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Duma i pycha: Pride and deliciousness in Polish¹

1. Introduction

Let us begin with the seven deadly sins. The idea of transgressions so severe that committing them would consign a person to eternal punishment in hell has been around since the first century AD. Originally, there were nine such offences, and by the fourth century there were eight: *Gula* (gluttony), *Luxuria/Fornicatio* (lust, fornication), *Avaritia* (greed), *Tristitia* (sorrow/despair/despondency), *Ira* (wrath), *Acedia* (sloth), *Vanagloria* (vainglory) and *Superbia* (pride, hubris) (Bloomberg, 1952, p. 71). In the modern English language *sorrow/despondency* has been replaced by *envy*, while *vainglory* and *pride* seem to have been combined in the lexical item of *pride*. In Polish, the corresponding word is *pycha*, which is perhaps closer to *vainglory* and *hubris*.

Pride is considered by many the worst of the seven. Ecclesiasticus 10:12–13 states: “The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker. For pride is the beginning of sin, and he that hath it shall pour out abomination: and, therefore, the Lord brought upon them strange calamities and overthrew them utterly. The Lord hath cast down the thrones of proud princes and set up the meek in their stead.” Bloomfield (1952, p. 69) cites a fifth century scholar, John Cassian, who wrote “How great is the evil of pride, that it rightly has no angel, no other virtues opposed to it, but God Himself as its adversary.” Bloomfield (1952, p. 75) further clarifies: “Pride [...], is the sin of rebellion against God, the sin of exaggerated individualism. In a disciplined and corporate society, which the Middle Ages held as an ideal, exaggerated

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individualism, rebellion against the will of God, was considered particularly heinous.” Similarly, Derdziuk (1996, p. 156) cites several Polish moral theologians of the 18th century, who refer to *pycha* as “matka i królowa wszystkich pozostałych grzechów,” ‘mother and queen of all other sins’.

2. ‘Pride’ in Polish

2.1. *Hardy* and *pyszny* in Old Polish

*Słownik staropolski*² cites *Psałterz Floriański*, the ‘Saint Florian Psalter’, from the end of the 14th century as the source for the first attestation of *pycha* in Polish. The dictionary defines *pycha* as *próżność* ‘vanity’, *wyniosłość* ‘haughtiness’, and *zarozumiałość* ‘conceit’, and gives the Latin equivalents of *superbia* ‘pride’, *insolentia* ‘insolence’, *arrogantia* ‘arrogance’, *fastidium* ‘disgust’, and *vanitas* ‘vanity’ (Vol. 7, p. 412). It also lists the verb *pysznić się* ‘to show vanity/to be conceited’, two adverbs *pyszno* and *pysznie* ‘in a haughty manner’, the adjective *pyszny* ‘haughty’ and a derived noun (nomen essendi) *pyszność* with the same meaning as *pycha*.

Brückner (1970, p. 449) says that the root of *pycha*, *pyszny*, *pysznić się*, *pyszalek* ‘big head’, *pyszalkowy* ‘stuck up’ is related to blowing, inflaming, puffing up. *Słownik pojęciowy języka staropolskiego*³, Bańkowski (2000, p. 969), and Boryś (2005, p. 5060) agree, and the latter points out the connection between *pycha* and *przepych* ‘splendor’. Raszewska-Żurek (2018, p. 152) cites examples from Old Polish which show that *pycha* could be conceptualized as an illness, thus supporting the metaphor ANTI-VALUES ARE ILLNESSES. *Wielki słownik języka polskiego*⁴ defines *pyszny* as „związany z psychą, cechą kogoś, kto ocenia siebie zbyt wysoko” ‘related to *pycha*, a trait of someone who thinks too highly of themselves’.

Another relevant word is *hardy*. *Słownik staropolski* lists *hardość* and *gardość* with the translation ‘arrogantia, superbia’, and gives the date of its first attestation as 1471 (Vol. 2, p. 540). *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* gives the Czech word *hrdý* ‘proud, brave, arrogant, conceited’ which comes from Common Slavic **grdъ* ‘large, strong, haughty, terrible’ as the source of Polish *hardy*. The borrowing from Czech took over the native form *gardy*. The dictionary defines *hardy* as „okazujący nieugiętość wynikającą z dumy i niechęci podporządkowania się komukolwiek” ‘exhibiting indomitability resulting from pride and unwillingness to be subjected to anyone’.

² ‘Old Polish Dictionary’.

³ ‘Conceptual Old Polish Dictionary’.

⁴ ‘Great Dictionary of the Polish Language’.

Thus, in the Old Polish period there were two words relating to the concept of PRIDE: *pycha* and *hardość/gardość*⁵. These two roots are the sources of most Slavic words for ‘pride’: Polish, Czech, Slovak *pycha*, and probably Slovenian *napuh*. Russian and Ukrainian have *gordynia*. Serbian *gordost*, Bulgarian *gordelivost*⁶. We shall next trace the developments of these two roots in Polish to determine why they were not sufficient to talk about pride and why *duma/dumny* developed.

2.2. *Pyszny* in Baroque Polish

It seems that in the 16th century, the two words, *pyszny* and *hardy*, continued to coexist. *The Dictionary of 16th century Polish* lists 394 instances of *hardy/gardy* and 412 instances of *pyszny* in the meaning of ‘proud, haughty, or conceited’. It cites only 1 instance of *dumny* in the same meaning,

The electronic corpus of 17th- and 18th-century Polish texts (referred to as ‘the Baroque corpus’ or KorBa below) includes texts from 275 sources written between 1601 and 1750. Both *pyszny* and *hardy* return results of 500, which is the maximum allowed by the program and which suggests that they were both frequently used. *Pyszny* is often found with reference to people as in (1)–(4) in the sense of ‘haughty and vain’⁷.

