

Reviews

Everardo Garduño. (2016). *En donde sale el sol. Decadencia y revitalización de la cultura yumana en Baja California*. Mexicali, Baja California, México: Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. ISBN 978-607-607-316-2.

Andrés Fábregas Puig^a

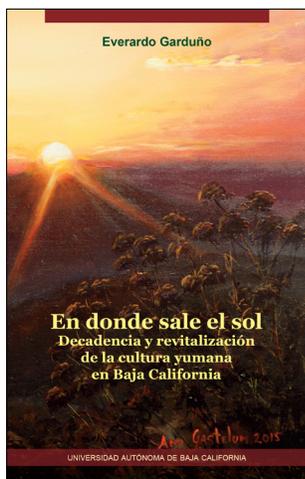
^a Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social-Occidente, México, e-mail: afabregas@ciesas.edu.mx

The Baja California Peninsula is still the recipient of immigration from all corners of Mexico and even from abroad. It would seem that, seen from the otero of the Mexican National State, Baja California is a frontier land, meaning the expansion of the State itself, as Frederick Jackson Turner put it in his text entitled “The Frontier in American History”. Added to this characteristic is the fact that anthropology, or rather, the professionals of that discipline formed in Mexico, took years to fix their eyes on the Mexican north—that in fact are several north—obsessed with the analysis of Mesoamerica by on the one hand, and on the other, as a result of the policies of assimilation applied during decades in the 20th century under the rubric of “*indigenismo*”, which treated the Indian populations of the country with the same Mesoamerican scale. The very concentration of the teaching of anthropology in Mexico City, the location of the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH), supported centralism in research, not only in ethnology or social anthropology, but also in Archeology, linguistics or physical anthropology and ethnology. In such a context, it is to be celebrated that an ethnologist like Everardo Garduño insists on the importance not only for anthropological theories, but also for the understanding of the country, the analysis of the populations and cultures of Baja California.

The book *En donde sale el sol*, is organized on the basis of thematic texts rather than chapters themselves. These texts are preceded by an introduction whereas the final considerations seal the book, which also contains a section on informants, bibliography and index. In total, 283 pages of a book that has the flavor of the field work, the long anthropological walks by the pathway of the cultural variety and the perception of the environments in which the life of the peoples studied takes place.

The human groups analyze belong to the ethnolinguistic family Yumana: the cucapá, kiliwa, pa-ipai, kumiai and tipai. They are populations of the great group of “people of the north”, as the old chronicles say, of the towns named Chichimecas, who inhabited the Huey Chichimecatlalpan that the informants of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún said.

The peoples studied had their first contacts with the Europeans towards the 17th century. At that time, as was characteristic of the people of the Great Chichimeca, the Yumans practiced a random economy of nomadism. From the Introduction it is pointed out that the transition from a lifestyle as the one



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mentioned to the sedentarization occurred through three cycles in the period from the 17th mid-20th century, when dealing with soldiers, explorers and missionaries (The 17th century) first, American miners and cowboys, concessionaries of land in Baja California during the 19th century, and landless peasants who were settled in Baja California in the middle of the 20th century. A long process that meant drastic changes in life and culture of the Yuman. This forced those who analyzed these people to think that they were in a process of assimilation or, in other words, cultural extinction. It is a perspective that the author shared. That is the reason that his first texts about these people bear the title of “*En donde se mete el sol* (Where the sun goes down)...” Now it is different: the ethnologist, Everardo Garduño, located a process of cultural revitalization, a fact that responds better to the concept of Transculturation than that of acculturation. And so, the new perspective is “*En donde sale el sol* (Where the sun rises) ...” the direction now taken by the author’s reflection in his book and which highlights the proposal, consistent with the above mentioned, that the current situation of the Yuman is the result of three processes: the missionary period or establishment of the colonial regime, capitalist expansion in the 19th century that already carries the seal of extractivism (especially mining activities) and the Mexican revolution in the early 20th century.

