

Graciela Iturbide as Anthropological Photographer

STANLEY BRANDES

This article is a reflection on the images of Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide. Focusing on her portraits of indigenous peoples of Mexico (particularly the Seri, Isthmus Zapotec, and Mixtec), the author addresses the anthropological value of a body of visual material that is artistic, rather than documentary, in conception and execution. The article inquires into whether and to what extent the images of a professional photographer such as Iturbide can be considered ethnographic. In essence, the author argues, Iturbide may be thought of as an anthropological photographer, given that her work is of educational and inspirational value to ethnographers of Mexico. [Key words: gender, indigenous identity, Mexico]

Graciela Iturbide is indisputably one of Latin America's most celebrated photographers, admired and respected not only for her artistry, but also for her ability to get close to her subjects and reveal aspects of their lives that would be inaccessible or entirely invisible to the casual observer. Iturbide cannot be called an ethnographic, or even documentary, photographer. Because most of her photographic subjects are posed, she can hardly be called a street photographer either. And yet her photographs—particularly those dealing with her native Mexico—can prove extremely interesting and informative to any scholar with a concern for indigenous life. An exploration of Graciela Iturbide's Mexican photography calls into question the way photographers and visual anthropologists alike tend to classify imagery. Her work straddles genres of still photography as they are normally defined, thereby raising questions as to the kinds of imagery that anthropologists should consider relevant to their own research endeavors. The work also illuminates similarities and differences between anthropological photographers and other image-makers who focus on powerless, marginal members of society, thereby validating their lives as artistic or intellectually vibrant subjects.

Born in 1942 in Mexico City, Graciela Iturbide began her career in film making. She even briefly acted in movies. In 1970, after Iturbide's daughter died at the age of six in an accident, she underwent a personal crisis, abandoned the world of film, and began accompanying Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902–2002)—dean of Mexican

photography—on photographic expeditions. With support from Álvarez Bravo, she gradually became a professional photographer.

Iturbide's first major project, initiated in 1974, was the documentation of General Omar Torrijos' attempt to establish a left-wing regime in Panama. In 1978, together with Nacho López, Mariana Yaompolsky, and other well-known documentary photographers of Mexico, Iturbide received a commission from the National Indigenous Institute of Mexico (INI) to name an Indian group of her own choosing and, working in collaboration with a writer of her own choosing, produce a book about that group. Iturbide selected the Seri, a group of some 500 seminomadic people in the Sonora desert who were in the process of becoming entirely sedentary. The result of that project was a book entitled *Los que viven en la arena* (1981) (*Those Who Live in the Sand*), which she produced in collaboration with anthropologist Luis Barjau.

Following the Seri project, Iturbide began to devote her photography to the remote, rural, mainly indigenous peoples of her own country. In carrying out this work, she, as an elite urban Mexican, became virtually a tourist, or, more accurately, a quasi-anthropologist. Art critic Cuauhtémoc Medina remarks that "Iturbide belongs to a generation of Mexican and Latin American photographers who reactivated a passion for the discipline in the 1970s and 1980s, mostly from within so called 'ethnographic photography'" (Medina 2001:11). It is through her work that the indigenous peoples who form the

subjects of her main projects—principally the Seri, the Isthmus Zapotec, and the Mixtec—reveal themselves to us.

What seems curious about Iturbide's Mexican photographic corpus is that it does not fit into the mold of documentary imagery. She has never attempted to explore the entire way of life of a people or to reveal some hidden truth about them. Is it possible, then, to learn something substantial about Mexican society from Graciela Iturbide's photographs? Is she an "innate anthropologist," as some observers state (Medina 2001:3)? Or is there something about her artistry that convinces viewers that her work is designed to instruct them about indigenous Mexico?

Consider first the obvious conclusion: in terms of the professional definition, Graciela Iturbide clearly is not an anthropologist. She possesses neither formal anthropological training nor academic degrees in anthropology. Nor is her approach to her subject anthropological. Anthropologists pose questions of the world around them and carry out systematic research in an attempt to answer these questions. Anthropologists also build their arguments through reference to published work that precedes their own. Graciela Iturbide, whose photographic corpus is intimately personal and whose goals are primarily aesthetic, fails to conform to this scientific paradigm. Questions of cause and effect do not interest her. Nor does she seek to document reality.