(1) Doktor Symon de Tornaco w Paryżu/ w Theologiey rządził/ był wielce vczonym czasu swego/ lecz przeciw przystoyności takięgo vrzędu był niepowściągliwy y **pyszny**.
 ‘Doctor Symon de Tornaco was famed in the Paris theology circles. He was a major scholar of his age, but against what is due to a man of such position, was intemperate and vain.’

Anonim, *Wielkie zwierciadło przykładów*, 1612

(2) Na zachód **pyszny** Niemiec krwią zaszargał pludry.
 ‘In the west, the haughty German stained his pants with blood.’

Waclaw Potocki, *Wojna chocimska*, 1670

(3) Od tego czasu już ów wielki **pyszny** zwycięzca, król szwedzki, nigdy nie mógł głowy podnieść.
 ‘Since that time that great haughty conqueror, the Swedish king, could never raise his head again.’

Franciszek Ksawery Otwinowski, *Dzieje Polski pod panowaniem Augusta II*, 1728-40

(4) Powierzchownie jesteś wm. pan dosyć grzeczny i uniżony, ale wewnętrznie jesteś wm. pan **pyszny** i zawstyżony jak diabol.
 ‘On the surface you, sir, are quite polite and humble, but inside you are haughty and obstinate like a devil.’

Marcin Matuszewicz, *Diarusz życia mego*, between 1754 and 1765

⁵ *Slownik staropolski* does not list *duma* or *dumny*, only the verb *dumać* in the sense of ‘to think’ (Lat. *cogitare*) (Vol. 2, p. 220).

⁶ Croatian seems to be an outlier with *oholost*.

⁷ Examples are given as they occur in the corpus. Spelling often differs from modern Polish orthography. Translations are by the present author.

The corpus also contains examples where *pyszny* is found with reference to objects, in the meaning of magnificent, palatial, baronial, showy (cf. Boryś's comment regarding the connection between *pycha* and *przepych* 'splendor').

(5) Tám pánował Mausolus krol/ ktorego ciało pochowala tam Artimisiá żoná iego/y zbudowala mu bárzo **pyszny** grob/ ktory nazywano Mausoleum.

'There, ruled a king named Mausolus, whose body was buried by his wife Artimisia, who built him a very grand tomb, which was called the Mausoleum.'

Giovanni Botero, *Relacje powszechnie*, cz. 1, 1609

(6) Oględuje **pyszny** gmach, gdzie na wszystkie strony Jasne złoto po ścianach śle blask nieścigniony.
'He looks at the magnificent building, where bright gold on the walls sends unparalleled brilliance in every direction'.

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orland szalony*, 1620

(7) Damy y Dworzanie byli **pysznie** postroieni.
'The ladies and courtiers were magnificently dressed.'

Jonathan Swift, *Podróże kapitana Gulliwera w różne kraie dalekie*, 1784

Having perused the 500 examples, I found only one where *pyszny* can be construed as 'delicious'. However, it is used about a banquet, and thence could also mean 'opulent' or 'sumptuous'.

(8) Ten że mu nabożeństwá spolnik się naiawił Y towarzysz/ gościom rad/ bánkiet **pyszny** sprawił.
'As a partner for prayer and a companion appeared, glad of the guests, he prepared for them a delicious? opulent? sumptuous? banquet.'

Publius Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoseon*, 1636

2.3. *Hardy* in Baroque Polish

Hardy is found primarily with reference to people, or people's attributes (*wzrok* 'eye' sight' *spojrzenie* 'gaze', *oczy* 'eyes', *mina* '(facial) expression', *słowa* 'words', etc.). It means 'haughty' and suggests that the person is arrogant and stubborn.

(9) Bogaczu **hardy**, prożno śmiejesz się z nagiego./ Nago wchodzim na ten świat, nago pojdzim z Niego.
'O, haughty rich man, you laugh in vain at the [poor] naked person. We enter this world naked, and we will leave it naked.'

Daniel Naborowski, *Wiersz*, between 1620 and 1640

(10) Temu Szlachcicowi pomienionemu podobna byla w dumie ona **hárda** Szlachcianka/ktora/ gdy chowala/ Xiedzá/ co ią w chorobie nawiadzał/ pytał: Xieże powiedzcie mi/ ieśli tam wszyscy do iednego niebá przydziemy? Albo/ ieśli My Szlachtá osobliwe mieysce w niebie mieć będącym?
'Similar in pride to the above-mentioned gentleman, was this haughty noblewoman, who, when she was ill, asked a visiting priest: Father, tell me, are we all going to the same heaven? Or will we, the nobility, have a special place in heaven?'

Adam Gdaczus, *O pańskim i szlacheckim [...] stanie dyskurs*, 1679

(11) Człowiek **hardy**, Krolowi swawolą podobny, podłych y ubogich Rodzicow Syn.
 ‘He is a haughty man, like a king in his licentiousness, yet a son of base and poor parents.’
 Benedykt Chmielowski, *Nowe Ateny, volume 4*, 1756

(12) ‘Babel zaś wieży przyczyna nazwania. Przeto, że znaczy wielkie zamieszania’. Budynek pychy, y ta myśl w nich **harda**.
 ‘The building was named Babel, as it means great confusion. It was a building of pride, of haughty thoughts.’
 Nicolas Fontaine, *Historia Starego i Nowego Testamentu*, 1761

(13) Zepsutych czasow w Was nienawiść **harda**, Deistkich maxym odważna pogarda.
 ‘You have a haughty hatred of the spoiled times, a brave scorn for the deist maxims.’
 Onufry Rutkowski, *Zabawki poetyckie rozmaitym wierszem polskim napisane*, 1775

I found only one example where *hardy* refers to a non-human. It occurs in a poetic account of a forge and describes an ingot, which is indomitable, very hard and difficult to shape.

