

Brzozowska-Krajka, Anna. *Ethnoculture in the Diaspora: Between Regionalism and Americanization*. Translated by Robert A. Orr. Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press and New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. Bibliography. Index. 315 pp. \$60 (cloth). ISBN 978-83227-9367-1.

Polish folklorist Anna Brzozowska-Krajka of the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin has made a significant contribution to cultural anthropology in general and to diaspora studies in particular in her recent book, *Ethnoculture in the Diaspora: Between Regionalism and Americanization*. The book was originally published in Polish in 2012 and is now available in English thanks to a translation by the Canadian Slavist Robert A. Orr. Brzozowska-Krajka maintains that scholars in the field must avoid making unwarranted generalizations and instead should take into account internal diversity caused by sub-ethnic groups. She illustrated this in her latest book by focusing on a sub-group, the Tatra Highlanders (Górale) within the Polish Diaspora in America. Her choice of subgroup was influenced by her earlier research on the rich folk culture of the Tatra Highlanders in the Podhale region, which resulted in a major book *O Współczesnej poezji podhalańskiej 1945-1980* [Contemporary Highlander Poetry in Podhale 1945-1980]. During her research for that book, she was surprised to find that many of the materials for her study were found in the *Tatrzański Orzeł/The Tatra Eagle*, a bilingual quarterly published in the United States in the state of New Jersey since 1947 by the Gromada family, who are members of the Polish Highlanders diaspora. At the time, the Communist regime in Poland did not support highlander regionalism so there were very few outlets available for Góral creative artists. Prominent folk poets like Andrzej Florek Skupień, Aniela Gut Stapińska, Hanka Nowobielska, and Stanisław Nędza Kubiniec submitted their poetry to this American periodical, which avoided political topics, and therefore was discretely circulated in Poland. Based upon this work, Brzozowska-Krajka began to think about eventually doing research in America to learn what had happened the Tatra Highlander folk culture in the Polish diaspora.

Opportunities for this research arose in 1999 and continued over eight years. Her research was done in Polish Highlander communities in the Greater Chicago area and also in Northern New Jersey (Passaic, Clifton and Garfield), where she engaged in participant observation and adopted a cultural studies approach advocated by the Australian scholar Chris Barker. The result was a study that is neither historical nor sociological. After meticulous research in those communities as well as in major public and university libraries, including the archives of the Polish Museum in Chicago and the Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America in New York, Brzozowska-Krajka concludes that the Polish Tatra Highlanders in America have not only been able to preserve the main elements of their folk culture within urban American contexts but were able to expand and develop it further to co-exist within America's multi-cultural urbanism.

In the 12 chapters in Part 2 of the book, Brzozowska-Krajka painstakingly describes and analyzes the manifestations, processes and ethnic markers (music, FOLKLORICA 2021, Vol. XXV

song, dance, dialect, costumes, family customs, religious observances, and folk art and architecture) that evince the vitality of this subgroup in America. She highlights its strong efforts to maintain an authentic folk culture and its careful imitation of cultural patterns and models of Podhale, the original homeland region. She credits two institutions for playing a role in maintaining the identity and folk culture of the “Górale” in America; The Polish Highlanders Alliance of North America (*Związek Podhalan w Północnej Ameryce*) based in Chicago, and *the Tatrzański Orzeł/The Tatra Eagle*; the latter is described by the author as a primary shaper of the highlander’s essential ideology (171).

I would agree with the author that retaining markers of Polish Góral ethnicity acts as a defensive mechanism against being forced to jump into the “melting pot” and becoming a standardized Anglo-American; but it is not a barrier to Americanization. Polish American highlanders are not resisting Americanization, especially since the 1970s with the greater emphasis on diversity and cultural pluralism in American society. This community demonstrates that it is possible to be an American without giving up one’s cultural heritage. Brzozowska-Krajka rightly supports Roman Reinfuss’s theory that “urban civilization does not by itself cause the disappearance of folk cultures, rather it is the inferiority complexes of those cultures vis a vis urban culture. But when a folk group has a positive self-image and values highly its culture, it can without conflict co-exist and even flourish and take advantage of all the amenities of urban culture” (262). As this book shows, Tatra Highlanders, both in Poland and America, tend to have a high positive self-image and are extremely proud of their folk culture.

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