And there is more that separates her from anthropologists. The professional ethnographer attempts to learn about and convey with as much fidelity as possible the economy, society, religion, and polity of the study population. Graciela Iturbide, by contrast, makes no pretense to providing her viewing public with a literal description of her photographic subjects. She renounces scientific goals outright. She reveals her lack of objectivity in a series of brilliant interviews conducted by writer and literary critic Fabienne Bradu (2003). "I do not produce photographs to provide instruction about the indigenous world or my country, nor to hear from others that they are good or bad," she says. "If [critics] like my results, that is fine. [Photography for me] is a passion, that is, an internal drive to take along the camera when I go out; it is like therapy" (Bradú and Iturbide 2003:35). In other words, Graciela Iturbide uses the camera as an instrument to satisfy her own inner needs. It is no surprise, then, that her work is above all personal, metaphoric, and intuitive. It communicates on an emotional rather than intellectual level. Without knowing something about the

culture of the people portrayed in her images, it is virtually impossible to understand them from an ethnographic or anthropological point of view.

The way we understand and interpret documentary photographs is through captions. Graciela Iturbide's captions are short and often cryptic. They locate photographic subjects geographically and denote in the simplest of fashions an object or a person figured in the image. But the captions offer no information that the viewer can rely upon to contextualize the unusual, frequently exotic portraits in any meaningful cultural way. On the other hand, the artistic power of the images stimulates the anthropological imagination. Iturbide's pictures operate on an emotional, rather than intellectual, level. It is above all their affective impact that points to something worth exploring from an ethnographic standpoint. Graciela's photographs raise questions about the society and culture of her subjects—questions which any serious ethnographer of Mexico, in particular, would want to explore.

It is for this reason, and others, that I would say that Graciela Iturbide is, in fact, an "innate anthropologist." Consider, first, that her photographic subjects are essentially the kind of people to whom anthropologists have traditionally given most attention: indigenous peoples, marginal peoples, forgotten peoples—and, most often among these groups, women. Regarding the Seri, who initially stimulated her interest in native peoples, Graciela states, "With the Seris . . . most of my work was portraits, because their daily life is extremely simple, nothing happens. Men go fishing, live in the desert, make sculptures; the women collect snails from the sea and create necklaces, but their life is very austere" (Bradú and Iturbide 2003:54).

Perhaps her most famous photograph from this project is the one she calls *Mujer angel* (Angel Woman), a ghostly female figure, viewed from behind as she rushes into the wilderness, clutching a radio/tape recorder in her right hand. Despite its beautiful and deeply mysterious composition, the story behind this picture is eminently anthropological, that is, anthropological once we learn of the context in which it was taken. Graciela informs us, via one of the Bradú interviews, that the image was shot from behind as this woman led her and a male friend into the desert to see ancient petroglyphs. Graciela confesses that she does not remember taking the picture. She even suspects that it was the friend who took it (Bradú and Iturbide 2003:54) (Figure 1).



FIGURE 1. *Mujer Ángel*. *Mujer ángel, desierto de Sonora, México*, by Graciela Iturbide. Gift of Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

We know from the Bradu interviews that the Seri were familiar with tourists, who would take color Polaroid pictures of them. These indigenous people, far from constituting a remote, isolated tribe, evidently lived in part from tourism. We can thus infer that Graciela's expedition into the desert was something familiar to the Seri, a tourist route they repeated many times with outsiders, who pursued them as photographic subjects. From just a few sentences in the Bradu interview we can begin to construct a context in which to understand the photograph ethnographically. The Seri are a desert people, dressed in indigenous garb (in reality, 19th-century Mexican women's costume), in the midst of transformation through tourism. The radio/recorder provides information about Seri commercial ties to the outside world and evidence of a nomadic group in the midst of change.