(14) Tu kołat ciężkich młotów, pod którym stal twarda Jęczy pryskaiąc ogniem, i gdzie sztaba **harda** Zgina się pod Cyklopow nachylona razy.
 ‘There is clatter of heavy hammers, under which the hard steel moans spraying fire, and where the indomitable ingot bends under the strikes of Cyclopes.’
 Michał Mackiewicz, *Do p. Jana Mariańskiego kowala. Z okazji darowanych przez niego dwóch wozów dla wojska Rzeczypospolitej*, between 1789 and 1790

Thus, during the Baroque period, the primary, human-centered meanings of *pyszny* and *hardy* remain the same (haughty, conceited), while in connection with inanimate objects, they diverge: *pyszny* means ‘magnificent’ while *hardy* means ‘indomitable’.

2.4. *Dumny* in Baroque Polish

While searches for *pyszny* and *hardy* both return the maximum number of examples in KorBa (500), *dumny* occurs there 425 times, suggesting that it was not as frequently used. We can speculate that the reason for this is that it is a relatively new word. When used about people it means ‘haughty’, ‘conceited’, ‘proud’, just like *pyszny* and *hardy*, see (15)–(17).

(15) Ják **dumny** Moskal wiele sobie tuszył, Ják ufał szczęściu, y pośilkom onym, Ktorych zsamego Acherontu ruszył?
 ‘How the proud Muscovite hoped for so much, how he trusted in luck and in those reinforcements that he sent for from Acheron itself.’

Diego Uffan, *Archelia, to jest nauka i informacja o strzelbie i o rzeczach do niej należących*, 1643

(16) Nie rozwajał tego on **dumny** Szlachcic/ ktory o sobie/ y o szlacheckim stanie wiele rozumie-
iąc w kościele przy nabożeństwie przed inszymi pospolitymi ludźmi praerogatywę álbo pro-
dekk mieć chciał.

‘He did not consider it, he, the haughty nobleman, who thought a lot about himself and the nobility, and who
during a mass in church wanted to have a prerogative or precedence above other more common people.’

Adam Gdajusz, *O pańskim i szlacheckim stanie dyskurs*, 1679

(17) Potocki, wojewoda kijowski, **dumny** w spokojnym czasie, tchórz w niebezpieczenstwie, porzucił także
hetmana, pobiegł co przedzej do dóbr swoich na Ruś.

‘Potocki, governor of the Kyiv province, haughty during peacetime and a coward in danger, also aban-
doned the hetman and ran as fast as possible to his estates in Russia.’

Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Pamiętniki czyli Historia polska*, 1743

When used to describe non-human nouns, the meaning of *dumny* seems to fluc-
tuate. Thus, we find it with nouns like *forteca* ‘fortress’, *suknie* ‘dress’, *okazałość*
‘grandeur’ where it resembles *pyszny*, but, like *hardy*, it also occurs with human attri-
butes: *żrenice* ‘(eye) pupils’, *rozum* ‘reason’, *umysł* ‘mind’, *serce* ‘heart’, *krew* ‘blood’,
życie ‘life’. Unlike both *pyszny* and *hardy*, it can also be found with abstract nouns
odpowiedź ‘answer’, *otucha* ‘hope, encouragement’, *ubóstwo* ‘poverty’, *zarzut* ‘accu-
sation’, *przeciwieństwo* ‘opposition, contrast’, see (18)–(19). Based on this evidence,
I would venture to say that the meaning of *dumny* was still developing in the 17th and
18th century.

(18) Westchnał nad zaślepieniem jednego, i nad **dumną** zapalczynością drugiego ubolewał,
‘He sighed over the blindness of one and bemoaned the proud impetuosity of the other.’

Anonim, *Roztropny wybór Azuba do korony spomiędzy trzech synów swoich czyli
powieść moralna*, 1782

(19) Ktokolwiek albo przez nieczułość, albo przez **dumne** w sobie samym zaufanie, niera-
dzi się ani ksiąg, ani ludzi uczonych
‘Whoever, either because of indifference or proud self-esteem, does not consult neither books, nor
learned people.’

Konfucjusz, *Myśli moralne Konfucjusza*, 1740

2.5. Why *dumny*?

The question arises why in the 16th century *duma* and *dumny* developed to mean ‘pride’
and ‘proud’, as Polish at this time already had *pycha* and *pyszny*, as well as *hardość* and
hardy. Brückner (1970, p. 108) says that while *duma* is a PIE root meaning conception,
estimation, opinion, it was borrowed into Polish from Gothic in the 16th century (Gothic
dōms ‘judgement, opinion’). In East Slavic languages the Common Slavic verb **dumati*
developed to mean ‘to think’ (Russian *dumat’*, Ukrainian *dumaty*, Belorussian *dumac*),
in West Slavic and Croatian and Serbian it refers to a special kind of thinking: mulling,
brooding or musing (Polish *dumać*, Czech *dumat*, Serbian, Croatian *dumati*). In East
Slavic the noun *duma* means ‘advice, thought, council, intention, like-minded people’.
In Russian, it also means ‘parliament’, a type of a song, or a ‘small pillow’. In Serbian

and Bulgarian *duma* means ‘speech’. In other Slavic languages the meaning of *duma* is also thought to be related to this, and Polish is the only language where this word has come to mean ‘pride’, ‘self-esteem’, or ‘arrogance’.⁸

One may speculate that this meaning of *duma* in Polish came about as a result of a shift from ‘thought’ to ‘thought about oneself’ to ‘good thoughts about oneself’ and that is indeed what Boryś (2005, p. 132) proposes. He defines *duma* in the first place as *poczucie godności* ‘sense of dignity’ and secondly as *zarozumiałość*, *pycha* ‘conceitedness, vainglory’ and suggests that both senses derive from thinking too highly of oneself. Bańkowski (2000, p. 311) attributes the semantic development from thought to pride to the religious polemics of the second half of the 16th century (the Reformation) and proposes the following progression: from ‘obstinate adherence to wrong opinions, arrogance’, to ‘excessive pride, hubris, vainglory’.

