (*Barański* sounds well-adapted, though it misses the pun and is too ordinary; *Baran* seems a better option; a more free, yet semantically close to the original, translation could be *Pustogłów*). Buzfuz is analogous with buzzing or something fuzzy, both indicating empty wordiness (*Bzykalski* could be an option, though it implies sexual undertones in modern Polish slang, so perhaps *Brzęczyk* would be more appropriate). Snubbin may be connected with "snub" or, more closely, with "snub-nosed", and indicates superiority (*Zarozu-*

¹⁵ See: I. Dobrzycka, *Klub Pickwicka Karola Dickensa*, Warszawa 1968, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, p. 40.

¹⁶ The firm concerned is Ellis and Blackmore. See: P. Ackroyd, *Dickens*, London 1991, Minerva, p. 126.

¹⁷ Brook, however, suggests that "Sam's own surname was no doubt suggested by that of Mary Weller, a servant who looked after Dickens when he was a child". (G. L. Brook, op. cit., p. 210.) This interpretation is convincing given that, to some extent, the relationship of Pickwick and Sam is that of a child and a child-minder.

mialski), whilst Fogg is an obvious analogy with the fog of English law, but also with being murky in his dealings (*Mgielski*; *Mgła* or *Mglisty* being less natural). Dodson is less clear. Irena Dobrzycka in her critical study provides the Polish reader with explanations of the translocated English names¹⁸ since in the Polish translation of, for instance, Włodzimierz Górski surnames remain untranslated, although the translator does introduce footnotes to explain certain cultural phenomena.¹⁹

Another example is Brass of *The Old Curiosity Shop* with its connotations of effrontery and impertinence or metallic features. The name receives two interesting comments in the novel. Quilp, in his amorous address to Miss Brass, comments on her surname: "Why don't she change it – melt down the brass, and take another name?"²⁰ The comment may be treated as referring to Quilp's matrimonial innuendos, but it may also be a reference to the changeable nature of the metal after which the siblings take their name. The lawyer, who befriends the criminal character, shines on the outside but is dark below the surface. The other comment refers directly to the legal profession: "it's a good name for a lawyer".²¹ Mr Brass is false as a representative of justice, just as brass can be treated as false gold (*Mosiężny*).

The function of the representatives of the legal profession and courts of law in Dickens's fictional world is prominent as they ultimately destroy the individual. Dickens progressively develops his ideas on the legal system. In earlier novels the law court is treated episodically, but in *Bleak House* the Court of Chancery is one of the focal themes. This novel is generally treated as Dickens's attack on the law and the lawyers in Victorian England. The thrust of the novel is to present the Court of Chancery as a destructive force. A novel organized around a court naturally contains several characters professionally involved with it. At the top of the hierarchy presides the Lord High Chancellor. He is surrounded by numerous functionaries of the court, none of them individualised by name. There is a legal firm, Kenge and Carboy, as well as junior clerks, including William Guppy and his friend Jobling, a law-writer. Various lawyers represent different parties: Mr. Tan-

¹⁸ However, even Professor Dobrzycka refrains from creating proper translations of the surnames into Polish, preferring descriptive explanations: "Nazwisko Muttonhead to po prostu "barania głowa", Single znaczy "brzęczenie", Buzfuz – "bzykanie" i "puch", a więc coś bez wartości, coś pustego. Snubbin zawiera aluzję do "lekceważenia", "trakowania z góry". Nazwisko Dodson nic nie znaczy, ale Fogg to "mgła", coś niejasnego, tutaj "krętactwo". I. Dobrzycka, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁹ See: K. Dickens, *Klub Pickwicka*, translated by Włodzimierz Górski and supplemented by Zofia and Wiktor Popławscy, Warszawa 1982, Czytelnik. The very first page of the translated text provides the target reader with three pieces of information in the footnotes, one being: "Esq. (skrót. Esquire) – tytuł nadawany w Anglii każdemu, kto nie należy do warstwy kupieckiej lub rzemieślniczej". (p. 7) The lack of any explanation concerning at least some of the surnames suggests that for the translator their semantic code is much less significant than the extra-textual cultural code.

