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*THE UNITED FAMILY*  
THE VIEW OF THE VILLAGE OF THE RECOVERED TERRITORIES  
IN THE LITERATURE OF ZIEMIA LUBUSKA

*The United Family* is a title of one of the novels by Zygmunt Trziszka published in 1965 as “The Great Pigsticking”, that made writer’s debut and initiated the rural theme in the literature of Ziemia Lubuska. Since 1965 Trziszka, one of the founders of regional culture and the author hailed as one of the most eminent regional writers, had written many novels and short stories focused on the same topic: the Polish village located on so-called Recovered Territories<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, his prose output, giving a wide spectrum of Polish post-war rural problems, conceives a regional legend, offers the base local narrative and presents the new identity of the new region, of community which was in the state of establishing itself and – most of all – the identity of immigrants settled in this area after World War II.

It should be noted, that Ziemia Lubuska, in contradistinction to the other Polish regions, was not an industry-developed area. There were no big cities (the greatest towns of Ziemia Lubuska, such as Zielona Góra or Gorzów, were not prominent metropolis like Wrocław or Gdańsk). There were many small towns and villages, and that is why agrarian culture prevailed over the urban one.

The second reason for Lubuska literature to favour rural theme was of political nature. The literature of Ziemia Lubuska created stories according to propaganda concept, so-called “western theme”. Polish authorities made the writers follow their orders and instructions, and writers gave the picture response at propaganda’s directions. By 1989 “western theme” in the literature of Ziemia Lubuska concerned rural problems only and it changed after political transformation<sup>2</sup>. For the reasons mentioned above, I concentrate mostly on

<sup>1</sup> I use the term “Recovered Territory” to describe the territory of the former Free City of Danzig and the part of pre-war Germany that became part of Poland after World War II.

<sup>2</sup> Since 1989 the cities like Wrocław, Gdańsk and others were rediscovered and the urban theme became interesting to the writers. They started to describe western towns as the palimpsests in order to present multiplied culture and as the sign of multiculture heritage.

the early period of Lubuska literature, on the literature of the 60's and 70's. It was just the beginning of Lubuska literature.

The aim of my article is to give the outline of the literary picture of Lubuska village, created by Trziszka and other writers who followed him, in accordance with propaganda pressure and the expatriates' and settler's expectations. Firstly I would like to outline the literary background and the rural subject in post-war Polish literature (part I). I would also like to take a closer look at the post-war Polish places' policy (part II) and at two literary traditions: the epos (part III) and the both utopian and arcadian idea (part IV), taken over by post-war (western) writers. Finally I would devote attention to subversive narrative that painted the portrait of Lubuska village as a strange, unpleasant and even damned place (part V).

My reflections are based mainly on Trziszka's novels, but I would also occasionally refer to the other writers of Ziemia Lubuska, id est Zdzisław Morawski and Janusz Olczak.

## **PART I: Literary background – Trziszka as one of the Polish rural writers**

The Polish literary studies say about Trziszka as one of those who continued the rural subject, initiated in the 19th century by such writers as Bolesław Prus, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Maria Konopnicka, continued by Władysław Reymont, Stefan Żeromski and – in the between-war period – by Józef Morton, Henryk Worcell, Stanisław Piętak, Jan Ożóg, Zdzisław Mach, Jan Kawalec and extended after War World II.

The rural theme had grown rapidly after 1956 and was represented by writers born in the 20's, 30's and 40's. and those who made their debut in the 60's. They concentrated on social and psychological aspects of rural life, on rural habits, traditions and culture. But first of all they depicted the changes of Polish village, for example the process of disappearance of folklore and destruction of traditions. They all tried to deal with experiences of social migration from villages to cities – „run away”, as Trziszka called it<sup>3</sup>.

Polish literary scholar, Andrzej Zawada, considers Trziszka to be a representative of young generation of rural writers, who turned to the plebeian tradition and described village using referring to Rabelais' „carnival” concept<sup>4</sup>. The traditional folklore of old village world was turned upside down through laugh and irony. The main purpose of it was to purify, revive and in the effect – to restore the artistic and cognitive value of folklor. Referring to Rabelais and Gombrowicz, using plebeian laughter and grotesque Trziszka restores rural topic and expresses the experience composed of two opposite elements: being the member of peasant community he was as a writer beyond this community. He was both a peasant and non-peasant. So the title of the monography of Trziszka by Tadeusz Budrewicz – *Zygmunt Trziszka. The Plebeian at the Crossroads*<sup>5</sup> seems to be extremely accurate. But “the crossroads” could be a metaphor referring to another biography situation, because

<sup>3</sup> See Z. Trziszka, *Dać drapaka: wybór opowiadań*, Poznań 1983.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Zawada, *Gra w ludowe. Nurt chłopski w prozie współczesnej a kultura ludowa*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 61–65.

