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Forum Lingwistyczne
tom 12, nr 2 (2024)
ISSN 2450-2758 (wersja elektroniczna)

DOI: http://doi.org/10.31261/FL.2024.12.2.04

zgłoszone: 20.09.2023
zaakceptowane: 09.01.2024
opublikowane: 09.09.2024

From ours to alien: The journey of Polish *obcy*

Historia znaczenia słowa *obcy* w polszczyźnie

Abstract: The paper traces the history of *obcy*, whose original meaning of common, mutual, communal, has changed to mean alien, foreign. In other Slavic languages, the reflexes of the Common Slavic **obьtjь* tend to retain its original meaning: Czech *obec* "community," Russian, *obščestvo* "community, society," *obščenije* "contact," etc. I show how the original dichotomy between *swój* "one's own" and *cudzy* "some else's" becomes a trichotomy, whereby *swój* is contrasted with *cudzy* vis-à-vis property and with *obcy* vis-à-vis people, places, ideas, etc., belonging to the out group. The emergence, in the baroque period, of a new word *wspólny* "common" further facilitates *obcy*'s spectacular shift. I argue that the semantic shift of *obcy* was motivated to a large degree by the rise of the *szlachta* social class and its ethos of *sobiepaństwo* "self-mastery." As *szlachcice* grew more powerful over time they came to view things that were communal as things which were not theirs and therefore alien.

Key words: historical linguistics, corpus linguistics, semantic change, etymology

Abstrakt: Artykuł śledzi historię słowa *obcy* w języku polskim. Słowo to początkowo oznaczało „wspólny, społeczny" lecz z czasem diametralnie zmieniło znaczenie. W innych językach słowiańskich słowa oparte na starosłowiańskim **obьtjь* nie uległy podobnym zmianom i zachowują pierwotne znaczenie: czeski *obec* „społeczność", rosyjskie *obščestvo* „społeczność, społeczeństwo" czy *obščenije* „kontakt". Artykuł pokazuje, jak w historii polszczyzny słowo *cudzy* zawężyło swoje znaczenie i zaczęło odnosić się głównie do przedmiotów, natomiast *obcy* zaczęło być używane w odniesieniu do ludzi, zwyczajów, języków, itp. Pojawienie się pod koniec osiemnastego wieku słowa *wspólny* o dawnym znaczeniu słowa *obcy* spowodowało, że *obcy* przestało być używane w tym sensie. Artykuł postuluje, że zmiana znaczenia słowa *obcy* była konsekwencją zwiększonej roli jaką w polskim społeczeństwie zaczęła odrywać szlachta. Szlachecki etos sobiepaństwa doprowadził do tego, że postrzegano to co było „obce", tj. wspólne, jako coś, co nie należało do szlachty, a więc *obce*.

Słowa kluczowe: językoznawstwo historyczne, językoznawstwo korpusowe, zmiany znaczenia, etymologia

The distinction between *swój* "one's own" and *obcy* "other, foreign, unfamiliar, alien" is very important in Polish and other Slavic cultures. Perhaps, more generally, in collectivist cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1994), where the in- and out-group discourse, lexicons, behaviors, and expectations can differ to a large degree. This difference manifests itself in Polish speech in several ways. As in other Slavic and many European languages, there are the formal and informal ways of addressing interlocutors (*Pan/Pani/Państwo* for people who are not close vs. *ty* for those who are part of one's circle). Expressive derivation is used to show closeness: a *Katarzyna* is never addressed as such by her family, it is *Kasia, Kasieńka, Kasiulka, Kasiątko*, etc. There are also distinct ways of performing politeness: in an in-group, such as a family or a circle of friends, it is not necessary to always say thank you or please, one can issue commands with bare infinitives, etc. Politeness expressions are seen as something that is used outside the home, in public, and not standing on ceremony is a marker of closeness.

The word *swój* is a lexicalization of this in-groupness and closeness, as seen in the expressions *sami swoi* "just us," *swój chłop* "a man who is like us, who is trustworthy," something can be *swojej/swojskiej roboty* "home made," and *swojsko* "in a familiar, homey way." Though it is a pronoun, *swój* can be reified and used in the sense of someone close, for example one's countrymen or one's folks, as in *Wróć do swoich* "Come back to your own (family/people)." Another common practice is answering the question *Kto tam?* "Who is there?" with *Swój* "One of us."