²⁰ C. Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, London 1985, Penguin Books, p. 325.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 334.

gle, a lawyer in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit, Mr. Vholes who advises Richard Carstone in the same suit, and Mr. Tulkinghorn, a legal counsel of Sir Leicester Dedlock, but also the Chancery lawyer advising Gridley. Dickens makes this legal society complete by introducing Mr. Snagsby who owns a store which supplies legal stationery, Captain Hawdon, generally known as Nemo, an impoverished law-writer at the time of the story and Mr. Krook, an owner of a rag-and-bottle shop, who functions as a sign for the Lord High Chancellor in the structure of the novel.

Some of the surnames with which Dickens provided these characters are clearly evocative. Mr. Tangle, totally incompetent, entangles himself in never-ending suits, and is incapable of any professional efficiency (*Wiktacz*). The name Vholes bears associations with holes, moral emptiness. It can be also interpreted in other ways. For instance, in decoding this character's name Brook highlights: "The use of the initial group Vh-, which is contrary to English habits of spelling, emphasises the inhumanity of the least attractive of the lawyers in *Bleak House*".²² Schlicke provides a different reading: "a 'vole' is a type of rat or, in a card game, a situation in which the dealer has the winning cards. Mr Vholes is perhaps the archetypal modern lawyer".²³ Dettelbach associates the character's name with a bird: "Vholes, whose name reminds one of the word Volant, meaning 'having the wings expanded as if in flight, flying, or capable of flight'".²⁴ So many possible interpretations make it virtually impossible to translate this particular name without any compromises. As vole means *szlem*, one could play with spelling to create *Szlam* which would reflect the general attitude to law and legal profession which overwhelms the novel. It additionally denotes something rather unpleasant, and that is exactly the feature of Vholes. Yet other possible meanings are lost in such a translation. Nevertheless, *Szlam* reflects Vholes better than *Lotny* or *Zmienny*, both referring to the "volatile" aspect. Among the richer representatives of his profession, Tulkinghorn's name, accompanied by other features, echoes "Old Horny" – the devil (*Rogowski* could be an option, though it sounds too ordinarily in comparison to its English equivalent; *Rokita* could also be considered, though it could evoke extra-textual associations in the modern reader).

In the case of the lawyers, their surnames are significant as they not only point to their expressive function but, more prominently, to the ideology of the novel which is criticising the legal system and its representatives. Both Vholes and Tulkinghorn, and to a lesser extent Tangle who is less prominent in the novel, represent the dark side of legal chicanery and their surnames roundly complete the character sketches. Vholes and Tulkinghorn

²² G. L. Brook, op. cit., p. 215.

²³ P. Schlicke, op. cit., p. 318.

²⁴ C. Dettelbach, *Bird Imagery in Bleak House*, *The Dickensian* 1963, vol. 59, pp. 179–180.

are destructive and their actions visit ruin on the ones who they are supposed to help, Richard Carstone and the Dedlocks respectively. Thus their names powerfully participate in the co-creation of the fictional world, which can be divided into light and dark space. Dickens creates dark space around legal professionals which predestines death or some kind of tragedy. Not only the offices, which propagate the evil space, but also the legal professionals' clothes take on attributes of the devil. Dickens's lawyers and clerks are generally dressed in black, not only on duty, but also in private, at a time when men's clothes were rather colourful.²⁵ Tulkinghorn is appropriately dressed in black clothes which also represent his personality: "One peculiarity of his black clothes, and of his black stockings, be they silk or worsted, is, that they never shine. Mute, close, irresponsive to any glancing light, his dress is like himself"²⁶ Vholes, "dressed in black, black-gloved, and buttoned to the chin" (*BH*, p. 496), clearly belongs to the evil space. Vholes, moreover, has another feature which makes him an emissary of death, as Esther observes when she portrays Vholes and Richard: "Mr. Vholes, quite still, black-gloved, and buttoned up, looking at him [Richard] as if he were looking at his prey and charming it. I have before me the whole picture of the warm dark night, the summer lightning, the dusty track of road closed in by hedgerows and high trees, the gaunt pale horse with his ears pricked up, and the driving away at speed to Jarndyce and Jarndyce". (*BH*, p. 498) Esther twice ties Vholes to death through the gaunt pale horse, the pale horse of the Four Horsemen of Apocalypse bringing death, which foreshadows Richard's fate. The very encounter with the lawyer brings death to the client, whether actual, financial or emotional.

