A Socio-Cultural Aspect of Anti-language[1].

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Abstract. The article has been devoted to the phenomenon of anti-language and the focal point of the paper refers to the analysis of socio-cultural processes involved in the formation and reception of anti-laguage. The analysis has been aimed at defining the circumstances of the occurrence of anti-laguage as well as determining its role and functions at both individual and collective levels. My general approach to the study of anti-language outlines the social functions which govern the emergence of anti-languages with the explicit reference to language, context and text. Kenneth Burke (1966) defines man as a symbol-using animal. In his "Definition of Man", Burke draws attention to the concept of negativity when he argues that negatives do not occur in nature and they are solely a product of human symbol systems. According to Burke, "(…) language and the negative 'invented' man (…)" (Burke 1966: 9). The study has begun with the premise that anti-language permanently depicts an antagonistic attitude towards the official language, whereas the negative attitude towards anti-language translates directly into stigmatisation of its users. The negativity of the affix *anti-* in anti-language has been culturally and socially structured as antithetical to language. Nevertheless, language and anti-language do not necessarily forge a typical antithesis in a polar sense. Victor Turner (/1969/ 1975) employs the affix anti- for his term *anti-structure* and explains that the affix has been used strategically and does not imply radical negation. This paper seeks to revise the one-dimensional attitude towards anti-language and fortify its social significance with a new quality. The basis for the study of anti-language has been its multi-functionality and multifaceted character. A modest corpus of anti-languages has been analysed in order to illustrate a complex and polysemic nature of this phenomenon.

Keywords: anti-language, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, stigmatisation, multi-functionality, the negative, symbol, culture, taboo.

The study of anti-languages, which I undertook two years ago while collecting research material for my M.A. thesis, has embraced the social and cultural facets of this linguistic phenomenon. The study began with the premise that anti-language permanently depicted an antagonistic attitude towards, what I conventionally termed, the norm language, and that the negative attitude towards anti-language translated directly into stigmatisation of its users. As a result, my first and foremost priority was to revise the one-dimensional attitude towards anti-language and distinguish a typology of anti-languages according to their functional features.

[1]The issue of a pragmatic and sociolinguistic analysis of anti-language has been addressed by me in my M.A. thesis *A Typology of Anti-languages in Selected Instances of Literary Discourse*, written in 2018.

The concept of anti-language was first defined and researched thoroughly by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978), who employed the term to describe the *lingua franca* of an anti-society. Halliday (1978) argues that anti-language and anti-society are a matter of choice, a "conscious alternative" (Halliday, 1978, p. 164) to conventions and standards imposed and exercised in the norm society. Émile Durkheim, on the other hand, postulates to recognise language as a social fact. Durkheim defines social facts as "manners of acting or thinking" whose distinguishing feature is their ability to "(…) exercise a coercive influence on the consciousness of individuals (...)" (Durkheim, [1895] 1982, p. 43). Language, thus, characterised as a social fact is imposed on its users while, at the same time, it restrains individuals from violating the norms of a social collective. The external coercive power, through the institutions such as education and culture, becomes indiscernible and operates in the field of habits and customs. However, it loses nothing from the power of its impact. Just as he recognises the implicit value of crime, Durkheimian approach to anti-language provides the same imposition. Applied to the rules of sociological method, anti-language qualifies to be a social fact no less than the norm language itself. Whenever an individual attempts to resist it, they will immediately become aware of the pressure it exerts upon them. Durkheim explicitly indicates that the coercive power asserts itself the most noticeably when it is resisted or denied:

A social fact is identifiable through the power of external coercion which it exerts or is capable of exerting upon individuals. The presence of this power is in turn recognisable because of the existence of some pre-determined sanction, or through the resistance that the fact opposes to any individual action that may threaten it. (Durkheim, [1895] 1982, pp. 56–57)

Whether imposed or wilful, anti-language constitutes a peculiar overture to a broadly understood adjustment. What anti-language and the norm language share in common is precisely their social DNA, although, as Halliday asserts, "[i]n all languages, words, sounds, and structures tend to become charged with social value; it is to be expected that, in the anti-language, the social value will be more clearly foregrounded" (Halliday, 1978, p. 166).