Regardless of how exactly *dumny* came to mean PRIDE, the question remains: why did Polish need this word, having two other words which were near synonyms? I would like to suggest that it is because, unlike *pyszny* and *hardy*, *dumny* could be directed at others and was compatible with a cause indicated by the preposition *z* ‘of’ or a *że* ‘that’ clause.

Wielki słownik języka polskiego defines *duma* as 1) “stan człowieka, wynikający z zadowolenia z osiągnięć własnych lub osiągnięć ludzi, z którymi czuje się on związanym rodzinie albo społecznie” ‘a psychological state caused by satisfaction with one’s achievements or the achievements of those with whom one is familiarly or socially connected’; 2) “osoba lub rzecz, która stanowi powód do dumy – stanu” ‘person or object which is the cause of *duma*, the psychological state’; and 3) “poczucie własnej wysokości wartości, które wpływa na zachowanie człowieka i postępowanie wobec innych” ‘a sense of one’s high value which affects the person’s behavior and treatment of others’.

Thus, according to the dictionary, the primary meaning of *duma* is linked with achievements, either one’s own or of those dear to one. In other words, *duma* has a cause as evidenced by its second meaning, i.e. the source of pride, as in “children are a mother’s pride.” The third meaning points to the still existing overlap with *pycha*. That is, *duma* is very much a semantic and syntactic equivalent of English *pride*, which can be either self-oriented and arrogant (*proud like a peacock*), or justified and other-oriented (*a proud father*)⁹.

⁸ Dubisz (2022, p. 101) writes that Samuel Linde’s ‘Dictionary of the Polish Language’ (1807–1814) lists three meanings of *duma*: 1. Consideration, reflection, 2. Being convinced of one’s superiority and 3. Chivalric elegy, a song. While in Doroszewski’s ‘Dictionary of the Polish Language’ (1958–1969), the meanings are subtly different and rearranged: 1. Dignity: a) a sense of self-worth, b) high opinion of oneself, 2. The object of one’s pride, 3. Epic poem based on historical events, a sad song, 4. Archaic: ‘thought, thinking, a dream’, 5. A parliamentary body created in Russia in 1905.

⁹ Fabiszak, Hebda (2010, p. 267–268) trace the semantic development of Old English *pride* from “excessively high opinion of one’s own worth [...] attitude of superiority” with an addition in the 14th century of the meaning of “outward display of one’s affluence or prominence [...] magnificent, splendid or ostentatious adornment or ornamentation.” During the Middle English period, the word steadily gained a religious connotation in opposition to humility or meekness and extended to include “verbal manifestations, such as a particular manner of speaking chiding and mocking others, as well as boasting of one’s own deeds and

Pycha and *hardość* are not compatible with a cause, as *pycha* is deeply linked with magnificence and *hardość* with indomitability. In the Baroque corpus, we find one very unclear example of a collocation of *hardy* with the preposition *z* marking the cause, and one slightly less unclear of *pyszny z*, below. This sentence seems to say that the weed, proud of the color of its flower, is choking the crops.

(20) Pomogła mu znaczna liczba krytyków do wyplenienia tego buynego chwastu, który **pyszny z** pozornej barwy kwiatu, dobre zasiewy głuszył i przytłumiał.

‘Many critics helped him to eradicate this abundant weed, which, proud of its flower’s ostensible color, choked and subdued good crops.’

Franciszek Siarczyński, Franciszek Ksawery Dmochowski, *Zakus nad zaciekami Wszechnicy Krakowskiej, czyli uwagi nad niektórymi tej akademii dysertacjami*, between 1781 and 1790

On the other hand, there are seven examples of *dumny z* ‘proud of’ in the same corpus, suggesting that the idea that pride could have a cause and could be linked with achievements was already present at that time.

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(21) Tym czasem hrabia de Montpensier **dumny z** szczęśliwego wyprawy swoiej powodzenia, powrócił z Gienną.

‘In the meantime, Count de Montpensier, proud of the happy outcome of his expedition, returned from Gienna.’

Charlotte-Rose de Caumont La Force, *Historia Małgorzaty z Walezji, królowej Nawarry*, 1781

(22) Słyszałam ia mówiących o Pannie Hortensi o że iest **dumna z** swey piękności.

‘I heard people say that Miss Hortense is proud of her beauty.’

Marie-Elisabeth de la Fite, *Rozmówki, komedyjki, powiastki obyczajowe dla małych dzieci*, 1786

(23) Za Panowania Jana III. Ibrahim Basza, **dumny z** dobycia kilku Zamków, kusil się o wzięcie Trębowli.

‘During the reign of John III, Ibrahim Basza, proud of having conquered a few castles, was tempted to attack Trębowla.’

Józef Wybicki, *Wzór dla Polek w osobie Kazanowskiej wsławionej mestwem*, 1789

It is also worth noting that it is *duma*, which is used in the Polish equivalent of the expression “pride and joy,” attributed to Sir Walter Scott. The Polish phrase “duma i radość” is illustrated in (24) with a sentence from National Corpus of Polish (Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego, further on: NKJP). The link with joy highlights the positive attributes of pride, only compatible with *duma*.

(24) Dlatego tu najbardziej były widoczne dwa wielkie uczucia: żal, że Ojciec Święty odszedł, a równocześnie dumna i radość, że był takim człowiekiem.