Tulkinghorn is sketched as the final stage of corruption in both mind and heart in the gallery of Dickensian lawyers. His fortune largely depends on his clients' metaphorical life and death: "The old gentleman is rusty to look at, but is reputed to have made good thrift out of aristocratic marriage settlements and aristocratic wills, and to be very rich". (*BH*, p. 10) The power that he possesses as the master of other people's lives through what he knows ("He is surrounded by a mysterious halo of family confidences" *BH*, p.10) makes him closer to the devil rather than God since he uses it vindictively to destroy others. He is described as being of the old school and Chancery, where he practices, is a relic of an outworn legal world, rooted in the social order through its century-old tradition, immovable and inflexible, and which virtually kills plaintiffs (Tom Jarndyce, Gridley, Miss Flite, Richard Carstone all die because of Chancery). Georgas actually asserts that "Tulkinghorn is drawn as a fully-developed archetypal devil figure", pointing to the epithet "old" attached to him, to his black clothes, his secrecy, hatred

²⁵ Black suits became fashionable only in the second half of the 19th century. (See: I. Dobrzycka, op. cit., pp. 62–63).

²⁶ C. Dickens, *Bleak House*, London 1992, Bantam Books, p. 10. For the sake of convenience the abbreviation of *BH* will be used in the text to indicate a direct quotation.

and suspicion of women, lack of family and clear motivation in his deeds, as well as his name.²⁷

Other names of characters connected with the law are less transparent, yet they also bring to mind certain associations, especially when accompanied by other appellations used for particular characters. Of the solicitors Kenge and Carboy only the first one is actually characterised and participates in the action of the novel. Mr. Kenge, whose surname faintly echoes a "cage", a symbolic prison of Mrs. Flite's birds and a sign for the court imprisoning the plaintiffs, is generally known as Conversation Kenge because: "He appeared to enjoy beyond everything the sound of his own voice. (...) it was mellow and full, and gave great importance to every word he uttered. He listened to himself with obvious satisfaction, and sometimes gently beat the time to his own music with his head, or rounded a sentence with his hand". (*BH*, p. 20) The nickname which he provides this character with points to the fact that in *Bleak House* Dickens expands his theme, already began in *The Pickwick Papers*, of the vital contribution of language and theatricality to success in the legal world. Thus, across his novels Dickens sustains the theme that the loquacity of the lawyers transforms the courts from an arena for the delivery of justice into a theatrical showcase for verbal jousting, and that all lawyers care about is manipulation and deception of clients, a point encapsulated in Mr. Kenge's life motto: "It is really of no use carrying on a deception when no object is to be gained by it" (*BH*, p. 19). Thus he could become *Wygadany Klacior*, though such a rendering definitely changes the register; so perhaps *Klatkiewicz* would be more appropriate.

Mr. Snagsby, the owner of a law stationary store, and his wife bear an interesting name. Whilst he is mild and timid, his wife is a shrill and vehement woman. His "snag" may be associated with difficulties or problems, created by his innocent conduct. First he identifies the handwriting of Mr. Nemo alias Captain Hawdon, which has a vital significance for Tulkinghorn's investigation of Lady Dedlock's secret, thus creating a huge problem for her. Later, he tells Tulkinghorn what Jo said about the mysterious woman who was inquiring about Nemo (Lady Deadlock in disguise), thereby further complicating the mystery plot. Mrs. Snagsby, obsessively jealous, may be associated with the other meaning of the word "snag", i.e. damaging or catching. Her obsession almost damages the marriage as she spies upon her husband, relentlessly believing that he had fathered Jo. Consequently, the couple's surname could be rendered as *Niszczalscy*.