While *swój* is a Slavic universal (Common Slavic **svojь* (Boryś, 2005, p. 590), Russian *svoj*, Ukrainian *svij*, Czech *svůj*, B/C/M/S *svoj*, Lusatian *swój*), its opposite, the word denoting something or someone of the out group, varies. In a number of languages, it is a derivative of the Common Slavic **tjudjь* (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 203): Russian *čužoj*, Ukrainian *čužyj*, Czech *cizi*, B/C/M/S *tuđi*, Old Church Slavic *čuždь* and *štuždь* (Brückner, 1970, p. 67). Polish *swój* has two antonyms *cudzy* and *obcy*, the latter coming from a root **obъtjь* (Boryś, 2005, p. 371), which in other Slavic languages (and some Polish words as well) means general, common, community, proximity, closeness. This paper will trace the journey of *obcy* from familiar and communal to strange and foreign.

I will first consider the contrast between *swój* and *cudzy*, then trace the history of *obcy* as outlined in Polish etymological dictionaries. According to these sources *cudzy*, was the primary antonym of *swój* up to the beginning of the 15th century and the meaning shift of *obcy* starts to take place roughly at the same time. Next, we consider uses of *cudzy* and *obcy* in baroque Polish. It is in this period that the meaning shift of *obcy* takes root, aided in part by the emergence of the word *wspólny* "common, joint." Finally, we consider an extralinguistic explanation for this semantic change.

Swój and *cudzy*

First, let us focus on *cudzy* vis á vis *swój*. This word is also an antonym of *swój*, but in a quite different sense than *obcy*. *Swój* is the so-called reflexive possessive pronoun and

it often serves a disambiguating function. In the first and second person *swój* is sometimes used interchangeably with *mój* "my," *twój* "your," *nasz* "our" and *wasz* "your-pl." as shown in (1).

(1)
a. Kocham mojego syna. = Kocham swojego syna.
I love my son.
b. Kochasz twoją córkę. = Kochasz swoją córkę
You love your daughter.
c. Kochamy naszego syna. = Kochamy swojego syna.
We love our son.
d. Kochacie waszą córkę. = Kochacie swoją córkę.
You-pl. love your daughter.

In the third person, however, *jego* "his," *jej* "her" and *ich* "their" are ambiguous. They can refer to the subject or to some other possessor. Here is where *swój* comes in, since it refers only to the subject its use clarifies who is being referenced by the possessive pronoun, as shown in (2).

(2)

a. On kocha swojego syna.	≠	On kocha jego syna.
He loves his (own) son.		He loves his (own or someone else's) son.
b. Ona kocha swoją córkę.	≠	Ona kocha jej córkę.
She loves her (own) daughter.		She loves her (own or someone else's) daughter.
c. Oni kochają swoje dzieci.	≠	Oni kochają ich dzieci.
They love their (own) children.		They love their (own or someone else's) children.

Thus *swój* is a possessive pronoun that can be used in the sense of *my, your, his, her, its, our and their*, whose use unambiguously references the subject. *Cudzy* is the antonym of *swój* in this possessive sense and means belonging to someone else, not one's own.

According to Bańkowski (2000), Boryś (2005), and Bruckner (1978), *cudzy* has been attested in Polish as early as the 14th century.[1] Its original meaning was "belonging to foreigners (enemies)" (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 203), and suggested something strange and unfamiliar. The collective noun **tjudъ-i* meant unusual, fearsome people who speak a different language and have foreign customs, for example, Russian *čudь* is collective name for the northern Finnish tribes, "gigantes." The same root gave us Polish *cud*, *cudo* (**tjudъ-o*) originally "something unusual, strange, beautiful" (Bańkowski, 2000, pp. 201–202), which could refer, for example, to thunder or lightning, and which later under the influence of Christianity came to mean a miracle.

[1] Boryś (2005, p. 88) claims that the Common Slavic **tjudjь* comes from Indo-European **teuta/touta* "people tribe."