Anti-language, due to its low social affiliation, may not have seemed an attractive object of interest to linguists who often reduced its linguistic diversity to merely a secret code developed and sustained only to insulate a marginalised community. The biased tone may have been the result of a preconceived approach to anti-language, the approach preserved both in culture and language. The affix anti- has earned its semantic relevance through social arbitrary agreement. Although language is an arbitrary system, the choice of means and meanings is determined culturally and socially. The imposed meanings have not been established irrevocably once and for all, yet, whilst undergoing mediation and dispute, they remain within the social structure. Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978) explicitly underlines the fact that through exchanging meanings people simultaneously communicate the social structure. To paraphrase the words of Halliday: "(…) what we say is affected by who we are" (Halliday, 1978, p. 2). For Halliday,

language is a tool with the support of which people express social processes while, at the same time, it is the metaphor of these processes. The heterogeneity in languages reflects the diversity in society. Bronisław Geremek (1980) argues, for instance, that the mere fact of selecting a secret code for communication is immediately perceived as suspicious, and a potential threat to the social stability and *status quo*. Obscurity and ambiguity of language may activate a negative attitude and suspiciousness on the verge of taboo and the definition of *taboo* implies two seemingly contradictory aspects of an activity: the sacred and the accursed one. *Encycloapedia Britannica Online* provides a definition of the word t a b o o , where one can read about the dual nature of the concept:

Taboo, also spelled *tabu*, Tongan *tabu*, Maori *tapu*, the prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred and consecrated or too dangerous and accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake. (…) Generally, the prohibition that is inherent in a taboo includes the idea that its breach or defiance will be followed by some kind of trouble to the offender (…).[2]

Daniel Heller-Roazen (2013) isolates a divine element in the secret uses of anti-language when he employs a narrative in which both gods and men have used to denote the same things but in a different manner:

The truth, however, is that within the terrain circumscribed by a grammar, obscure expressions can always be invented. They can, moreover, proliferate without end, for the parts of speech can be recomposed in infinitely new ways. The oldest literatures of the Indo-European traditions suggest, in striking unison, that the true masters of such obscure expressions are divine. A corpus of ancient sources leads one to believe that the gods of the ancient Greeks, Celts, Norsemen, Indians, and Anatolians, in particular, employed a set of special terms and phrases that were at once similar in form to those commonly recorded in human tongues and noticeably distinct from them. (Heller-Roazen, 2013, p. 84)

Secret language, being attributive to gods, might also be useful as a kind of smoke screen through which poets could skilfully avoid or camouflage words and expressions identified in society as taboo. Presumably, one of the methods to avert danger and to avoid the punishment was to employ a ciphered code, which had the effect of a ritual protecting communities and individuals from the unavoidable consequences in case of breaching the taboo, although, at the same time, the code could have become the source of taboo itself. The desire to maintain secrecy and conceal the true significance of signs whilst retaining the faculty of communicating messages lay behind the creation of *nomina sacra*. In his essay, titled "The Origin of *the Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal," Larry Hurtado (1998) defines *nomina sacra* as: "(…) a collection of words (…) written in special abbreviated forms in Christian sources to indicate their sacred character"

[2] *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*: https://www.britannica.com/topic/taboo–sociology, retrieved on 28 December, 2017

(Hurtado, 1998, p. 655). The origin of the Christian *nomina sacra* can be traced to Jewish scribal practice. Hurtado refers to Jewish scribal approach to the *T e t r a g r a m m a t o n* as to the name which should be preserved from uttering. The four-letter abbreviation was often replaced by other signs or simply avoided, which expressed the great devotion of the scribes. As Heller-Roazen (2013) notices, the Christian *nomina sacra* "(…) illustrate[s] a linguistic phenomenon that is by all accounts more general" (Heller-Roazen, 2013, p. 105). Heller-Roazen (2013) refers to lexical taboos which are strictly prohibited, and yet, since the imposed silence surrounding such words and phrases cannot be fully guaranteed, "(…) a set of substitutions is also required" (Heller-Roazen, 2013, p. 105). These substitutions may be classified as linguistic euphemisms for the unexpressed taboo words through which social order is being maintained. Certainly, the purposes for which secret codes are applied can be of strictly pragmatic provenience. Daniel Heller-Roazen (2013) recalls the examples of Julius Caesar's cipher and its simpler version used by Caesar's nephew, Augustus, as the instances of encryption techniques employed to protect messages of military significance against their decoding by the enemies. Another example provided by Heller-Roazen (2013) is the practice of *a t b a s h* which rests upon a similar principle as the Caesar's cipher. Richard C. Steiner (1996) mentions two editions of the *Book of Jeremiah*, namely the Masoretic text and the Old Greek version, indicating that the *a t b a s h* code-words may illuminate the milieu of the two editors. The analysis of the two *a t b a s h* code-words for Babylon sheds light not only on historical and social background of the text but it also indicates different function of this kind of anti-language. On the one hand, it is employed for fear of repression; on the other hand, it serves as a tool for deriding the old ruler and legitimising the new one. The above examples may suggest that secrecy in anti-languages operates at multiple levels. According to Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978), "(…) secrecy is a necessary strategic property of anti-languages, yet, it is unlikely to be the major cause of their existence" (Halliday, 1978, p. 166).