<sup>5</sup> T. Budrewicz, *Zygmunt Trziszka. Plebej na rozdrożu*, Kraków 1992.

Trziszka was born in Weldirz in Ukraine (1936) and after the war ended he was expelled from his native land and settled in the new western Polish territory. So he appears as a man who lost his roots and heritage. Unlike to the other Polish rural writers he was compelled to root in the new, quite strange country.

There is no doubt that he was a politically correct and subordinate author. Using Roch Sulima term, he was a “contract writer”<sup>6</sup>. Sulima, Polish prominent cultural scholar, used this notion to describe the institutional type of folk artist, that was created in Poland in the 60’s. as the response to the regional tendencies. So-called “contract writer” existed out of true folk culture and he provided the modern, unusual, exotic and desirable subjects. But Trziszka was a committed author as well as who dreamt about safe, sheltered, indestructible homeland. He had never forgotten about his first home and his “motherland”. In the novel entitled „The Oder River Home” he wrote about the triple fire that destroyed his first house, that was made of wood, and he also confided in his childish desire of going on a journey to unknown western land. He came to Ziemia Lubuska hoping he would get better:

I heard promises that in the territories on the river Odra a brick-built house had waited for me and that it would never burn down. The elderly whispered about these houses, but I slobbered over Wierchowina. „Wierchowino, my mother...”. How could I abandon my own mother? Could I abandon one in order to find a better one? Perhaps she was a stepmother only?<sup>7</sup>

[słyszałem obiecywania, że nad Odrą czeka murowany dom, który nigdy nie będzie płonął. Starzy szeptali o tych domach, ale żal mi było opuszczać wierchowiny. „Werchowino, maty moja...” Jakże opuścić własną matkę? Czy można opuścić jedną, żeby znaleźć lepszą, a może tamta była tylko macochą?]

Such above questions are the core theme of his prose, the same with a loss of identity and exile’s experience. He was not only a rural writer then, but also a writer of lost land. His view of native land was modelled on the picture of the village at Ziemia Lubuska and used in the official propaganda as the western “land of opportunity” or – in other words – in the image of “Lubuska Arcadia”.

## PART II: Lubuska post-war literary in the shadow of western place’s policy

The Yalta agreements, that took place on February 1945, influenced not only the post-war state of Poland, but also Polish literature. Jacek Łukasiewicz, a critic and prominent scholar in literature, noticed in the article titled *If Yalta hadn’t Happened...* that without Yalta agreements the history of Polish literature would have taken quite a different way and he presents the panorama of Polish literary scene<sup>8</sup>. Due to Zbigniew Herbert’s poetry would to become more visionary and metaphorical. But Yalta agreements took place, so Herbert reflected the post-war Polish communistic reality and portreited, among others, the

<sup>6</sup> See R. Sulima, *Folklor i literatura. Szkice o kulturze i literaturze współczesnej*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 195–196.

<sup>7</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Dom nadodrzański*, Łódź 1968, p. 24, my translation.

<sup>8</sup> See J. Łukasiewicz, „Gdyby nie było Jalta...”: *Ruchome cele*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 10–15.

activists involved in political mission, who propagated the following image of Polish village:

a home-brewed Mephisto in a Lenin jacket  
 sent Aurora's grandchildren out into the field  
 boys with potato faces  
 very ugly girls with red hands  
 (*The Power of Taste*)<sup>9</sup>

[samogonny Mefisto w leninowskiej kurtce  
 posyłał w teren wnuczęta Aurory  
 chłopców o twarzach ziemniaczanych  
 bardzo brzydkie dziewczyny o czerwonych rękach  
 (*Potęga smaku*)]

“The home-brewed Mefisto“ exists as a figure of evil and stands for the government institution that controls cultural activities, such as “Western and Northern Land Society”, “Western Institute”, “Ministry for the Recovered Territories” and so forth.

The common reference literary point was instructed by politicians and served political purposes. That is why deportation and deracination theme was forbidden as well as national and ethnic conflicts. The subject that was welcome was the process of taking roots in a new land. The government concept was to define the new state of Poland as the recovered Piast realm and archaeologists, linguists, historical scientists made efforts to legitimize the new territories. Many writers popularised and redistributed their findings in literary works. In accordance with the official view they glorified beautiful “motherland” (along with the concept to define post-war Poland as heritage from medieval Piast dynasty), territory constituted “old Polish land”, “ancient Piast land” and “land of opportunity” on western beautiful, pleasant country.