The meaning of *cudzy* as belonging to someone else is evident in compounds like *cudzołożyć* "to commit adultery," lit. *cudze łoże* "someone else's bed," *cudzołóstwo* "adultery," *cudzołożnik* "adulterer-male," *cudzołożnica* "adulterer-female." Also, *cudzysłów* "quotation marks" lit. *(znak) cudzy(ch) słów* "a mark of someone else's words," and *cudzoziemiec* "foreigner" lit. *cudza ziemia*-person "someone else's land-person."

Thus, according to the lexicographers, in the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century, *cudzy* is the sole antonym of *swój*, both in the sense of someone else's and not belonging to our group.

Obcy

According to Bańkowski (2000), Boryś (2005), and Bruckner (1978), *obcy*, from Common Slavic **obьtjь* (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 332), in the sense of not mine, alien, foreign, can be found in Polish as early as the first half of the 15th century. All three authors point out that its original meaning was, as in other Slavic languages, common, joint, mutual, societal, collective, communal, public. This meaning can be still seen in the verb *obcować* which means "to spend time with someone, be in contact, partnership, to commune, consort." Other Polish words which suggest the original meaning are *obecny* and *wobec*. *Obecny* means "present" in modern Polish, but its earlier meaning (up until the 17th century), was general, common, relating to the community (Bańkowski, 2005, p. 371). *Wobec* is a preposition meaning "in the face of, or vis-à-vis," but it originated from a prepositional expression *w obec* meaning publicly, in the presence of the community (as in the expression *wszem wobec* most often translated into English as "all and sundry" meaning to all and about all). Bruckner (1978, p. 369) lists the word *obec* in the meaning of community, or a group of peers called on as witnesses, but points out that it changed its meaning in the 15th century. *Obec* is not a modern Polish word. Other Polish words with this root reflect the new meaning: *obczyzna* "place that is not your motherland," *wyobcować* (*się*) "to alienate, estrange," *obcość* "strangeness, foreignness," *obcojęzyczny* "foreign language."

In other Slavic languages, the reflexes of the Common Slavic **obьtjь* tend to retain its original meaning. In Czech, *obec* means community, a group, *obecny* means general, *obecenstvo* "the public, audience." In B/C/M/S *opšti* (Croatian *opći*) means "general," *uopšte* "in general," *opština* "municipality," *saopštiti* "announce," *opštiti* "to communicate, to have sex," *opštenje* "communication." In Russian, *obščij* means "general, common," *obščestvo* "community, society," *obščestvennyj* "social, public," *obščenije* "contact, relations with others, *vobšče* "generally," *soobščestvo* "group, community, company," *soobščinik* "co-participant," and *obšče-* as a prefix means generally, for example, *obščeponjatnyj* "generally known." In Ukrainian *obščina* means community.

Bańkowski (2000) and Bruckner (1978) briefly discuss and dismiss the idea that Polish *obcy* comes from a different source than Czech *obec*, B/C/M/S *opšti* and *opći*, Russian *obščij* and other Slavic reflexes. That is, that *obcy*, since its meaning is so different from other Slavic languages, is based on a different root, and *obecny*, *obcować* and *wobec*, are borrowings from Czech. They rule this out on the basis of Old Polish attestations of *obcy* in its original

meaning. Other than Bańkowski (2000), lexicographers do not speculate on the reason for this semantic shift, though Brückner (1978, p. 369) points out that this meaning is "entirely unknown to Czechs and other Slavs." Bańkowski (2000, p. 332), however, writes: "The change of meaning in Old Polish from 'common' to 'not mine' reflects an important characteristic of the Polish psyche: 'autolatry,' that is, a cult of high-handed ownership, strictly private" [Trans. mine]. Autolatry means self-worship, self-adoration. The word used by Bańkowski in the definition of *idiolatria, sobiepański* is translated into English as "high handed" or "cavalier," but its etymology hints at its true meaning *sobie-pan*-adjectival suffix "self-master-adjectival suffix." *Sobiepański* thus means acting according to one's will, having no master.

Bańkowski's comment seems to suggest that at a certain point in the Old Polish period the meaning of *obcy* shifted from communal and common to alien, foreign, not ours, because Polish speakers came to view something that was common as something that was not mine/ours – if something belongs to the group then it does not belong to me, that is, it is alien.[2] And thus *obcy* became another antonym of *swój*. He attributes this change to a particular psychological trait, which has to do with disregard for authority, dislike for the communal and the importance of private property. Thus, if we believe Bańkowski, this meaning shift suggests that in effect then Poles became early individualists.