For a modern reader naming a law clerk, William Guppy, after a tropical fish must seem ingenious (*Gupik*, which seems to fit the character, though perhaps too strongly indicating "silliness"). Guppies are known for their speed and agility, just as Guppy is clearly changeable (his behaviour towards Esther and his marriage proposals can serve as an example). Guppies are

²⁷ See: M. Georgas, *Dickens, Defoe, the Devil and the Dedlocks: The "Faustus Motif" in Bleak House*, *Dickens Studies Annual* 1982, vol. 10, pp. 23–42.

also known for their external beauty, and external beauty is what he most cares about. This and his sneakiness are evident when Esther's looks are changed: "I could hardly have believed that anybody could in a moment have turned so red, or changed so much, as Mr. Guppy did when I now put up my veil. (...) I never saw such faltering, such confusion, such amazement and apprehension". (*BH*, p. 504) He is as changeable as the law which can be used differently according to circumstance. However, the problem with such an interpretation is that Dickens simply could not have named Guppy after the fish, as the name was introduced in 1895 when Robert John Lechmere Guppy showed the first specimen in the British Museum.²⁸ The example clearly shows the change of perspective in the reception of that particular name between the Victorian and modern reader.

Guppy seems Dickens's most perfect unity of professional and private life, following the tradition of previous legal representatives in his love of words, making artificial verbal constructions to deceive the world. He never allows himself to be caught off guard, and even when he is taken by surprise he falls into his professional mode, though with verbal difficulty. When Guppy's apparent feelings towards Esther disappear, he will use legal tricks to protect himself. The verbal tricks Guppy is so fond of may be connected with the emptiness of the legal profession whose only medium is the word which distorts the reality and makes justice non-existent. Thus perhaps Guppy may be associated with gaps – emptiness, and so could be translated as *Pustak*, which could apply both to his attitude to Esther and law as such.

Tony Weevle Jobling's name defines him as working for the corrupt machinery of English law (*Pracus* or *Pracolik*, the latter being closer to the original if only because of the similar pronunciation of the second part of the surname; it could also be rendered as *Trybik* to associate it with the legal apparatus). Initially unemployed, he finds work thanks to Guppy's help and rents the room at Krook's previously occupied by Nemo. This links him to other characters connected with the law and particular events concerning the message Dickens devises for the Court of Chancery as symbolized by Krook's rag-and-bottle shop.

The nickname given to Captain Hawdon, Nemo, is self explanatory. When he was an army officer he was given a surname. At the time of the story, when he is a law-writer, he becomes "no one", as if any dealings with the law dehumanised a person. Krook, on the other hand, is in no way a "no one". He is both himself and a crooked version of the Lord High Chancellor. Dickens decides to parallel the most elevated among legal institutions with the most sordid shop, and the most exalted in the legal hierarchy with the lowest among traders. Significantly, Krook's shop accepts anything, just like the court deals with any case, and, although it sucks everything inside, it does not give anything back, just as the court does not produce expected verdicts. Dickens makes a straightforward analogy between the Lord Chancellor and

²⁸ See: www.akwa120.republika.pl

Krook by having the latter called the Lord Chancellor in his neighbourhood, whilst his shop is nicknamed Chancery. By making the Lord High Chancellor and Krook coequal, Dickens reduces the highest official to the status of a trader in human beings, signified by the bones in the shop. The Lord Chancellor has no more desire to improve his court by making it more efficient than Krook has to improve his shop by cleaning it. All things considered, *Kanciarz* may be treated as a good equivalent.

Thus Krook becomes a sign for the unnamed Lord High Chancellor. Yet there are certain appellations used for this character. Mr. Tangle addresses the Chancellor "Mlud", a play on the words "My Lord – Mlud – Mud",²⁹ linking the Chancellor to the motif of mud which, together with fog, is one of the images most frequently associated with the court. The imagery of the court surrounded by fog and mud has been extensively analysed by critics.³⁰ It is uniformly agreed that fog in *Bleak House* functions on two levels: it is the real, authentic London fog, and it is symbolic of the Court of Chancery. The fog symbolises institutional oppression and human confusion that translate into misery. The "mental" fog looming over the court mirrors the ways in which the court operates: its stagnation, procrastination and protraction of suits, its disorganisation and muddle. But it also symbolises "all the ponderous and murky forces that suffocate the creative energies of mankind";³¹ moreover, fog and mud "are the symptoms of a general return to the primal slime, a return to chaos which is going on everywhere in the novel and is already nearing its final end when the novel begins".³² The Lord High Chancellor is provided with a metaphorical equivalent whose attributes correspond to those evoked by the symbolic fog and mud.