On the contrary to other regional literatures of Recovered Territories, the literature of Ziemia Lubuska started several years after war and was actually founded in the late 50's, 60's and 70's. Due to this fact, it was directed not only by Piast idea, but also by later political instructions. So there were two leading concepts of culture that shaped the literary image of the village of Ziemia Lubuska – the epos and the Arcadia. Rural literature of Ziemia Lubuska appealed to these two literary traditions. Hereafter I would take a closer look at them.

### PART III: Claiming for epos

In 1959 at II Congress of Western and Northern Land Society in Świerklaniec Edward Gierek, Polish politician instructed writers to establish a Polish post-war epic, dedicated to the great describing migration and new western state, as a chance for Polish literature. The

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<sup>9</sup> Z. Herbert, “*The Power of Taste*”, trans. J. and B. Carpenter: Z. Herbert, *Selected Poetry*, trans. by J. and B. Carpenter, C. Milosz, P. Dale Scott, selected by T. Kunz, afterword by J. and B. Carpenter, Kraków 2003, s. 147.

long narrative poem was to recount heroic pioneer settlers' deeds and give a comprehensive view of after-war community. Due to the main function of this poetry it was also appear to be the spirit of settlers by supplying them with models of heroic behaviour. The settlers were supposed to transform into heroic warriors who lived in the heroic times age. In this way their exodus was transformed into a great adventure. Witold Nawrocki, both the writer and communistic party activist wrote:

The immigration processes, the settlement of almost uninhabited abandoned lands were like a great splendid adventure, the common experience became a legend, and transformed into a myth. It was a great theme, a chance to literature; the life of Western Territories offered many amazingly different situations, little-known or quite new, full of dramatic, political and moral conflicts. (...) The big exodus, the settlement processes of the first clashes, brushes (...) – that was the great adventure climate, full of unusual happenings. And that all was the chance for great epic<sup>10</sup>.

[Procesy migracji ludnościowej i zasiedlenia terenów na ogół opustoszałych miały smak wielkiej przygody; zbiorowe doświadczenia ludzkie łatwo obrastały w legendę, podlegającą przyspieszenemu procesowi mitologizacji. Była to wielka szansa tematyczna dla literatury; życie na Ziemiach Odzyskanych podsuwało niesłychanie wiele różnorodnej natury konfliktów, niebanalnych, mało znanych lub zupełnie nowych, dramatycznych, bogatych w spięcia polityczne i moralne. (...) wielka jazda na zachód, procesy osiedleńcze, pierwsze konflikty i tarcia – to był klimat wielkiej przygody, niecodziennego wydarzenia. W tym tkwiła szansa na wielką powieść epicką.]

Epos like this had never been written and its idea failed – perhaps as a consequence of genre's structure exhausting and because of bad condition of Polish post-war prose<sup>11</sup>. But in spite of this (and due to these expectations) many writers tried attempted to give a kind of response. They enlarged on the rural theme with respect to some elements of epic structure and making allusions both to Homer's epos works and Polish literary tradition (mainly to Adam Mickiewicz's and Władysław Reymont's epic). For example Janusz Olczak, another writer of Ziemia Lubuska, described the community that was establishing itself, with the help of the image of Adam Mickiewicz's Soplicowo village and he painted Ziemia Lubuska as the country estate of heroic family clan, using numerous quotations from *Pan Tadeusz*.

Trziszka didn't use to do that. Most of his stories published in the 60's and 70's – I mean *The Big Picksticking* (1965), *The Father's Tough Hand* (1967), *The River Oder Home* (1968), *The Afterflame Night* (1971), *The Subject's Landscape* (1975), *A Good News* (1976) – could be put together and transformed into a long narration painting the wide-view of the village of Ziemia Lubuska. Scattered elements and short stories could be unified in one epic poem modelled on epos and presented the panorama of the community of new region in the state of establishing itself.

<sup>10</sup> W. Nawrocki, *Trwanie i powrót. Szkice o literaturze Ziemi Zachodniej*, Poznań 1969, p. 111, 120, my translation.

<sup>11</sup> See B. Bakuła, *Miedzy wygnaniem a kolonizacją. O kilku odmianach polskiej powieści migracyjnej w XX wieku (na skromnym tle porównawczym): Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku*, ed. H. Gosk, Kraków 2012, pp. 182–184.