‘That this why, one could most clearly discern two great feelings here: sorrow that the Holy Father died and, simultaneously, pride and joy that he had been such a man.’

“demanding excessive reverence in forms of address” (Fabiszak & Hebda, 2010, p. 283). They also point out that *pride* had some positive connotations when talking of national and military *pride* and that the French *vanity*, was “the preferred realization for the negatively evaluated pride from Middle English onwards” (Fabiszak & Hebda, 2010, p. 291).

In psychology, Tracy and Robins (2007) are typically credited with coming up with the terms authentic and hubristic pride, where authentic pride is an emotion that occurs in response to a specific eliciting event, whereas hubristic pride is a personality trait that describes an individual who tends to experience pride across situations and over time¹⁰.

In a brilliant 1988 article entitled “‘Lord Help Me Walk Humbly’: Anger and Sadness in England and America, 1570–1750” Stearns analyzes diaries and autobiographies from that time and concludes that before the end of the 17th century, the writers did not think of themselves as angry. Describing situations which we would interpret as likely to provoke anger, the diarists framed them in terms of sadness and weeping. Stearns suggests that the primary reason for this was that people did not see anger as something that they were entitled to feel¹¹. Anger, or more specifically, wrath, was a deadly sin for people, but God, in the view of the writers, had a right to exhibit righteous anger and was frequently wrathful. People often interpreted misfortunes that befell them as an angry God’s punishments for their transgressions. Stearns suggests that by the late 17th century some were beginning to postulate a more forgiving and merciful God, and also discovered a sense of agency and control over their emotions and a change from sad/submissive to angry/more assertive expression was begging to emerge. Hunt (2025) similarly notes: “Over the course of the 17th century, people in Europe and British North America came to have a happier view of human prospects.” This was due to the emerging sense that individuals could, each to a different extent, shape their own lives.

I would like to suggest that a similar psychological transformation was the reason for the rise of *dumny* in Polish. That is, increased self-awareness made it possible for people to take pride in their achievements, previously seen as signs of God’s favor. This valorization of pride seems to have affected the Christian world in general. Bloomfield (1952, p. 75) writes: “The modern world since the Renaissance, with its emphasis on individualism, has tended to look at pride as a venial sin.” A venial sin is a minor sin that does not separate a person from God, unlike a deadly sin. Venial sins are less serious and can be forgiven through prayer or confession.

Petkov (2012, p. 43), goes even further to say that pride is now considered laudable:

Modern value theory, still in many ways an intellectual heir of sacred ethics, has come a long way from the medieval Christian theory of vice. It has come to valorize positively almost the entire host summed up in the medieval theory of the seven deadly sins. A different ‘moral arithmetic’, to use John Bossy’s apt phrase, applies today. Pride is lauded. Avarice, its old rival for leadership of the deadly sins, is reviled in. The rest of the sins, formerly capital, mortal, venial or other, are lukewarmly embraced. In the period from the 14th to the 20th century, the old vices, one after another, lost their reprehensibility and became virtues.

¹⁰ Grzegorczykowa (1993, p. 26) points out that several European languages have words for ‘bad pride’ and ‘good pride’ French *fierté* and *orgueil*, Russian *gordost’* and *nadmennost’* Czech *pycha* and *hrdost*.

¹¹ Another reason Stearns points to is that while in the early modern period melancholy, sadness and tears were seen as desirable feelings/behaviors, by mid-19th century tears ceased to be accepted as appropriate public behavior as the desirability of good cheer started becoming apparent.

This justified pride was both linguistically (impossibility to use *pyszny* or *hardy* with a cause) and morally incompatible with the Polish language of the time (*pycha* being a deadly sin) and thus a new word was needed to express it¹².

Searches in the NKJP corpus indicate that in modern Polish, *dumny* is the most common of the three adjectives. We find 7,763 instances of *dumn** compared to 3,017 instances of *pyszn** and 50/758 of *hardy*¹³. Furthermore, over a quarter of all occurrences of *dumn** are found with causes: *dumn* z* 1,370 times and *dumn*, że* 645 times¹⁴.

Two recent publications examine the use of *duma* and *pycha* in modern political discourse. Kaczor (2016, p. 108) defines *pycha* as the belief that a person is self-sufficient and that all their accomplishments are due solely to his/her deeds or attributes. She goes on to say (p. 117), that there are four main components of *pycha*: focus on the

¹² There is a Polish word that might seem to contradict the argument I am making, namely *chlubić się* ‘to be proud of/to boast of’ followed by a cause in the instrumental case. An example from NKJP illustrates this usage.

Kopalnia Wieczorek chlubi się stu sześćdziesięcioma nowymi projektami wynalazczymi.
‘The Wieczorek mine can boast/be proud of 160 new innovative projects.’

I would argue that, while this word is found in Old Polish, its meaning is closer to ‘boasting’ than to ‘pride’. There is its close phonetic and historical connection to *chelpić się* which unequivocally means ‘to boast’. *Słownik staropolski* (Vol. 1, p. 232) defines *chelpić się* as ‘to vaunt, boast, brag, blow one’s own horn’, Lat. *intumescere* ‘to swell’. It also cites the noun *chelpa* which does not survive in modern Polish and defines it as “*pycha*, Lat. *superbia*, *arrogantia*, *iactantia*”; ‘boasting, ostentation’. The dictionary (Vol. 1, p. 237) then defines *chlubić się* as “*chelpić się*, Lat. *gloriari*” ‘to boast’, the noun *chluba* is glossed as “*superbia*, *iactantia*” and finally, most curiously, the adjective *chlubny* is defined as “*cierpliwy*” ‘patient’ and Lat. “*gloriosus*” ‘boastful, ostentatious’. It thus seems clear to me that there was a considerable overlap and likely confusion between the two verbs (and possibly also with the phonetically similar *chwalić się* ‘to brag, to boast’), with *chlubić się* often interpreted as *chelpić się* ‘to boast’ and thus there was a need for a more neutral, more justified word for pride.