In light of works such as *En donde sale el sol*, it is important to review the discussions between Fernando Ortíz, the Cuban anthropologist, author of *Contrapunto del Tabaco and Sugar*, Bronislaw Malinowski, the British anthropologist, and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, the Mexican theoretician of assimilationist indigenism. Just in the context of this discussion, Fernando Ortiz, supported by Malinowski, opposed the concept of transculturation to that of acculturation defended and developed by Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán. The different contexts from which both concepts come together should be included. In the review of this discussion. In the case of the Yumanos, it is important the incorporation of cultural traits that come from the rural life, the cattle farmers, the cowboys. Similarly, it would be necessary to discuss what features of the Yumanos were exchanged and are likely to be located among the ranchers. The cultural appraisal includes the language, its valuation and its daily use, in addition to the new ecological-cultural strategies elaborated by the current Yumanos. Throughout his book, the features of social and cultural life that expose a cultural revival of the human populations and the dynamics of that process are exposed. In this context, it seems to me important to emphasize the importance of kinship as the axis of the social organization of peoples as Yumanos and the process that passes the organizational criterion based on these relations, according the changes originated from the imposition of the colonial regime and its current results. In the book reviewed there is an important ethnographic material to establish a discussion as the one I suggest.

It is eye catching that in the author’s work experience with Yumanos, visual anthropology stands out. This part of the book narrative exposes the importance of making a video to understand cultural traits and contemporary social mechanisms that characterize not only the Yuman, but also their relational environment. In other words, it is not just a “record of images” or a support for ethnography, but a resource of method—visual anthropology—that allows to approach aspects of the life of a community that could otherwise be hidden to observation and therefore to reflection.

An aspect that also draws attention to the Yumanos, is their high capacity to elaborate cultural ecologies in very diverse environments. It seems to me that this is combined with

the idiomatic variety which, in turn, points to the fact that hundreds of languages have disappeared following the establishment of the colonial regime. With all of this, cultural revitalization emerges as a result not only of the energy of a people but of their survival vocation and giving continuity to their cultural peculiarities. In this sense, I find that it is basic theoretical reflection on processes that begin from colonialism through our days, carried out by people like the Yumano, an example of a long insertion in the processes of globality unleashed by the expansion of Western Europe and the diffusion and imposition of capitalism and modernity at the planetary level. Contemporary ethnography, as Everardo Garduño proves, is a “Gateway” to reconstruct from ethnohistory, the life of people as they are studied and theorized from there, the ways of resistance against colonial, their current results and perspectives that come off.

The statement one finds in the text about population dynamics is also another important factor in the general reflection on the Yuman. In 1937, prominent demographer Sherburne Cook estimated the population of the Yumans in 10 000 people. At present, 1 000 live self-identified people as Riéños and Serreños. In the group of the Riéños are the cucapá that inhabit in El Mayor Indígena Cucapá. The Serreños are the kumiai of Juntas de Neji, San Jose Tecate, Peña Blanca and San José de la Zorra; and the Kiliwa of the ejido of Quiliguas (stream of Leon), that are, precisely, the target groups of the ethnography and the reflection in this work.

As he advanced in the reading of *Where the sun rises*, a history of borders emerged, from ecological to cultural and linguistic to even political. Furthermore, a photo that is inserted on page 60 of the book caught my attention right on this border story that I mention: it is the Cerro de Cuchumá, iconic for the Kumiai, whose geography is divided by the border gates between Mexico and the United States. That is, the photo suggests a complex topic related to the emergence of northern Mexico and the southeastern United States that led to the territorial division of Greater Chichimeca and the consolidation of an international border that influences the ethnological perception of our days. It is a set of problems that, it seems to me, contemporary anthropology can not avoid. Moreover, the photo suggests the continuity of a process of transculturation whose contemporary dynamics must be explained not only to understand the areas that the National States themselves create, but also how the people who are divided by borders and who transform these into spaces of coexistence.