Angel Woman is an unusual photograph for Iturbide in that it portrays a subject in motion. Although, as stated earlier, she came to photography through film—and, in fact, was an award-winning actress—she states openly that “what I am most obsessed with is composition, the image, rather than time. For many others, to capture a moment is the most important [goal]; time is indispensable because it is movement. But, since I do not have many images in motion, time is of secondary importance to me” (Bradu and Iturbide 2003:55–56). With a few important exceptions, Graciela's photographs are individual portraits and, less frequently, group portraits. In this aspect, she varies dramatically from her Spanish friend and colleague, Cristina García Rodero, who classifies her own work as *retratos en acción* (portraits in action) (Brandes 2005).

This pattern is particularly evident in Iturbide's most famous photographic study of an indigenous Mexican people: the Zapotecs of Juchitán, located in the extreme south of the Republic along the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Here, as with the Seri, Iturbide does not strive to document these people as an anthropologist would—or, that is to say, as anthropologists already have done, for much has already been written about them. And yet her images, mainly posed portraits, not only engage the anthropological imagination. They also, if properly contextualized, provide ethnographic information, even though they almost always appear either without captions or with the briefest of labels.

Consider the image that Iturbide titles *El rapto* (The Abduction). A young girl lies in bed, her coverings adorned with flowers. To an untutored observer, the picture would seem to portray the victim of violent attack. Iturbide explains the actual meaning of the image thus:

The Abduction makes reference to a time when two youngsters from the countryside want to live together. The boy decides to abduct the girl, but the act is planned by both parties in concert. They go to the boy's house, where he deflowers her with his finger. The boy's family is aware that their son has the girl, but the girl's family is not, and the following morning, the boy's family looks to see if there is blood, if the girl really was a virgin. Then, there is a fiesta and they sing erotic songs, and seek out the girl's family. They show them the bloody handkerchief to prove that she was a virgin and that she was in fact deflowered . . . Afterwards, the girl remains in bed for



FIGURE 2. *Magnolia, Juchitán Oaxaca*, by Graciela Iturbide. Gift of Susan Steinhauer and Daniel Greenberg. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

a week and then the wedding ceremony is performed in church. [Bradú and Iturbide 2003:26–27]

Iturbide's portrait shows the girl during her week-long bed rest.

Any social anthropologist of Mexico knows about this sort of abduction as prelude to formal marriage vows (see, e.g., Brandes 1968; Stross 1974). Variations of the custom exist throughout the Mexican Republic, mainly under the name of "the *robo*" (theft). The practice existed until recently throughout southern Europe as well (e.g., Frigolé and Reixach 1982; Lockwood 1974). (In Spain it was called *llevarse la novia* [carry away the bride].) However, the specific form that the abduction takes among the Zapotec of Juchitán—the digital deflowering, the bed rest, and other details—is rare and perhaps even unique to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Iturbide's image arouses ethnographic curiosity, and her explanatory words, presented in an interview entirely

separate from the photograph itself, provide ethnographic information.

Other images from Juchitán illustrate already well-known ethnographic facts. Consider for a moment the portraits of Magnolia, a transvestite whom Iturbide befriended throughout her years among the Zapotec. Magnolia incontrovertibly belongs to a group of cross-dressers known throughout the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as *muxhes* (subject of a film by Alejandra Caro entitled *Muxes: Authentic, Intrepid Seekers of Danger*). The origin of the word *muxhe* is uncertain, but some scholars explain it as a local derivative of *mujer*, the Spanish word for woman. *Muxhes* constitute a prime ethnographic example of a third gender. (For others, see, e.g., Nanda 1999; Shore 1981.) Anthropologists generally consider the two sexes—male and female—to be defined by physiological attributes. But among many peoples, the Zapotec included, we find multiple genders, which are groups classified primarily according to behavioral and cultural characteristics, rather than anatomy alone (Figure 2).

Zapotecs consider *muxhes* to be neither men nor women, but rather a third gender, defined, as Analisa Taylor (2006:822) points out for the specific case of Oaxaca, primarily by their occupational roles. Among the people of Juchitán, *muxhes* are classified as such primarily for their domesticity, rather than their mode of dress or sexual orientation. (Various Native American groups in the United States possessed equivalent third-gender groups, known by the generic French term *berdaches* [Whitehead 1981].) The portraits of Magnolia provide anthropologists with a perfect illustration of how a *muxhe* actually looks. Because these portraits are posed, they also reveal *muxhe* self-image, or how that individual wants to be seen.