The noun *chluba* is used in modern Polish to mean the source of pride/glory, often in conjunction with *duma*, as in the following example from NKJP.

Dwa krzaki pnących róż, duma i chluba pani Barbary, nie czuły się dobrze tuż przy ścianie benzynowej stacji.
‘The two bushes of climbing roses, the pride and glory of Mrs. Barbara, did not feel well next to the wall of the gas station.’

It is also worth noting that the semantic development of the adjective *chlubny* which in modern Polish means ‘estimable, glorious, applaudable, praiseworthy,’ etc., (and its much more frequent antonym *niechlubny*, which means ‘dishonorable, disgraceful’) given that in Old Polish it meant ‘patient’ and ‘boastful’.

¹³ The total number of instances of *hard** is 758, however only 50 of them have the relevant meaning. The rest are borrowings of English *hard* or names: *hard rock*, *hardrockowy*, *hard core*, *hardcorowy*, *hard porno*, *Hardaway*, etc.

¹⁴ Something similar might have happened in English. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (further on: OED), English *proud* is a borrowing from Old French, its first attestation dates to 1225. The same dictionary states that in 1429 we find the first usage of *prideful*. The emergence of *prideful* seems like an attempt to distinguish between authentic and hubristic pride.

self, overemphasizing one's worth, belief that the world revolves around the self, and disdain for God and other people. The author analyzes texts of public debates and concludes that it is often invoked as an epithet directed at public officials. Dubisz (2022) turns his attention to the use of *duma*, which in contrast to *pycha*, is used in the positive sense: "duma narodowa" 'national pride', "dumny naród" 'proud nation', "Polska może być dumna" 'Poland can be proud', etc. He also points out that athletes who used to be described as 'pleased' (*zadowoleni*) with their achievements now are often 'proud' (*dumni*). This type of usage, according to the author, sounds bookish, lofty and erudite to modern Poles.

3. The semantic development of *pyszny*

3.1. 19th century

It has been described above how, in Baroque Polish, *pyszny* was used to refer to people (conceited, proud, haughty ones) and to objects, in the meaning of 'magnificent', 'palatial', or 'baronial'. In the corpus of 19th century Polish texts, there are 488 instances of *pyszny**, a search term that includes not only forms of the adjective *pyszny*, but also forms of the verb *pysznić się* 'to get above oneself, to strut' and the noun *pyszność*, which, as it has been mentioned above, was listed in *Słownik staropolski* as a synonym of *pycha*. *Pyszny* is found in the meaning of haughty/conceited (e.g. *wódz* 'leader', *król* 'king' *nieprzyjaciel* 'enemy'), but most of the 19th-century examples have the sense of 'showy', 'palatial', 'magnificent', 'majestic', or 'baronial'.

(25) Na tem samem urwisku, gdzie rósł niegdyś las, wznieciono, kosztem milionów, **pyszny** dworzec kolejowy.
 'On the very cliff where the forest once grew, a palatial train station was built, at the cost of many millions in cash.'

Gustaw Daniłowski, *Nego: nowele*, 1899

(26) Hr. Anna Wąsowiczowna, przyozdobiła pałacyk „salą chińską” i urządziła do koła niego **pyszny** park.
 'Countess Anna Wąsowiczowna, embellished the palace with a Chinese room and created a magnificent garden around it.'

Zygmunt Gloger, *Eliza Orzeszkowa. Dolinami rzek: opisy podróży wzdluż Niemna, Wisły, Bugu i Biebrzy*, 1903

Other collocations of *pyszny* in this sense include *biblioteka* 'library', *zamek* 'castle', *panorama* 'panorama', *palac* 'palace', *rezydencja* 'residence', *kolumnada* 'collonade', *dwór* 'manor', etc.

We also find examples where *pyszny* means 'excellent', or 'very good', which seems like a natural extension of the meaning 'magnificent'. Thus, *pyszny* can modify nouns denoting furniture: *kanapa* 'sofa', *stolik toaletowy* 'vanity table' *fortepian* 'piano', decorative elements: *skóra tygrysia* 'tiger skin', *dyadem* 'diadem', *strój* 'dress', *plants*:

kwiat ‘flower’, *bluszcz* ‘ivy’, *bukiet* ‘bouquet’, as well as more abstract concepts: *myśl* ‘thought’, *pomysł* ‘idea’, *kontrast* ‘contrast’, *kawał* ‘joke’, *figiel* ‘trick’, *alegorya* ‘allegory’, *efekt* ‘effect’, *okaz* ‘example’, *wiersz* ‘poem’, etc.

(27) Nagle, ponad głęboką ciszę pustyni zrywa się **pyszny** śpiew kobiecy.

‘Suddenly, a magnificent female song rises above the deep silence of the waste.’

Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Na przełęczy. Wrażenia i obrazy z Tatr*, 1891

(28) Przeczytaj pan tę nowelkę. „Miłostka aktorki!” **pyszny** tytuł?

‘Have you read the short story ‘An Actress’ Dalliance’, an excellent title?’

Gabriela Zapolska, *Kaśka-Karjatyda: Powieść*, 1922

Thus, in the 19th century, there is the original meaning of ‘showy’, ‘opulent’, ‘magnificent’, and ‘ornate’ extending to ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ in the realm of objects and concepts, but not yet robustly to ‘tasting very good’. There are only a handful of instances where *pyszny* means ‘delicious’ unambiguously. In the example shown in (29) śniadanie ‘breakfast’ could be delicious or plentiful as the following clause might indicate.