Obcy vs. *cudzy* in baroque Polish

Collocations

The history of Polish is typically divided into four periods. Pre-literary, until 1136; Old Polish, from 1136, considered to be the probable issue date of the *Bull of Gniezno*, a papal letter written in Latin, but which contains over 400 Polish names, till the turn of the 16th century. This is the beginning of the Middle Polish period and the beginning of the "golden era" in the history of Polish, the time when Polish began to emerge as a national language. The main factors which contributed to this development were the trends of Humanism and Reformation, which prompted the use of Polish as the language of instruction in schools, publication of books printed in Polish, wider use of Polish in the public life, and the development of Polish literature. Modern Polish is assumed to start in the middle of the 18th century (Klemensiewicz, 1961).

The corpus of baroque Polish (KORBA) includes texts from 275 sources written between 1601 and 1750, thus a hundred years into the Middle Polish period. *Cudzy* in all its forms appears in KORBA 1,962 times, *obcy* is found only 680 times.[3] The frequencies confirm that *obcy* in its current meaning is a newer word. Although the two words are often used in similar contexts, indicating that this period is the time during which the semantic shift is still taking place, we can also clearly see that their meanings are beginning to diverge. In their adjectival use both words frequently modify nouns such lands, nations, countries, kingdoms, people, although in varying contexts and with varying frequencies. I looked

[2] This is also the analysis offered by Grzegorczykowa (2008) and Topolińska (2014).

[3] The numbers are arrived at by adding instances of all inflectional forms of *cudzy* and *obcy*: *-y, -a, -e, -ego, -emu, -ym, -ej, -ą, -ych, -ymi.*

at 500 random examples of each *cudzy* and *obcy* and listed all collocates of both words. Example (3) shows the collocates common to both.

(3) Common collocates

	cudzy	*obcy*
kraj/e "country"	108	49
ludzie "people"	5	23
naród/y "nation"	2	44
państwo/a "country"	4	2
strona/y "territory, land"	4	15
ziemia/e "land"	12	8

We can see that each common collocate has a "preferred" modifier. Thus, *kraj* is found with both *obcy* and *cudzy*, but prefers *cudzy*, unlike in modern Polish, where we would use *obcy* (*obcy kraj/obce kraje* occurs in NKJP[4] 362 times, *cudzy kraj/cudze kraje* 12 times). I would postulate that countries were at that time perceived as properties of monarchs and the meaning "belonging to someone else's king" triggers the use of *cudzy*.[5] The opposite is true about *naród* "nation," which is harder to conceptualize as belonging to someone and which prefers *obcy* by far. *Ludzie* "people" and other nouns referring to human beings are an interesting case. They are more frequently found with *obcy*, as people are not seen as property, yet they do occur with *cudzy* as well. This is typically in contexts where a nobleman talks about his serfs, compare *cudzy chłop* and *obcy człowiek* in (4) – (5) below.

(4)

Bo jeżeli memu chłopu byłoby wolno przenieść się do sąmsiada, mógłbym się zapewne spodziewać, że **cudzy** chłop przy takiej powszechnej wolności, przyjdzie do mnie na jego miejsce.

[So if my peasant could move to my neighbor's land I could surely expect, given such common freedom, that someone else's peasant would come to me in his place.]

Głos wolny wolność ubezpieczający, 1733

(5)

Jaką pobożnością mógł Konstantyn, który trzy syny i dwie córce miał, tak wielkie swoim dzieciom bezprawie czynić, aby ich połowice własnego dziedzictwa oddaliwszy, **obcemu** ją człowiekowi oddał?

[How could Konstantyn, who had 3 sons and 2 daughters, hurt his children so much, and having removed their spouses from the inheritance, give it to a strange person?]

Informacja Cosmograficzna, 1743

[4] NKJP stands for Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego – "National Corpus of Polish." It contains texts from the 19th, 20th and 21th centuries.

[5] In fact, in baroque Polish countries were often referred to as *korony* "crowns."

Cudzy chłop is a property of the neighbor, but *obcy człowiek* is a person who does not belong to the family. Spouses, however can be seen as belonging to their partners and, indeed, *cudza żona* "someone else's wife" occurs in the sample 6 times, see (6), while *obca żona* only once.