Trziszka in his novels repeats the same settlement's account taking place over the course of the first post-war years. It begins with the moment of immigrants' arrival by train or by cart to a new land and continues as history of establishing a new state. They enjoy the richness of cropland, but also they assimilate with serious troubles and conflicts connected with relationships between settlers. The writer replicates the types of heroes and reproduces situations, resumes some sub-plots and gives a collection of the same type of characters: an elderly man, wise and well-known called "Patriarch", the typical of settler's family – wife, husband and children and also the tabby aunt, the grandmother and the young man and woman who fell in love. There is close identity of different heroes of the stories – they have the same biographies, the same names: Anielka, Adam Wilniuk, Szymonka, Frantas. Most of the main heroes have the Anielka, Adam Wilniuk, Szymonka, Frantas names after Trziszka's parents – Józef and Helena, and quite similar main hero's father job after Trziszka's father, who was a woodman. It is clear that his prose could be read as fiction based on the writer's life. It implies many biographical facts and reflects subject's experience, including personal details. It is clear in particular in the context of the essays of recollection published in 1980 and entitled *The Travels to My Itaka*<sup>12</sup>. These essays tell the story with elements modelled on Homer's epos *Odyssey*. Trziszka compares the pioneer settler to mythological hero, he relates the settler's long journey and his return home in the context of the myth of Odys. i.e.

#### PART IV: Arcadia and utopia

Aleksander Fiut, a prominent literary scholar, compared World War II history with a monstrous blender mixing all around<sup>13</sup> and this metaphor well depicted post-war process of establishing the community, that writers of Ziemia Lubuska painted. They described people blending in a new society and becoming a harmonious part of it. At the same time they brought them together, mixed up in a melting pot and transformed into "one family" just as one soup.

The keynote idea of regional literary image of the village is transformation of various groups of people into one community establishing itself in terms of „the general will of the people”. For example Trziszka promotes the vision of identity despite obvious cultural differences. He follows one pattern: in several stories he multiplies examples of day by day, friendship building, peaceful and harmonious life and shaping ideal relationship between neighbours representing many ethnic groups, that is eastern people (present-day Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus), people from Wielkopolska – so-called "potatoes people", the people from central Poland, Warmia and Mazury, Śląsk and Polish-speaking population who lived in this region before war.

The coherent community was established through people's trust in common war experience and memories of common historical experience with the underlying concept of returning to the Piasts'realm territory considered as "old Polish land". That is why one of Trziszka's major characters consoles his daughter arguing that she must leave her baby's

<sup>12</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Podróże do mojej Itaki*, Warszawa 1980.

<sup>13</sup> A. Fiut, *Pytanie o tożsamość*, Kraków 1995, s. 11.

cradle because on western land there is a new and a real is waiting: "You come back to real Polish cradle"<sup>14</sup>.

Generally Trziszka presents two kinds of processes of unification: through the collective work and through the marriage. In the leading model story entitled *The United Family* he describes the lakeside village Rybniaki (before war "Christopswalde or Guscht") as a coherent community of eastern people, of eastern people, so-called "Poleszuki" and "Podolaki", people from Wielkopolska, so-called "potatoes" and local Polish natives. At first peasants were suspicious and afraid of each other but as time went by, they interacted and corporated as a team in an effort to built „one family". So the peasants worked hard together and learnt from one another, building community as one (joined-up) organism or – borrowing Trziszka's notion – "fishnet":

First days they lived and acted separately, everybody worked on his own and only peat digging and fishing boats taught them to take care of water's behaviour. The local people were teaching them fishing skills (...). As the result, they all were fishing together. (...) And the big trammel overwhelmed people at the closed circle<sup>15</sup>.

[Zrazu ciągnęli w swoje strony, każdy na własną modłę. Tylko to wsiowe kopanie torfu i rybackie łodzie uczyły ich razem zważać, kiedy woda zaczyna się pienić, potem znów opadać. Tutejsi uczyli ich rybackiego rzemiosła (...). Potem już razem przez jezioro zapuszczali slymp (...) wielka sieć, która zagarniała ludzi do zamkniętego koła.]

Most of Trziszka's stories relate to intermarriage between different groups. A very good example is the story entitled *Great Pigsticking*. It's action tells about the daughter of an eastern man who falls in love with the son of the "potatoes" settler. Both fathers were involved in an ethnic conflict and in the fighting of two groups of settlers one of them hurt the other, thus they were sworn enemies. Trziszka refers to the well-known old story of Romeo's and Juliet's love, but – in the contrary to Shakespeare's play – the vendetta between two families ends happily. Young people get married and finally the father accepts his daughter's decision. The keynote in the novel's plot is an idea of "pigsticking". It was just one of the eastern rural celebrations. During pigsticking all members of the village community were given some meat and a newly married daughter's family also got it.