(29) Wkrótce podano **pyszne** śniadanie, zastawiono stół flaszami i karafkami jak najrozmaitszego kalibru, a na balkonie odezwała się liczna kapela, strojna po kozacku.

‘Soon a delicious/plentiful breakfast was served, the table was set with bottles and carafes of all kinds and on the balcony a large band, dressed in a Cossack manner, started to play.’

Placyd Jankowski, *Fanaberje pana starosty Kaniowskiego: z pism pośmiertnych Johna of Dycalp*, 1873

The following examples clearly show *pyszny* in the meaning of delicious.

(30) Na granicy obu gruntów stoi ogromna jabłonka, która **pyszne** owoce rodzi.

‘At the border of both fields there stands a huge apple tree, which produces delicious apples.’

Jadwiga Teresa Papi, *Ciche niewiasty*, 1896

(31) Piwo tu **pyszne**, z przyjemnością można wypić jeden, drugi, a nawet trzeci i czwarty kufelek.

‘The beer is delicious here, one can drink one, two and even three and four steins with pleasure.’

Klemens Szaniawski, *Przy kominku; Obrazki i opowiadania*, 1896

(32) Wyśmienite! Wspaniałe! Oto **pyszny** napój — przynosi on chlubę naszej sławnej ziemi — Co ?

‘Exquisite! Excellent! This is a delicious beverage, it does our famous land credit, doesn’t it?’

Philipp Berges, *Humor amerykański: Americana: szkice humorystyczne z życia Yanków*, 1903

I have already mentioned that *Słownik staropolski* lists the derived noun *pyszność* with the same meaning as *pyscha*, i.e. ‘vainglory/pride’. This word is not found in the corpus of Baroque Polish, but does occur in the 19th century corpus (3 instances) and crucially, it is used in the plural form *pyszności* (9 instances). I suspect that it is this usage of the derived noun in the plural that facilitated the semantic shift of *pyszny* to delicious. As it does not really make sense to talk about prides or vainglories, the plural *pyszności* was reinterpreted as ‘delicious things’ or ‘delicacies’, as in the examples below.

(33) Napełniono mi go wiśniami po same brzegi; Maurycy tak lubi wiśnie! Robota mojej żony! **Pyszności!**
 ‘They filled it with cherries to the very brim for me, Maurice likes cherries so much! Made by my wife! Delicious!’

Alphonse Daudet, *Nowelle*, 1907

(34) Nagle, gdy oblałszy sobie przypadkowo palec, oblizała go, zapytał, lękając ślinę, z oczyma poządliwie badającymi jej minę: — I cóż? Potrzasnęła głową na znak wysokiej pochwały i odparła z uśmiechem, który jej z obu stron ust dołki wyzłobił w policzkach: **Pyszności!**
 ‘Suddenly, having spilled [...] on her finger, she licked it, and he asked, swallowing his saliva, with his eyes scanning her face lasciviously, And? She nodded her head as a sign of high praise and replied with a smile which carved dimples on the sides of her mouth: Delicious!’

Zygmunt Niedźwiecki, *Oczy: nowelle i szkice*, 1905

3.2. 20th century

In the 20th century, ‘delicious’ is the primary meaning of *pyszny*. In NKJP its most frequent collocates are *ciasto* ‘cake’, *wypieki* ‘baked goods’, *pączek* ‘donut’, *ciasto* ‘cookie’, *ciasteczko* ‘cookie’, *obiad* ‘dinner’, *pieróg* ‘dumpling’, *jedzenie* ‘food’, *śniadanie* ‘breakfast’, *potrawa* ‘dish’, *desert* ‘dessert’, *kanapka* ‘sandwich’, *zupa* ‘soup’, *danie* ‘dish’, *wino* ‘wine’, *lody* ‘ice-cream’, *tort* ‘tort’, *grochówka* ‘pea soup’, *kawał* ‘joke’, *zabawa* ‘entertainment’. Verbs which are found together with *pyszny* include *serwować* ‘serve’, *jeść* ‘eat’, *gotować* ‘cook’, *smakować* ‘taste’, *przygotować* ‘prepare’, *kupić* ‘buy’, and *robić* ‘make’.

It is not that the meanings of ‘haughty’ and ‘very good’ are forgotten; they are still present, but the foremost association of *pyszny* is now with food and drink. The same is true of the noun *pycha*, that is, its primary connotation is an exclamation of approval over a particularly delicious dish, akin to Yum!, however this is a bit more difficult to prove. The majority of the 617 examples of *pycha* in NKJP evince the meaning of ‘pride/ vainglory’. But I would argue that it is because most of the texts in NKJP are written, and as such, unless they are transcripts of speech (as (35)–(37) below), they rarely contain exclamations. When we look at the spoken section of NKJP, all 11 examples of *pycha* there are exclamations.

(35) Zjedliśmy New England Clam Chowder (pycha!).
 ‘We ate New England clam chowder (yum!)’

(36) Oj naprawdę pycha, zjem ci do ostatniego kawałka.
 ‘Oh, this is really yummy, I will eat it to the last crumb.’

(37) To ma być szarlotka? Pycha! Palce lizać!
 ‘This is supposed to be an apple cake? Yum! Finger licking good!’

Thus, to summarize, the meaning of *pyszny* seems to be quite stable from the Old Polish period until the 19th century. During that time its usage shifts slightly from primarily human-centered (‘haughty’, ‘conceited’) to non-human centered (‘magnificent’).