Anti-language has earned the status of a social dialect, a distinctive linguistic category which tells the history of a community that has developed it. The notion of anti-language complements the notion of a speech community by incorporating social dialects, taboo phrases, imprecatory passages as well as sacred names or poetic signs and by suggesting a heterogeneous world-view embedded in both language and community. Language relates common experiences and different backgrounds and it reflects modes of thinking and ways of living. Florian Coulmas (2013) postulates to view languages as resources dependent on the reference group as well as the functional potential of language. The use of slang, for instance, as being one of the anti-language types, is no longer restricted to confined sub-groups of teenagers, soldiers or inmates. Slang has won approval among world-famous trendsetting musicians as well as in the unrestrained realm of global communication facilitated through social networks. Anti-language, or rather its elements smuggled in the mainstream literature, may provide diversity and contribute to individuals' development as well as broaden their intellectual awareness. Novels such as *White and Red* by Dorota Masłowska (2002), *Pigeon English* by Stephen Kelman (2011)

or *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* by Piper Kerman (/2010/ 2014) introduce their readers to the microcosm of a large city, gang-ruled estate and a federal prison through anti-language indeed. Applying anti-language to portray certain national or local vices and stereotypes may be convincing, genuine and helpful in emotional and symbolic confrontation with understatements and euphemisms. Once spoken language of the social outcasts and underclass, the status and prestige of anti-language have become upgraded by adopting it into the written form. It seems justified to point out the fact that the concept of prestige is a subjective criterion based on value-laden determinants. Socrates3, a classic Athenian philosopher, perceived writing as a record of ignorance and a source of obscurity as written words were deprived of a crucial propriety of dialogue and discourse which features speech. Daniel Heller-Roazen (2013) describes the procedure of guarding secret messages in the Vedic religion in which knowledge is intended to be communicated to memory through hearing. Therefore, it appears that great prestige has been granted to sounds and oral transmission. The knowledge of Druids, highly regarded members of Celtic communities, was not intended for the masses and it would be against the law to commit it to writing. Nonetheless, in certain circumstances, only a written record could reinforce the anticipated power. In this context, it is worth mentioning c u r s e t a b l e t s which constitute a distinct instance of anti-language employed to prevent anticipated future defeats. It should be clearly indicated that the main motivation of the *defigens4* was to restrain or inhibit the victim and not to destroy them. The curse tablets address gods and the deceased as well as provide valuable information concerning ordinary provincial citizens from different parts of the Greco-Roman world. Christopher A. Faraone (1997) provides an analysis of the function and social context of the curse tablets (which he refers to as *d e f i x i o* to mean "binding spells") in early Greek society. According to Faraone (1997), it is possible that the early *d e f i x i o n e s* were purely verbal and had a form of recited formulae performed during a ritual. As literacy gradually spread in the classical period, the verbal spells became transformed into more sophisticated written formulae. Although functioning in the underground (literally and metaphorically), curse tablets constituted a vital part of cultural and religious life of the ancient Greek society. Faraone (1997) interprets secrecy as a part of the traditional social ritual procedure which accompanied communication with gods. However, neither magic nor religion ably assisted in evaluating the cultural phenomenon of early Greek *d e f i x i o n e s*. Faraone (1997) argues that the rationale for this kind of ritual is based on "(…) strong belief in the persuasive power of certain kinds of formulaic language" (Faraone 1997: 8). The formulae employed in the case of curse tablets prove it difficult to distinguish magic from religion. Obviously, the language of curse tablets constitutes not so much a secret language, although "(…) the addition of any and all foreign-sounding deities, epithets and

[3]*The Phaedrus* by Plato. [In:] "Plato in Twelve Volumes," Vol. 9 [274c-277a] translated by Harold N. Fowler. Retrieved on 1 May, 2018 from: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu

[4] "The *defigens* – lit. "the one who binds" (Faraone [1997: 5])

voces magicae was thought to increase the efficacy of every 'magical' operation" (Faraone, 1997, p. 6), but a fixed form which guarantees success of the spell. Faraone (1997) suggests that the text of the binding formulae was stripped of unnecessary supplements in order to render the message more effective.