As I pointed out, this book is a history of borders, of how they are created, of their different nature and how each of these borders shapes a complex thematic for today’s anthropology. For example, a subject that apparently has nothing to do with the central arguments of the work, the one about the presence of Ricardo Flores Magón in Baja California, leads to think of the conceptions of the radical groups of the Mexican Revolution about the destiny of towns like the Yumano in the context of the imagined Mexican Nation. Moreover, it leads to the reflection of the meetings and disagreements between the transformations of Mexico and the different perceptions that the American society had of them. As an example, I quote the recent book by Claudio Lomnitz *El regreso del camarada Ricardo Flores Magón* (2016). It is a theme that leads to reflect the encounters and disagreements between the nomadic peoples, the “The North people” and the Mexican Revolution, an aspect that Everardo Garduño points out on page 67 of his book. There are cultural roots in these encounters and disagreements. This also leads to reflection on the misunderstandings of indigenism that operated between people as the Yuman with the Mesoamerican models of social organization in mind, without

conceding that the people from Gran Chichimeca have a history of their own with all that this means. It is just to mention that this is an aspect that worried and that dealt with amplitude our late and dear colleague Juan Luis Sariego.

Another aspect that seems to me to be outstanding is the reflection on the livestock cultures that emerge from the colonial period and from social and cultural figures like the cowboy. The influence of American cinema through the “films of the West” generated the perceived perception that in the American nation root the pioneers are, cowboys of the west, with their weapons, with that cult of arms, that still does not end in the North American nation and that brings so many misfortunes that country. *En donde sale el sol*, he denies the image of the cowboy as an exclusive character running along the border in the United States and shows that “the cowboy culture” rose from the south to the north, as is shown by the historical configuration of Altos, Jalisco. One question, within the scope of the concept of transculturación, is what Yumanos traits carries the culture of the cowboy in Baja California? In the same area, it should be noted that the articulation between Yumanos and other sectors of the population continues to be a reality through conflict, as in the past it happened between nomads and sedentary, cattlemen and Yumanos. Here the concept of conflict itself becomes important and its study as the moment in which the transculturation operates with intensity, showing the parties their own organizational mechanisms and their capacities to transpose cultural traits.

The religious transculturation is another subject that is approached and that must be mentioned as an important factor to understand the processes of cultural revitalization. To this, the reinvention of identities through the struggle for land is associated, or at least I read, and recalls that the origin of the discipline of ethnohistory lies in the struggle that the Indians of North America claimed for their territories.

Finally the border is cleared even though it is there. It is diluted through a cultural renaissance resulting from emigration. In this process, women are the center of cultural revitalization, as the book shows. It is as the author says, the Yumano character who most evidences the cultural difference in carrying the ancestral wisdom of herbalism, ceramics, basketry and also, because it is the interlocutor with society and with the State. Here is a field of reflection that is waiting.

After reading *En donde sale el sol*, I agree with Everardo Garduño. I quote:

In conclusion, the Yumanos of Baja California are vigilant groups. From a nomadic tradition, hunter and gatherer, Cucapá, Kiliwa, Pa-ipai, Kumiai, Tipai and even Cochimíes, punctually contradict the apocalyptic versions of their extinction and cultural assimilation (p. 272).

This work shows the above. It shows that a new sun has emerged, made into the size of the vitality of Yumana culture, as one of the myths of creation I transcribe:

It is no use, said Komat, and if he was lenient, without saying a word, he began to mold his own sun with his hands, his own sun, resulting in a beautiful radiant, huge and warm sun which raised again with both hands, and making a great effort threw it towards the heavens, towards the East, so that from that time that robust luminous star began its eternal and daily journey from east to west (p. 121).

En donde sale el sol is the narrative of how a culture is reborn, returns to the world renewed and enriches a country as diverse as Mexico. We thank books as this one that stimulate anthropological research and places northwest Mexico as an important protagonist of the new sun that illuminates our discipline.