Writers of Ziemia Lubuska put readers in many affairs between immigrants, they come in their stories to the conclusion that the settlers are very much alike and, in fact, they all might have been the members of one family. In the Trziszka's novel *The Afterflame Night* Aniela, one of major characters, tells about pre-war time: "In Podole region there were more multiculture families than in Ziemia Lubuska region and they lived all together in harmony"<sup>16</sup>. She also claims, that her father shared a balk with a German and they were in a small conflict first, but later they became good neighbours.

The above described state of village, that's how the writer creates a utopian society and relates to utopian idea closely connected to the image of Arcadia in which people live peacefully together, in harmony with nature. After war the Arcadian idea was very attrac-

<sup>14</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Uszanka: Dom nadodrzański...*, op. cit., p. 46, my translation.

<sup>15</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Jedna rodzina: Wielkie świnioobicie. Wybór opowiadań*, Warszawa 1965, p. 122, my translation.

<sup>16</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Dopala się noc*, Warszawa 1971, p. 91, my translation.

tive, it often stood for paradise that was lost and recovered again and that's why the writers composed the image of Arcadia in accordance with many different cultural traditions, i.e. mythological images, the Biblical Garden of Eden and Biblical Land of Promise, the Vergili's work, the *locus amoenus*. This idea was easily assimilated in Ziemia Lubuska. There are many aspects of the popularity of the Arcadian idea in this region. First of all, the Arcadian topic was attractive to post war society as a response to people's expectations. War troubled people needed the stories that could express progress, move mankind forward, influence their lives in positive way and give them hope of happy and safe life.

Secondly, the Arcadian idea was adopted very well due to the character of Ziemia Lubuska – there was not anything characteristic about its landscape, no typical space signature: No mountains like in Dolny Śląsk, no the sea like in northern Poland, no lakes like in Warmia and Mazury, no industry like in Górnny Śląsk. There was also a locality without earlier industrial, without former cultural and tradition. As a result there was no integration in the past. There are many discrepancies between historical and contemporary shape of Ziemia Lubuska territory. The present-day Ziemia Lubuska voivodeship comprises parts of former Brandenburgia, of Dolny Śląsk, of Wielkopolska and of Dolne Śląsce. It should be noticed that its capital, Zielona Góra never belonged to medieval *terra lebus* and the historical capital of *terra lebus* (current Lebus) is situated in Germany. So the post-war region was – borrowing Marc Augé's term – „non-place”<sup>17</sup>, a sort of non-anthropological place, place without its identity, lying beyond time and space – simply like Arcadia – the place situated in European culture only.

As a third things, the idea of Arcadia was introduced in Ziemia Lubuska due to its rural origin. Leo Marx argued that pastoral forms are based on archetypical experience and it resumes the archetypical patterns of reality<sup>18</sup>. So it's the type of rural consciousness because its origin lies in the sacrifice sphere consists of archetypical traits (the concept of mythical time and space, magic outlooks, magic reasons and magic origin of the world).

Last but not least it should be also noted that Arcadia is a permanent recurrent motif in Polish literature. One of the first prominent Polish poets, Jan Kochanowski, created the image of Arcadian village in his *Sobotka Song*, in which he wrote about „joyous” and quiet countryside and later generations of writers followed him.

But in the Recovered Territories a political factor was the most important. There is no doubt that Arcadian idea is usually promoted by those who are in control, That's why Leo Marx defines a pastoral form as „effective ideology in The United States” and William Empson points out a close relation between the image of the utopian form of government and ideology of communism<sup>19</sup>. The same with after war state of Poland. But communist government propagated this idea in particular in Recovered Territories. Polish newspapers encouraged Polish people to relocate to the west. The regime put up in public places the posters with messages that making a promise of a better life in the Recovered Territories. Ziemia Lubuska was described as a place where many opulent villas and fully furnished houses and businesses abandoned by Germans, who had left them, waited for the brave.

<sup>17</sup> See M. Augé, *Non-lieux: Introductory to an Anthropology of the Non-Place*, Paris 1992.

<sup>18</sup> L. Marx o., „Pastoralism In America”: Bercovitch Sacvan, *The Rites of Assent. Transformations in the symbolic Construction of America*, New York, London.