(6)

Cudzemu psu, **cudzemu** koniowi, i **cudzej** żenie nie trzeba dowierzać Trzy rzeczy żadnego nie przynoszą pożytku, **cudze** pieniądze liczyć, **cudzego** psa karmić, i **cudzą** Zone obłapiać.

[You shouldn't trust someone else's dog, horse and wife. Three things do not bring any profit, counting someone else's money, feeding someone else's dog and groping someone else's wife.]

Proverbium polonicorum, 1618

Ziemia/e is a common collocate for both *cudzy* and *obcy* but here too, we find differences. *Ziemia* "land" in the singular, most often refers to someone's property (e.g., a farm, a land owner's domain) and is easily conceptualized as belonging to someone else, thus triggering *cudzy*. Another word for this is *grunt* and this word occurs exclusively with *cudzy*, and *cudzy grunt* "someone else's land" is a legal expression to this day. *Ziemie* "lands" can mean someone's properties, but more often it evokes places far away, such as in the English expression *distant lands*. In that sense it triggers *obcy*. *Strona/y* "territory, land" works analogously to *ziemia/e*.

Antonyms

In baroque Polish, *cudzy* is most often contrasted with *swój*, as in the following examples:

(7)

Skrytym być trzeba: **swe** konsylia taić: a o **cudzych** pilnie przysłuchywając się i wywiadować.

[One should be secretive, hide one's own affairs and, listening closely, find out about the affairs of others.]

Krotkich a wezłowatych powieści [...] księgi IIII, 1614

Śmielszy Kur na **swoich** śmieciach, niż na **cudzych** wrotach.

[The rooster is more brave on its own terrain, than on someone else's gate.]

Proverbium polonicorum, 1618

Propozycje **swoje** drogo szacuje, **cudze** potępia.

[He counts his proposals dearly, and condemns other people's.]

O wodach w Drużbaku i Łęckowej, 1635

Tak wojujące strony, krew **cudzą** i **swoją** tocząc zobopolnie giną.

[And so the warring parties, spilling their own and the others' blood, both perish.]

Informacja statystyczna, 1743

Obcy is also often found as an antonym of *swój*, as in (8), but in addition it is frequently contrasted with *domowy* 'home/domestic' as in (9).

(8)

Nie przekładajcie nigdy **obcego** nad **swego**. Jeżeli twój brat jest w nieszczęściu, ratuj go; jeśli twa Siostra zostaje w frasunku nie opuszczaj ją.

[Never prefer a stranger over your own. If your brother has met with misfortune, save him, if your sister is troubled, do not desert her.]

Filozof indyjski, 1767

(9)

Mocno się każdemu nieprzyjacielowi **obcemu** i **domowemu** zastawiał.

[He strongly opposed every enemy, foreign or domestic.]

Żałosna mowa Rzpltej polskiej pod Koprzywnicą do zgromadzonego rycerstwa, 1606

A nie przyjaciele zaś i ci którzy mogą przynieść szkodę i ubliżenie kościołowi są dwojacy **domowi** i **obcy**.

[And enemies and those who can bring harm and affront to the church are of two kinds: domestic and foreign.]

Relacje powszechne, cz. III, 1609

Bo i pies na przykład poznaje Pana swego, ma rozeznanie co chleb, co kii; kto **obcy** a kto **domowy**.

[Because even a dog, for example, recognizes his own master, he knows the difference between the bread and the stick, between strangers and members of the household.]

Informacja Cosmograficzna, 1743

Contrasting *obcy* with *domowy* further demonstrates that *obcy* has the meaning of "of the out-group," not connected to home.

Reified forms

Another important contrast between *cudzy* and *obcy* in baroque Polish are the meanings of their reified forms. When employed in this fashion, the form of *cudzy* most often used is the neuter *cudze* (*coś cudzego* "something that's someone else's") and it most often refers to things belonging to someone else.

(10)

Co masz tak tego używaj abyś **cudzego** nie potrzebował, bo wiele jest takich co **swe** utraciwszy **cudzego** żądają.

[Use what you have so that you won't need someone else's, for there are many, who having lost their own (resources), demand someone else's.]