In the course of the 19th century, the meaning further extends to very good, excellent and the adjective is used with a wider set of nouns, including abstract concepts. Then, in the 20th century, the meaning narrows down to ‘excellent in taste’. This might have been motivated by the shift of the derived noun *pyszność/pyszności*, as there is evidence that the noun was used in the sense of ‘delicious goods’ before the adjective, and also by the ambiguity of sentences like (8) and (29), where *pyszny* modifies *bankiet* ‘banquet’ and *śniadanie* ‘breakfast’, and it is uncertain if the intended meaning corresponds to ‘opulent’, ‘magnificent’ or to ‘delicious’. Still, the semantic narrowing of *pyszny* appears less obviously motivated than the emergence of *dummy*.

Yet, it is not clear why this shift happened at all. It is true that before the 20th century, Polish did not seem to have an adjective meaning ‘delicious’, but it had *smaczny* ‘tasty’ (since 1550 according to Brückner, 1970, p. 503), which could be qualified with *bardzo* ‘very’. In fact, many Slavic languages do not have a separate word for ‘delicious’. Russian has only *vkusnyj* ‘tasty/delicious’, Slovenian *okusno* ‘tasty/delicious’, Ukrainian *smačno* ‘tasty/delicious’, Belorussian *smačna* ‘tasty/delicious’, Slovak *chutne* ‘tasty/delicious’. German also has a single word: *lecker*. Serbian has *ukusno* ‘tasty’ and *divan*, which can mean ‘delicious’, but also ‘kind’, ‘helpful’, or ‘wonderful’.

Why do languages develop “stronger” adjectives? Why do we have words like *delicious* and *beautiful* when we could say *very tasty* and *very pretty*? In the case of English, the answer often seems clear: following the Norman Conquest, scores of French words entered English, causing there to be many doublets, which subsequently specialized. For instance, the OED defines *delicious* as “extremely pleasing to the senses, esp. to the taste or smell; providing great sensual pleasure; delectable; (now usually) very appetizing, highly pleasant to the taste. Sometimes of a person: very attractive. In later use, the meaning of ‘very appetizing, highly pleasant to the taste’ is usually perceived as the core meaning, and other uses as figurative applications of this” (OED). The word is a borrowing from French, first attested in the relevant meaning in 1325. *Tasty*, on the other hand, is of Anglo-Saxon stock and its first use in the sense of “pleasing to the taste; appetizing, savory” is in 1617 (OED). So, it seems that in English the “stronger” adjective existed first, and its meaning was perhaps modified after *tasty* changed its meaning¹⁵.

¹⁵ The Polish words for *pretty* and *beautiful* follow a similar pattern: *piękny* ‘beautiful’ is first attested in 1494 (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 570), while *ładny*, now ‘pretty’, but originally ‘orderly’, appears in its new meaning in the 18th century (Bańkowski, 2000, p. 83).

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Corpora

Corpus of 19th century texts. <https://korpus-xix.ijppan.pl/#/>

KorBA – Elektroniczny korpus tekstów polskich z XVII i XVIII w. (do 1772 r.). <https://korba.edu.pl>

NKJP – Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego. <http://nkjp.pl/>

SUMMARY

Key words: pride, vainglory, agency, semantic change

This article seeks to answer two puzzling questions regarding the lexical domain of PRIDE in the Polish language. First, how the words *duma* and *dumny* came to mean ‘pride’ and ‘proud’, while equivalent words in other Slavic languages have meanings related to thinking and speaking. Second, how the words *pycha* and *pyszny*, whose original meanings were ‘excessive pride’, ‘vainglory’, and ‘haughty’, conceited, came to mean something delicious and delicious. Using data from linguistic corpora from different epochs in the history of Polish, I argue that at the beginning of the 16th century, a valorization of PRIDE took place. Increased self-awareness made it possible for people to take pride in their achievements, previously seen as signs of God’s favor. Thus, pride was both linguistically (it is impossible to use *pyszny* or *hardy* with a cause, as *pycha* is deeply linked with ‘magnificence’ and *hardość* with ‘indomitability’), and morally incompatible with the Polish language of the time (*pycha* being a deadly sin) and thus a new word was needed to express it. I show that the meaning of *pycha* and *pyszny* appears quite stable until the 19th century. During that time, its usage shifts slightly from primarily human-centered (‘haughty’, ‘conceited’) to non-human centered (‘magnificent’). During the 19th century, the meaning further extends to ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’, and the adjective is used with a wider set of nouns, including abstract concepts. Then, in the 20th century the meaning narrows down further to just ‘excellent in taste’. This might have been motivated by the shift of the derived noun *pyszność/pyszności*, as there is evidence that the noun was used in the sense of ‘delicious goods’ before the adjective, and by the ambiguity of sentences where *pyszny* modifies meals as it is uncertain if the intended meaning corresponds to ‘opulent’, ‘magnificent’, or to delicious.

STRESZCZENIE

Duma i pycha: ewolucja znaczeń

Ślówka kluczowe: duma, pycha, sprawcość, zmiany znaczenia

Artykuł podejmuje próbę wyjaśnienia zagadek związanych z domeną leksykalną dumy/pychy w języku polskim. Argumentuję, że gdy słowo *dumny* zmieniło swoje znaczenie na początku XI wieku z „dotyczący myślenia” na „zadowolony ze swoich osiągnięć”, itp., stało się tak z powodu zmiany w psychice Polaków (jak i innych narodów europejskich). W tym okresie ludzie zaczęli dostrzegać swoją sprawcość i potencjalny wpływ na własne losy. Istniejące przymiotniki *pyszny* i *hardy* nie mogły przejąć znaczenia „uzasadnionej dumy”, gdyż nie mogły łączyć się z frazami eksplikującymi powody do dumy (np. *dumny z, dumny, że*). Słowo *pyszny*, z kolei, ewoluowało od „okazujący pychę” do „wspaniały, okazały”, aby w XX wieku dodatkowo wyspecjalizować na oznaczający „doskonały w smaku” (zachowując jednocześnie pierwotny sens).