<sup>19</sup> W. Empson, *Some Versions of the Pastoral*, London 1935.

A country where living conditions were good and people had the opportunity of making money. In sum many people were attracted by Ziemia Lubuska by the promise of finding a beautiful dreamland.

That's why the writers of Ziemia Lubuska give many images of a beautiful land. In Trziszka's novel the promotor of Lubuska Arcadia is a grandfather. He encourages his family to depart East Land and come to Ziemia Lubuska, referring to its beauty and good living conditions. He says they will settle in the house that will never burn, which is built of fire resistant stone, which is safe and comfortable, full of abandoned German farms and equipment. The two quotations beneath refer to the first view of the German house and the first look at countryside that promised idyll and rest:

The pilgrims came to the rooms as neat as a pin, with bedding and equipment. Aniela was astonished, said no word, she only stared<sup>20</sup>.

[Pątnicy weszli do izb czystych i schludnych, z pościelą i sprzętem. Aniela ze zdumienia nie powiedziała ani słowa, tylko patrzyła.]

Then we saw the signpost CHRISTOPHSWALDE and we ran into the ravine. On the left side the slope of white sand – as if the ground shamelessly showed its naked stomach. On the right near the deep moat the black hump. I thought that the ground was upside down here<sup>21</sup>.

[Wtedy zobaczyliśmy tablicę CHRISTOPHSWALDE i wjechaliśmy w parów. Z lewej strony wznosiła się skarpa białego piasku, jakby ziemia bezwstydnie pokazywała swój goły brzuch, a z prawej, od głębokiej fosy zaczynało się czarne wybebeszenie. Pomyślałem sobie, że ziemia leży tutaj do góry brzuchem].

One of the most popular and recurrent motives refers to the treasure hidden in the western ground. One of writers presents the hero who finds valuables and gold in the house basement. The others find the basket with china, the car covered by hay, the walled up tractor and so on. Trziszka originally adapts this motif – he writes, that the heroes dig out the treasures hidden in the ground like the meat in a jar. The treasures are clothes and equipment, but the most precious is the soil itself (signed as “the most important treasure”). In the essays collected as *Travel to My Itaka* Trziszka interpreted and adapted the myth of Argonauts. He describes “Argonautes” as the settlers that arrived at Lubuski region and became the finders of gold fleece.

But Arcadian idea refers also to the countryside's beauty. Arcadia means a beautiful land of pleasure and that's why writers at Ziemia Lubuska described the local countryside as the green land with a mild climate and beautiful trees, plenty of woods and forests using *locus amoenus*, paradise and garden motives. Ziemia Lubuska just at the first look appeared to be a place with ever green trees, woody hills, the deep green of the fields and this description remind the United State “new land” image depicted by American poets. The important element of similarity is virginity linked with the image of the wood, smelling resin – like a primeval land.

<sup>20</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Dopala się noc*, op. cit., p. 24, my translation.

<sup>21</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Dom pod białą skarpą: Dać drapaka*, Poznań 1983, p. 52, my translation.

In spite of beauty Ziemia Lubuska is a fertile and fruitful land. The farms of this region are rich, they produce fine crops of wheat, potatoes and hay. And – it should be stressed – the landscape of Ziemia Lubuska and the view of Lubuska village remind the eastern one. Although actually it is difficult to find similarities, Trziszka compares new land to his native soil. He juxtaposes these two places and creates many parallels. *Tertium comparationis* was the kind of flora and sculpture of land. That is because Seczuk, the hero of the novel entitled *Back to the Great Water* settled with his family in Cigace near Zielona Gora. This place is close resemblance to his missing village. Trziszka also tells about Czernohra's people that first came to Ziemia Lubuska, but after they were resettled in the area at the foot of Śnieżka in Sudety because of its hilly landscape.

The writer's purpose is to paint Ziemia Lubuska as the image of eastern lost land. And he attributes the features of eastern land to the Recovered Territories, which are a kind of compensation. The identity is also expressed in possessive pronouns – by such as “my Lubuski Wierchowina”, “my Landsberg Itaka”. He creates many comparisons to argue that the new place resemble the place they left.

## PART V: Anti-arcadia. A subversive story

In the essays collected as *Travels to My Itaka* Trziszka gives one significant, provocative confession, he says:

My River Notec muds charmed me so much that in every novel I try to catch supernatural non-human charm of this country<sup>22</sup>.

[Moje noteckie oczeryty zauroczyły mnie tak dokumentnie, że z książki na książkę próbuję uchwycić jakiś zgoła nieludzki urok tej krainy.]