But Iturbide's photographic corpus from Juchitán not only reflects ethnographic reality. It has worked as well to shape perceptions of Zapotec society, especially with regard to gender. Take, for example, the photo entitled *La señora de las iguanas* (Lady of the Iguanas), which enjoys international fame not only for its stunning visual impact but also because it reinforces the popular view that Isthmus women constitute a kind of powerful Amazonian elite. Lady of the Iguanas, you will recall, is a head shot of a heavyset, middle-aged woman of proud countenance, gazing off in the distance. She seems entirely unfazed by the six or seven iguanas that writhe directly on top of her head (Figure 3).

In an interview with Fabienne Bradú, Iturbide explains that before she ever visited Juchitán, she heard that market women carry iguanas on their head. Once she got to the Isthmus, she caught sight of one such woman, got permission to take her picture, and in a series of spontaneous moments, managed to get in a few



FIGURE 3. *Nuestra Señora de las iguanas, Juchitán, Oaxaca*, by Graciela Iturbide. Gift of Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

shots. Iturbide admits that the single picture she chose for exhibition and publication represents her own biases and interpretation. “If anyone saw the contact sheet of the Lady of the Iguanas,” she says, “they would see that the woman is dying of laughter” (Bradú and Iturbide 2003:29, 30). Only in this one photo do the iguanas keep still and does the woman appear serious and contemplative. And yet this is the image that has become transformed into an international feminist icon. Iturbide further explains: “For the book on Juchitán, Elena Poniatowska wrote a text that, in its own right, is an interpretation. Many feminists in Japan or England, following the text of Elena Poniatowska, believed in the existence of a matriarchy in Juchitán and went there to interview the [actual] lady of the iguanas; and they asked her, ‘Are you a feminist?’ and Zoraida answered, ‘Of course I’m a feminist. Ever since my husband died, I support myself.’ In this fashion,” concludes Iturbide, “many myths are created” (Bradú and Iturbide 2003: 28–29). Graciela’s images almost always permit multiple interpretations, thereby satisfying, as she puts it, “the fantasy of each viewer” (Bradú and Iturbide 2003:29).

And fantasies are likely to be most vivid in the domain that seems most central to Graciela’s work: the anthropologically popular theme of gender. It is easy to interpret

her work as aiming to challenge stereotypes of the submissive, self-deprecating, abject Mexican woman. Certainly, *Juchitán* seems in part designed toward this end. Aside from the iconic Woman of the Iguanas, there are pictures of nude and seminude women—one is seated on a toilet bathing, another stands on the beach in her underwear, a third peers directly into the camera as she stands in a doorway entirely undressed. Another series of shots shows women openly imbibing alcohol. A seated woman of substantial size chuckles as she brings a beer bottle close to her mouth. Yet another scene shows a scantily clad young woman looking into the camera as she lies in a seductive posture on top of a bed. Iturbide’s images of the Isthmus Zapotec, according to Analisa Taylor, “invariably center upon the piercing gaze of self-assured Indian women” (2006:830). All of these images defy the usual stereotypes of feminine ideals in Mexico, symbolized most dramatically by the purity and sheer selflessness of the Virgin of Guadalupe as well as by the abject subjugation of Hernán Cortés’s consort, la Malinche. In fact, as Analisa Taylor (2006:833–836) states, photographic images such as these, in which women of a single Indian group are portrayed as forward and aggressive, function to reinforce the stereotypic representation of the submissive woman who prevails throughout Mexico generally.