Krotkich a wezłowatych powieści [...] księgi IIII, 1614

Lepiej **swoje** łatać, niżli **cudze** chwatać.

[It is better to fix your own (things), than to grab someone else's.]

Proverbium polonicorum, 1618

Swego dość mają nie pragną **cudzego.**

[They have enough, they do not want things that belong to others.]

Dworzanki albo epigramata polskie, 1664

Gdybyśmy mieli wszystkie zapłacone zasługi, mielibyśmy z czego żyć, i **cudzego**byśmy nie pragnęli, i **swoim**byśmy w marszach żyli.

[If all our service was paid for, we would have enough to live on and we wouldn't want what belongs to someone else, and would live using our own (money) during the marches.]

Kwestie polityczne, 1743

I found only one example when the reified *cudzy* refers to persons:

(11)

Ról swoich **cudzym** nie najmują, i zjeżdzają się ludzie, którzy karczmie do wyszynku pomagają, przez nich **swój** i **cudzy** ma swoję wygodę,

[They do not rent their lands to strangers but there are people who come to help serve in the tavern and due to them both the insiders and the outsiders are happy.]

Ekonomika ziemiańska, 1675

Reified *obcy*, on the other hand, used in the singular masculine (*ktoś obcy* "someone other") or in the male personal plural (same form), refers only to people who are not us, and never to things that are not ours.

(12)

Gdy tedy czas pogrzebu naznaczony przydzie / Najedzie się i **obcych** i **swoich**.

[At the time of the funeral, many will come, both strangers and near and dear.]

Toć jest nawiętsze tego dobrodziejstwo prawa, Które więcej **swem**, niżli **obcem** daje.

[This is the biggest asset of this law, which gives us more than the others.]

Orland szalony, cz. 2, 1620

Kto czyta Kroniki świadom dobrze/ jako i od **swoich** i od **obcych** i od przyjaciół i od nieprzyjaciół/ nie raz pod taki czas utrapiona bywała. (korona nasza)

[Who reads the Chronicles knows well that at that time our country was often ill-treated both by us and by the others, both by friends and by the enemies.]

Interregnum albo sieroctwo apostolskie, 1632

Kto mi da języków/ sto gąb/ oraz sto gardł Abym tu wszystkie wspomniał występki Małżeńskie/ Cudzołóstwa/ rozwody/ z **obcymi** mieszkania.

[Who will give me a hundred tongues and a hundred throats, so that I could mention all marital sins: adulteries, divorces, living with others.]

Satyry albo przestrogi do naprawy rządu i obyczajów w Polszcze, 1650

Strzec się pijaństwa, pobratania zbytniego z **obcymi**.

[Avoid drunkenness, too much fraternizing with the outsiders.]

Psie Prawo

Dogs' Law

Na warcie czekać. Na **obcych** szczekać, Kąsać żłodzieja.

[Wait as a sentry. Bark at strangers. Bite the thief.]

Nowe Ateny 3, 1754

Sometimes the meaning of *obcy* is specified as belonging to a different nationality or ethnicity.

(13)

W Anglij niektórzy rozgniewani, że **obcym**, to jest, Włochom dawano tam Kościelne beneficja.

[In England, some were angry, that the others, that is Italians, were given church benefices.]

W Anglij domowa była wojna z tego, że Król Henryk **obcym** to jest Piktawom/ urzędy rozdawał/ nie swoim Anglikom.

[In England, there was a civil war because king Henry gave positions to others, that is to Picts, not to his own Englishmen.]

Roczne dzieje kościelne, 1695

Thus to summarize, in baroque Polish both *cudzy* and *obcy* function as antonyms of *swój*, but their meanings are diverging. As adjectives, they modify a set of the same nouns, but with other nouns they appear to be mutually exclusive, that is, where one is found, the other is not. As nouns, *cudze* refers most often to things and *obcy* refers solely to people.