People use their language in order to achieve different aims and, for that reason, "[a]ll use of language has a context" (Halliday [/1985/1989, p. 45) One of the most vivid instances of functional language is a t e x t. Halliday (/1985/ 1989) refers to a text as to any example of living language which is made of meanings set in the context of situation and culture. A literary text is an exceptional form of language exchange between an author – a character – and a reader. This form of exchange is of a dialogical nature and thus furnishes the interaction between the participants. In order to summarise the function of a literary text in the sociolinguistic and cultural development of a human being, it seems justified to apply Pinker's (/1999/ 2000) definition of speech in reference to literature: when we commune with a literary text, "(…) we can be led to think thoughts that have never been thought before and that never would have occurred to us on our own" (Pinker, /1999/ 2000, p. 1). Roger Fowler (1981) postulates to "(…) relocate literary discourse within semiotic resources of their society" (Fowler 1981: 199) and return literature to the community. In order to do so, it is necessary to emphasise the communicative aspect of literature and relate the literary texts to the experience of readers. For Mikhail Bakhtin ([1975] 1981), a novel can be defined as diversity of languages which internally interweave and translate into social d i a l e c t . Roger Fowler (1981) views literature as a discourse and, thus, as a process of communication. In accordance with Roger Fowler's attitude to literary discourse, my aim has been to emphasise the s y n e r g i s t i c d i m e n s i o n s of texts: "[t]o treat literature as discourse is to see the text as mediating relationships between language users: not only relationships of speech, but also of consciousness, ideology, role and class. The text ceases to be an object and becomes an action or process" (Fowler, 1981, p. 80). My objective has been to re-determine the concept of anti-language in the light of literary dialogue and social imaginaries. The term *s o c i a l i m a g i n a r y* has been introduced by Charles Taylor (2004) to explore the structure of modern life in the West as well as multiple modernities around the world. Through the concept of social imaginaries, Taylor accounts for the differences among modernities. The Western social imaginaries are animated by different orders whose imposition is justified by means of mutual benefits. Wojciech Burszta (2008) refers to the concept of a culture trap or a culture dictate which compels people to form their identities in collective ideas, clear signs and symbols. According to Burszta, all traditional senses ascribed to culture have become gorgonised by social imaginary (Burszta, 2008, p. 156). Nonetheless, literary discourse provides a platform where prevalent meanings and common denotations can be negotiated in an active way. It was Bakhtin ([1975] 1981) who claimed that "[a] passive understanding of linguistic meaning is no understanding at all, it is only the abstract aspect of meaning (…). In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active (…). Understanding comes to fruition only in the response" (Bakhtin, [1975] 1981, pp. 281–

282). The material subjected to the analysis in the context of a typology of anti-languages has encompassed two novels:

- *Room*, a 2010 novel by an Irish-Canadian author, Emma Donoghue;
- *Pigeon English*, a 2011 novel by an English author, Stephen Kelman.

Both novels constitute an accurate example of literature which is preoccupied with language as an evolving process by contrast to literature which reinforces an already established idea of what language should be. Jacob Mey (/1993/ 1994) speaks of "wording the world" when he maintains that words are not merely designations of things but they are interaction with the speaker's environment (Mey, /1993/ 1994, p. 301). Emma Donoghue adopts a child's language to de-charm the anti-language, re-context it and render it more penetrable and less esoteric to the reader. The process of de-charming involves an experiment with language, which is an infrequent procedure in literary fiction. Reference may be made to Irvine Welsh and his novel *Trainspotting* (1993) narrated in Scottish English with dialogues transcribed phonetically or Anthony Burgess and his novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) written in a fictional argot, N a d s a t . Obviously, in each case, slang performs different roles and fulfils different functions. Yet, what integrates the linguistic experiments is an attempt to explore the relationship between language and authenticity. Roger Fowler (1981) determines anti-language to be a process rather than a code (Fowler, 1981, p. 157). Language, thus, becomes comprehensible through the functions it fulfils, the same as the nature of language can be defined through the interactions it enables. The meaning is derived not merely from what people say, but, first and foremost, how they say it, when they say it, where they say it, and why they say it. Hence, language can be understood and acquired through the functions it serves and through the cultural and social milieu in which it is applied. Stanisław Grabias (/1997/ 2001) recognises not only the social character of language but also its interpretative nature towards reality, both at the collective and individual levels. Jean Piaget ([1927] 1971) determines speech as "a collective institution" and Adam Heinz (1978) maintains that words enable thinking in the same way as numbers enable counting. Language, from such perspective, does not reflect reality but it creates it. The process of denoting reality may be analysed from different perspectives. Daniel Heller-Roazen (2013) mentions the medieval performers of Old Occitan lyric poetry, the troubadours,[5] whose secret language involved *s e n h a l s ,* by which their identity was concealed. The term *s e n h a l* was forged by a group of the fourteenth-century poets from Toulouse, who documented the troubadour poetic verses, and it denotes "(…) the troubadour procedure of substituting one name for another" (Heller-Roazen, 2013, p. 49). In the same way as contemporary poets and composers, troubadours possessed the skill and ability to manipulate reality. Hence, they could compose, transform and, finally, invent a