In the other place he also mentions “deuce charm” (“diabolic charm”) of Ziemia Lubuska. This wording reveals anti-arcadian, subversive base story, that turns against obvious and that what seems natural. It seems that Trziszka's settlement story is shaped in contradistinction to writer's intention, concentrates on dark sides of settlers' lives.

The mechanism of subversion can also be illustrated by the way in which Trziszka paraphrases the phrase happy country as the land of milk and honey. Trziszka turns it into “land of milk and vodka” or – in another version – “land of vodka and home-brewed hooch”. It is not only allusion to the political regime of “home-brewed” Mephisto (who Herbert wrote about), but also to a devil or rather – deuce/diabolic character of the new land. “Deuce contryside” is the polysemic phrase, in Polish language it means both beautiful and diabolic – land of beauty or land of devil. In this way Trziszka refers to the Germans: German bandits hidden in the forest, who attack the settlers (“the armed Wolf”), to the German intention to poison new citizens, to German churches, architecture, building, cemeteries and most of all – to the damned land.

<sup>22</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Podróż do...*, op. cit., s. 7, my translation.

Due to the subversive story, arcadian narrative collapsed and didn't appear in the context of a *locus amoenus* topics as in the tradition of bucolic, but in the context of a *locus horrendus*; as a destructive and even a deadly one. And Ziemia Lubuska proves itself to be a barren land, both wet and dry, sandy and infertile, with plenty of mosquitos. Its soil seems not to have salt – „the ground without salt (“white gold” is said in Halle) and unsavoury, which smells of pine just like cemetery”. One quotation:

All were invited to the feast prepared by the non-salt ground. But the ground without salt is worthless. It give birth to crops without taste<sup>23</sup>.

[Wszyscy poszli na ucztę tej ziemi, w której soli nie ma, a jak soli nie ma, to i ziemia nic nie warta. Urodziła płody, co w pysku smaku nie budzą.]

But the main disadvantage of new land is its destructive force, that makes people passive and soothes them down. So the settlers lose their minds, forget about their principles and morals and begin to get ill. Here is an example:

Grandfather doesn't have any recollections of such events. It's just here that people have learnt how to fill up their stomachs day by day through and they care for their fatness only. Everything loses its value, they pray in a slapdash manner, work in a hurry. Just simply mess. And the only thing they really can do is eating<sup>24</sup>.

[Patriarcha nie pamięta, żeby coś takiego zdarzyło się w rodzinnych stronach. Tu ludzie nauczyli się paść brzuchy bez pamięci i tylko na brzuchy mają baczenie. Wszystko zatraciło swoją wartość. Modlą się byle jak i szybko, pracują pospiesznie. Jedno bezołowie. I tylko jeść potrafią.]

There are two cardinal sins in settlers's community: overeating and heavy drinking. They are full and they lose sense of life:

Fatness made them lazy. They were lying on the balk, sitting down on the couches, they turned into lard an lay with full stomach and they felt great sadness and emptiness – the sense of desolation overwhelmed them<sup>25</sup>.

[Tłustość w gębie rzucała ludzi na wzrok. Walali się po miedzach, tarabaniли coraz cięższymi kuprami w brzęczące sprężyny pluszowych kanap. Zawiązywali sadło. Leżeli do góry brzuchami i popadali w nieznany dotąd smutek.]

The subversive narration presents the dark side of settlement, many conflicts and aspects of life that are morally degraded. The most significant – like the frequent figure of “united family” – are the marriage troubles and even suicides. The same with a non-place, where people can live temporary like at the railway station. That's why a German, one of Trziszka's hero says to his wife about Polish settlers:

They are not able to work here. They like neither new sky nor new ground. They will stay till autumn and will go back. Some of them are sitting on their suitcases yet and bargain waiting for a sign for the recall. It is natural (obvious) that everybody is attracted by his native land and

<sup>23</sup> Z. Trziszka, *Dopala się...*, op. cit., p.17, my translation.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 197, my translation.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 105, my translation.

everyone wants to die in the place of birth and on the ground soil on which he worked. That's exactly what a man is<sup>26</sup>.

[Oni tutaj pracować nie potrafią. Im się tutaj ani niebo, ani ziemia nie podoba. Tylko w tym roku posiedzą, do jesieni, i wrócą skąd przyszli. niektórzy to nawet na walizkach jeszcze siedzą i Czejkaja tylko znaku. Dziwić się nie ma co, każdego ciągnie w rodzinne strony. Każdy tam chce umrzeć, gdzie się urodził, gdzie ziemia przesiąkła jego potem. Taki już człowiek jest i szluz.]