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Wspólny

I would like to argue that the emergence of another word, *wspólny*, during the Middle Polish period facilitates the semantic change of *obcy*. The Dictionary of Old Polish does not list *wspólny*, though it does list its predecessors *spólny* (first attestation 1500), which it translates as mutual, reciprocal, bilateral, *spólnik* "associate, partner, accomplice" (first attestation 1441), and *spólnie* "together" (first attestation 1428) (Urbańczyk, vol. 8, 1977–1981, p. 360). Boryś (2005, p. 713), says that *wspólny* arose in the 16th century and traces its origins to **vъz polъ* Common Slavic "with half," modern Polish *wespół* "together" Boryś (2005, p. 685). I would like to propose that sometime in the baroque period *wspólny* emerges, replaces *spólny,* and acquires its modern meaning of common, communal, joint, thus overlapping with the original meaning of *obcy* and leaving the latter free to shift its meaning.[6]

In KORBA there are 72 examples of *wspólny* and 345 of *spólny*. By far the most common collocate of *spólny* is *ojczyzna* "motherland, fatherland, homeland" (24). It is also frequently referred to as *Rzeczpospolita* or *Rzplita* "republic." The examples show a fervent sense of patriotism on the part of baroque Poles and a strong sense that Poland is a common good.

(15)

Przeto jako ona nam wszytkiem nie może być jedno namilsza, u który na łonie wszystkie pociechy nasze, tak też rzecz słuszna, aby też jej jako z najwiętszą chęcią się służeło i dogodziło a jako ona jedna i **spólna** nam jest wszystkiem i my też wszyscy chciemy ją ratować.

[Thus she (the motherland) cannot be for us all only the nicest (place), whose bosom is the source of all our joys, but it is also right that we serve her most gladly and help her, as she is common to us all and we all want to save her.]

Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego tom I, 1601

Wiedzą oni, komu naprzód, komu więcej, komu nawet wszytko powinni. Aza nie ojczyźnie, tej matce **spólnej,** w której się porodzili i wychowali i której piersiami i teraz się pasą.

[They know, to who they owe first, to who they owe more and to who they even owe everything. Is it not the motherland, this common mother, in which they were born and raised and at whose breasts they now feed.]

[6] The pattern of creating words based on the combination of the preposition **vъz* and another root was very robust in Old Polish. *Słownik Staropolski* lists many such compounds. Some of them survive in Polish to this day, for example *wspominać* "to recall," *wspomagać* "to assist, to support," but many of them simplified, losing either the initial *w-* or *ws-*: *wspłodzić* "to sire, to father," modern Polish *spłodzić; wspór* "controversy, dispute," modern Polish *spór*; *wspamiętać* "to keep in memory," modern Polish *pamiętać* "to remember;" *wspłakać* "to start crying," modern Polish *płakać* "to cry" (Urbańczyk, 1977–198, pp. 346–360).

Kiedy idzie o **spólne** dobro Rzpltej, każdego lekarstwa, by naprzykrzejszego, godzi się zażywać.

[When it comes to the common good of the republic, one should take every medicine, even the most unpleasant one.]

Replika na respons ks. Prymasa, 1606

Other common collocates include *rada* "counsel, council, advice" (15), *miłość* "love" (5), *rozmowa* "conversation" (5), *dobro* "good" (5), *krzywda* "injustice" (4), *matka* "mother" (4), *nieprzyjaciel* "enemy" (4), *umowa* "agreement" (4).

(16)

Bez **spólny** rady i bez wzajemny pomocy trudno.

[It is difficult without common counsel and mutual help.]

Akta sejmikowe województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego tom I, 1616

Tyle w nim krew i miłość swoich sprawowała, Że w pół biegu szalone koła zatrzymała, **Spólnej** gwoli potrzebie.

[There was such blood and love for his own in him, that it stopped the mad wheels mid stride for the common need]

Zbiór różnych rytmów, 1631

W mojej, i twej uwadze być powinno **spólne** Nam Braterskie nieszczęście. Ah! kochany Bracie, Jeźli się nie chwyciemy **spolnemi** siłami Wyrwać z niebezpieczeństwa ostatniego, Brata; Bracią się uż niezówmy: ani też Synami.

[Our common brotherly misfortune should be important to me and you. Dear Brother, if we do not act with common forces to save our brother from the last danger, we cannot call ourselves brothers, nor sons.]

Jonatas, 1746

Wtem elektorów wojska też przybyły, Aby Turczyna **spólną** ręką zmyły w Dunaju.

[Then the prince electors' armies also came in order to drown the Turk in the Danube together (with common hand).]