The imagery surrounding the Court of Chancery and all the characters connected with it suggest a certain vision of the law and its representatives presented by Dickens. The attitude manifested in the novel is: "Suffer any wrong that can be done to you, rather than come here!". (*BH*, p. 3) The surnames given to the representatives of the law point to the most distinctive features of particular lawyers, but as a group they create an image of superior, sometimes limited, wordy individuals ensnaring their clients in the arcane mysteries of the law. Almost all the representatives of the legal profession are united in their devilishness associated with greed and represented by their appearance, attire and the dark space in which they work and live, as well as the surnames they bear. Consequently the evocative

²⁹ V. Nabokov, *Wykłady o literaturze*, Warszawa 2000, Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza SA, p. 128.

³⁰ Such distinguished critics as Churchill, Wilson, Lindsay, Kettle, Johnson, Butt, Davis and Nabokov have all dealt with the metaphorical meaning of fog and mud in the novel.

³¹ E. Johnson, *Charles Dickens – His Tragedy and Triumph*, London 1952, Hamish Hamilton, p. 762.

³² J. H. Miller, *Charles Dickens. The World of His Novels*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958, Harvard University Press, p. 195.

surnames complete the characterization not only of particular characters but also of an entire cluster of them. The dominant function of the names is then clearly the creative one, and so, if they are left untranslated, at least some of the senses they create are lost. Thus, translocation in this particular case makes the translation less rich in imagery and implied senses to be deciphered by the reader. Needless to say, at least to some extent the dominant, negative vision of the legal world as presented by Dickens is less black in the translation.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, P., *Dickens*, London 1991, Minerva.
- Brook, G. L., *The Language of Dickens*, London 1970, Andre Deutsch.
- Cieślakowa, A., *Jak "ocalić w tłumaczeniu" nazwy własne*, in: M. Filipowicz-Rudek, J. Konieczna-Twardzikowska (ed.), *Między oryginałem a przekładem. II Przekład, jego tworzenie się i wpływ*, Kraków 1996, Universitas.
- Collins, P., *Dickens and Education*, London 1963, Macmillan.
- Dettelbach, C., *Bird Imagery in Bleak House*, *The Dickensian* 1963, vol. 59.
- Dickens, C., *The Old Curiosity Shop*, London 1985, Penguin Books.
- Dickens, C., *Bleak House*, London 1992, Bantam Books.
- Dickens, K., *Ciężkie czasy na te czasy*, translated in 1866 by Apollo Korzeniowski, Warszawa 1955, Czytelnik.
- Dobrzycka, I., *Klub Pickwicka Karola Dickensa*, Warszawa 1968, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.
- Georgas, M., *Dickens, Defoe, the Devil and the Dedlocks: The "Faust Motif" in Bleak House*, *Dickens Studies Annual* 1982, vol. 10.
- Johnson, E., *Charles Dickens – His Tragedy and Triumph*, London 1952, Hamish Hamilton.
- Legeżyńska, A., *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie*, Warszawa 1986, PWN, p. 13.
- Miller, J. H., *Charles Dickens. The World of His Novels*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958, Harvard University Press.
- Nabokov, V., *Wykłady o literaturze*, Warszawa 2000, Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza S.A.
- Pisarska, A., Tomaszewicz, T., *Współczesne tendencje przekładoznawcze*, Poznań 1998, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, p. 62.
- Schlicke, P., (ed.), *Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens*, Oxford 1999, Oxford University Press.
- Stone, H., *What's in a Name: Fantasy and Calculation in Dickens*, in: *Dickens Studies Annual* 1985, vol. 14.
- www.akwa120.republika.pl