As a matter of fact, the idea that birthplace should be a place of death was Trziszka's guiding taught. Taken out of his fatherland he had never found a new one, in spite of all his efforts to build a new home in the village of Ziemia Lubuska.

## Conclusion

The people considered themselves as war victims; displaced, deracinated and finally settled at Ziemia Lubuska. They deserved home and needed a peaceful life in quiet countryside. Due to cultural action of the state the settlers adapted easily, day by day, to the new land and adjusted and conform to the way things are. There were many other groups of immigrants in the situation that can be compared with the situation of immigrants in Ziemia Lubuska, the situation in which the new state has to be established and has to acquire legitimacy is also universal in some way.

Clifford Geertz as the author of *The Interpretation of Cultures* points out the human being as "an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun"<sup>27</sup>, helps the symbols and myths that serve to generate and maintain meaning. Together, these symbols and myths provide the structure for people's world-views, give a framework in which to make decisions. These signs also constitute a cohesive narrative of existence and create a kind mental map which functions, in much the same way as a geographic map, as a guide to the terrain of life.

The literature of Ziemia Lubuska (and literary view of the regional village) got involved in the process of map-formation generating ideas to deal with new situations and to act in unexplored or inaccurate territory. It relates to cultural patterns – to archetypes found all over the world like utopia and Arcadia, to a literary form like epos and to a post-war Polish culture like Piast heritage. The image of the village is composed in relation to the signs and topics mentioned above, including local landmarks. That's why, being in favour of post-war policy of place, writers gave a story about a happy country.

Strangely enough the same narrative was supported by terms expressing a subtle, sly, oblique and underhand protest against resettlement the situation of displacement. First of all it expressed settlers' fears and apprehensions, their feeling of loose of their bearings. So post-war literary story about Lubuska village of the Recovered Territories appeared to be not quite a base narrative or rather it seemed to be incomplete. The story by the writers of Ziemia Lubuska accounting first settlements' days and describing post-war Lubuska village, is still waiting for an artistic look and scientific re-description.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 88, my translation.

<sup>27</sup> C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1973, p. 5.

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MAŁGORZATA MIKOŁAJCZAK

### “The United Family”. The View of the Village of the Recovered Territories in the Literature of Ziemia Lubuska

#### Summary

“The United Family” is a title of one of the novels by Zygmunt Trziszka published in 1965 as “The Great Pigsticking”, that made writer’s debut and initiated the rural theme in the literature of Ziemia Lubuska. Since 1965 Trziszka, considered as one of the most eminent regional writers, had written many novels and stories focused on the same topic: a village located on the Polish Recovered Territories. As a consequence, his prose output, presenting a wide spectrum of Polish post-war rural problems, gives the base local narrative and creates the identity of a new region and its community which was in the state of establishing itself and – most of all – the identity of immigrants settled in this area after World War II.

Ziemia Lubuska, in contradistinction to the other Polish regions, wasn't an industry-developed, where area and the agrarian culture prevailed over urban culture, and that's why the rural subjects became were so popular here. The second reason for favouring this theme in post-war literature of Ziemia Lubuska, was a propaganda concept, so-called "western subject" in Polish culture – in the first post-war decades it concerned all rural issues (it was changed after political transformation and since 1989 the urban theme became more interesting to the Polish western writers). That's why I concentrate mostly on the literature of the 60's and 70's. It was just the beginning of Lubuska literature.

The aim of my paper is to give an outline of Trziszka's work and other writers' who followed him, and to picture of Lubuska village, created both in accordance with propaganda pressure and the expatriates' and settlers' expectations. I would like to take a closer look at the view shaped mainly by two literary traditions: the epos and the arcadian idea. The purpose of long narrative poem, announced by Polish cultural policy in 1959, and taken over by western writers, was to recount the deeds by heroic pioneer settlers' deeds and to describe the process of after-war establishing the community (community unified as "one family"). Similar to the Arcadian as the dream of people living peacefully together in a beautiful landscape and in harmony with nature, that was attractive and helpful in the process of assimilation. Yet the literary image of Lubuska village was not only composed by these two crucial features, but also by subversive narrative, painting the strange, unpleasant and even damned land – a portrait, I would also devote attention to.

**Keywords:** literary view of the willage, literature of Ziemia Lubuska, prose of Zygmunt Trziszka, Recovered Territories, process of assimilation, epos and arcadian idea, base local narrative, subversive narrative