[5] "(…) poets of the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries who, (…), called themselves "troubadours": according to the most accepted etymology, "finders" or "inventors," named after the Old Occitan verb trobar, "to find." (Heller-Roazen, 2013, pp. 45–46)

convincing picture of reality in order to support different needs and expectations. The prime device, by means of which it could have been achieved, was language. Due to their peripatetic lifestyle, troubadours had an opportunity to witness the numerous disparate realities and the applied *s e n h a l s* functioned as indicative marks of their experiences. Heller-Roazen (2013) defines the function of *s e n h a l s* as of "founders" of unnamed reality. By naming what has been unnamed, a *s e n h a l* becomes equally an addressee and an addresser of the reality. Stephen Kelman (2011) places his main character in a relatively clichéd environment for immigrants in London. The social status of the newcomers is limited and, simultaneously, clarified by the descriptions of their physical milieu. Yet, Kelman's protagonist is not a voiceless anonymous outlander but he is granted viewpoints capable of challenging the reader's ideology. Although Stephen Kelman applies linguistic mechanisms to reproduce and consolidate differences and stereotypes, his main character displays in anti-language authentic naivety, vivid imagination and unconstrained faith in the power of words. The anti-language of slang is used as a tool employed to negotiate systems and hierarchies. Furthermore, the concept of anti-language may determine a reversed situation – from the incomprehensible children to confusing messages of adults. The situation of such reversal is perceptible in the narration of Jack, the protagonist of Emma Donoghue's *Room*. The transition from being incomprehensible to adults is reversed into the situation when the language of adults turns out to be at variance with the child's code. Emma Donoghue juxtaposes two linguistic worlds: the world of a child and the world of adults. For Jack, the language of adults does not make much sense, thus, it can be perceived by the boy as anti-language because it does not denote things and situations as clearly and directly as his language does, hence, it does not fulfil its elementary function of being communicative. Childhood may be perceived as a primitive, savage stage in the development of a human being. The stage, though, implies experiments and challenges.

Underprivileged languages, such as slang, become an expression of social tension and deprivation, yet, a vigorous deformation of the norm language can be perceived and experienced on the verge of poetry. Muriel Saville-Troike (/1982/ 2003) draws attention to the fact that "(…) language attitudes are acquired in the process of enculturation in a particular speech community, and are thus basic to its characterization" (Saville-Troike /1982/ 2003, p. 183). In the Dark Ages, secrecy and the procedure of deliberate language enciphering constituted a discernible domain of law-breakers of various types. In regard to common frauds and tricksters, secrecy was employed to conceal illegal activities and to evade justice. Nonetheless, in case of the Burgundian vagabonds, known under the name of C o q u i l l a r s,[6] a secret jargon was devised as a remarkably efficient technique employed to commit unremarkable crimes. Anti-language, as a hermetic form of speech, may oscillate between blasphemy and poetry, evidence of which can be submitted through the character of François Villon for whom the rogue tongue became the medium of verse. Of great importance in defining functions which anti-language fulfills could be

[6] It was a company of bandits and wrongdoers, who prowled the streets of the Burgundian capital in the fifteenth century of Common Era.