Pióro orła polskiego, 1685

Thus my argument is as follows. The original dichotomy between *swój* and *cudzy*, becomes towards the end of the Middle Polish period a trichotomy, whereby *swój* is contrasted with *cudzy* when it comes to property (mine, ours versus not mine, not ours, somebody else's) and with *obcy* when it comes to people, places, ideas, etc. which belong to the out group. This is aided by the emergence of *wspólny*, which has the same connotation as the original meaning of obcy. In the process, *obcy* spectacularly shifts its meaning from common, communal to alien, foreign, not ours.

Cultural reasons for the shift

In order to understand the historical underpinnings of this shift, we need to take a closer look at the concept of *szlachta* in Polish history. *Szlachta* is a term typically translated into English as nobility or gentry, but neither English term is quite right, though nobility is probably closer. This social class arose during the second half of the 13th century (Inhatowicz et al., 1996, p. 143), when the magnates and knights formed a new ruling feudal group. The members of *szlachta* were mostly landowners who over the years won considerable privileges from the Polish kings starting with Ludwik the Hungarian, who in 1374 in return for *szlachta*'s agreement to the succession of his daughter Katarzyna, promised that taxes will not be raised without *szlachta*'s approval (Inhatowicz et al., 1996, p. 150). Only *szlachta* could own land (peasants and merchants could not), and form special administrative councils, where they could try peasants for minor and major offences, while they themselves had immunity from prosecution. Between 1580 and 1590, the fine for killing a member of the *szlachta* was 480 *grzywnas* (the monetary unit in Poland at the time), while killing a peasant cost 30 *grzywnas* (Inhatowicz et al., 1996, p. 254). Members of the *szlachta* did not have to pay custom duties and had special heraldic rights (Zajączkowski, 1993, p. 19).

Perhaps most importantly, only members of the *szlachta* could serve in the Polish parliament (*sejm*) and elect the king, and, starting in the mid-17th century, they had the right of *liberum veto*. This meant that no laws could be passed without complete unanimity of the *sejm*. A single *szlachcic* could protest any law and by doing so force the parliamentary session to end. This principle, which was meant to ensure equality of all members of the *szlachta* and was seen as an embodiment of democracy, weakened the *sejm*, lead to anarchy, and eventually to the partitions of Poland.

Szlachta created extensive origin myths in order to differentiate themselves from other social classes. Wikipedia defines *Sarmatyzm* "Sarmatism" as follows. "It was an ethno-cultural ideology within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was the dominant baroque culture and ideology of the nobility (*szlachta*) that existed in times of the Renaissance to the 18th centuries. Together with the concept of "Golden Liberty" it formed a central aspect of the Commonwealth's culture and society. At its core was the unifying belief that the people of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth descended from the ancient Iranian Sarmatians, the legendary invaders of contemporary Polish lands in antiquity" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarmatism). With its emphasis on the uniqueness of *szlachta*, Sarmatism brought with it increased xenophobia. It was believed that everything which was *obce* "foreign" was bad and corrupt, while Polish customs and beliefs were the best.

I would like to propose, following Bańkowski's (2000) suggestion, that the empowerment of *szlachta* and its ethos of *sobiepaństwo* "self-mastery" contributed to the change in the meaning of *obcy*. Unlike preceding patrimonial and tribal estates, *szlachta*'s lands where not common to all members of the clan (Zajączkowski, 1993, p. 18), they were the sole property of the *szlachcic*, the landowner. As these *szlachcice* grew more powerful over time they came to view things that were common as things which were not theirs and therefore alien and foreign.

Postscript: *Obcy* and *cudzy* in modern Polish

In modern Polish *cudzy* has a somewhat archaic and slightly biblical flavor. (The first commandment is rendered in Polish as *Nie będziesz miał bogów cudzych przede mną*. "Thou shall not have other gods before me.") Other than in legal language, with set phrases such as *na własny i cudzy rachunek* "on one's own and someone else's account" and *cudzy grunt* "someone else's land," it is rarely used in everyday discourse. It is found in NKJP 2,055 times, compared to 6,487 occurrences of *obcy*. A possible factor in its slow demise might be the emergence of a near synonym *czyjś* "someone's" whose frequency has increased from 18 occurrences in KORBA to 4,208 in NKJP.[7]

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[7] The difference is stark, even given the uneven sizes of the corpora.