its role in establishing the social view of the world in which people from the social underclass are found guilty *in* potentialand *in* actu. The need to conceal language is perceived as intrinsically criminogenic. Thus, the linguistic decipherment is inevitably followed by the social recognition. The interrelation of language and its societal context is consistent with Mey's (/1993/ 1994) interpretation of pragmatics as: "(…) the science of language inasmuch as that science focuses on the language-using *human* (…). [P]ragmatics is interested in the process of producing language and in its producers, not just in the end-product, language." (Mey, /1993/ 1994, p. 35). Bronisław Geremek (1980) delineates a literary mode for the anti-language of beggars and vagabonds in the medieval Arabic literature from the tenth century of the Common Era. Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978) points out to an entertaining effect of particular anti-languages and evokes G o b b l e d y g o o k , a secret comic tongue of the Victorian working-class. Daniel Heller-Roazen (2013) argues that c a n t shares something with poetry and can be perceived as a form of art. The significance and pleasure of the practice referring to encrypting texts was recognized and explored by the seventh-century grammarian, Virgilius Maro Grammaticus (quoted in Heller-Roazen [2013, p. 96]):

Virgilius listed, in didactic terms, at least three reasons for such practices: "First, so that we may test the ingenuity of our students in searching out and identifying obscure points; second, for the ornamentation and reinforcement of eloquence; third, lest mystical matters, which should be revealed solely to the initiated, be discovered easily by base and stupid people." (Heller-Roazen, 2013, p. 96)

Additionally, it is worth noticing a peculiar status of dialects which, on the one hand, provide a sense of community to a group and, on the other hand, they can prevent communication between groups. From the societal point of view, it is profoundly important to acknowledge and elucidate this capacity of human beings to use the same device in order to communicate, consolidate as well as to conceal, confuse and obfuscate the message.

In summary, my aim has been to contra-pose the formulaic confidence that anti-language solely corrupts norm language, values and perceptions. Although, an apparent purification of colloquial vernaculars into literary languages may be perceived as a treacherous attempt to standardise them, the truth is that a common fate for slang words is their assimilation into standard speech. Since humans learn language in a social environment, not in isolation, it can therefore be assumed that people use their languages in order to achieve different aims. Ultimately, the functions of language derive directly from social interactions and, therefore, language becomes a mode of behaviour by which a speaker evolves from a mere proprietor of language into its active user and c o m m u n i c a t o r [7]. The act of attaching and detaching meaning to selected types of language is a socially-constituted process, which means that any boundaries imposed on

[7] The word c o m m u n i c a t i o n is derived from Latin *communicare* 'to share, divide out (…)' and literally it means 'to make common', 'to make public' – from the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, retrieved 15 March 2018.

language derive directly from the social structure. Vernacular speech, similar to race, gender and age, is a social marker that gives rise to discrimination. A low or high status is assigned to a language on the basis of ideology, current politics, fashion and other social factors whose meaning can be defined in relation to time and history. Florian Coulmas (2013) draws attention to the fact that the vector of dependence is oriented from speakers to language and not from language to speakers. The significance and efficacy of anti-language should not be indisputably devaluated on the premise that it is reserved exclusively to socially marginalised people. Anti-language embodies characteristics of a language which could be referred to as l i n g u a s a c e r[8] in being both noble and cursed, both language of exclusion and of the socially excluded. A certain paradox is that the identity of anti-language is constructed via its direct opposition towards the norm language. The excluding factor of anti-language, which eliminates it from the norm society, is equally its identity provider. Halliday (1978) employs the notion of metonymy to explain the anti-society relation towards society. Anti-society is a metonymic extension of society within the social system whereas structurally both anti-society and anti-language remain metaphors for the society and language. Dawid, one of the characters in the Polish drama film titled "Symmetry,"[9] when asked by his fellow inmate to legitimise an inconsistent and precarious character of law and order of the world, replies that the world does not make any sense and people have to provide the meaning by themselves. One of the objectives of mine has been to review anti-language as a social construct and an active mediator between people and realities it is able to encompass and delineate. Of particular relevance for my own perception has become to recognise a wide dimension of anti-languages and their diversified status in society. Referring to anti-language as to a language of s a c e r s t a t e takes place in accordance with the principles and morals of the norm language. Anti-language can, thus, be a cult object to its fans while remaining a monstrous distortion to its foes.

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[8] The term refers to the concept of *Homo sacer* which denoted a person both hallowed and cursed in Ancient Roman religion. The term was further developed by an Italian philosopher, Georgio Agamben (1998) in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen.

[9] *Symmetry* is the Polish drama film from 2004, directed by Konrad Niewolski and produced by SPI International Polska Em Studio in 2003.

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