This is not to say that Iturbide’s images fail to capture Mexican women as we conceive of them stereotypically. In the photographic corpus of Graciela Iturbide, women of all ages are depicted in association with supernatural imagery. We see young girls dressed as angels, as well as the *Mujer angel* herself—the Seri Angel Woman from the Sonoran desert—interpreted for the viewer as an angel, albeit lacking artificial wings. A woman from Chiapas draped in a black rebozo, her head tilted to one side and bearing an anguished countenance, seems to imitate the Virgin as she appears in thousands of paintings of the crucifixion. Several photographs of women from Juchitán show them highlighted against a background that mimics the rays of the sun—rays not unlike those that surround the Virgin of Guadalupe. In one image, the rays are actually the marks of a badly defaced wall. In another, they are a bundle of straw, which the woman carries on her back. Not all of the sacred imagery derives from Catholic tradition. A well-known portrait shows an old Zapotec *curandera* (healer), applying her supernatural gifts by grasping the head of a young girl (Figure 4).

In the imagery of Graciela Iturbide, just as in the popular imagination, women are more closely allied with the supernatural world than are men. At the same time, they are intimately tied to the natural world. Sherry Ortner long ago posited that societies all over the world associate women with nature and men with culture



FIGURE 4. *Curación, Juchitán, Oaxaca*, by Graciela Iturbide. Gift of Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

(Ortner 1972). It is not, as Ortner says, that women are in fact closer to nature. Rather, they are thought to be more natural than are men, governed more by biological processes like reproduction and devoted to satisfying the family's physical needs. In *Juchitán*, as in other photographic projects, Graciela illustrates natural woman: woman as nursing mother, woman as caregiver to children, woman as bride, woman as preparer of food. Iturbide's photographs of the goat slaughter among the Mixtec Indians, entitled "In the Name of the Father," focus on the woman's role in what the artist considers a sacrificial rite. Women prepare the goats for slaughter, but men do the actual killing. After the goat's throat is slit, it is the woman who bends down with a pail to collect the spurting blood—a role in animal slaughters that women have performed at least since the time Peter Breughel the Elder painted similar scenes from the 16th-century Flemish peasant life. On numerous occasions, during the 1960s and 1970s, I myself observed women collecting blood during the annual pig slaughter in rural Spain.



FIGURE 5. *Los pollos, Juchitán, Oaxaca*, by Graciela Iturbide. Gift of Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

The goat slaughter is just the most dramatic example of an important theme that pervades Graciela Iturbide's entire corpus: the connection between women and animals. Seri women are shown from behind, standing on the beach holding fish. An Isthmus Zapotec woman peers from her window, four fish dangling delicately from her fingers. A young woman from central Mexico, dressed as a mermaid, is surrounded by artificial fish that float around her in a terrestrial recreation of the sea. Then, too, we see Zapotec women holding iguanas on their lap and standing alongside a giant wooden replica of an iguana. Women are portrayed carrying chickens, dismembering rabbits, and disguising themselves with, in one instance, a bull's head, in another a giant crab, each held up to the face as if it were a mask. Through this imagery the women are transformed into half-human/half-animal creatures, which is to say, into humans who are integral parts of nature (Figure 5).

It would be unfair to say that Graciela Iturbide's photography is guided by a notion of the strict division between men and women. Her imagery is too varied and complex to allow for simple binary oppositions. For that

matter, her mission is not simply to portray women who defy the usual image of *la mujer abnegada* (self-sacrificing woman), as many of Iturbide's portraits of Zapotec and Mixtec Indians actually do. Men and women alike appear in photographs replete with religious symbolism. Both gender groups appear alongside animals as well. Probably the most famous example of a man associated with animals is the photograph entitled "Lord of the Birds," which shows an elderly caretaker and sole human occupant of an island in the state of Nayarit. He peers up at a sky filled with dozens of gulls in flight. The pointed collars of the caretaker's jacket extend outward into the wind. They mimic wings and give him a birdlike aspect that makes him one with the creatures flying above.

In Iturbide's photographic corpus, men and women rarely appear in the same photograph. In fact, she focuses altogether more on women than on men. Her women are often interpreted as strong, proud, and stately, although I find numerous images where they display weakness, humility, or a downright playful approach to life. One example is the photograph from Juchitán entitled *Quince años*, in which a young girl with a very serious face stands looking straight into the camera, while an old woman with long white hair sits stoop-backed at her side, with no visual communication between the two. Another famous image shows an old woman, looking very small as she stands in one lonely corner of a large, empty room. Iturbide's female world admits of no generalities. Each portrait conveys an individual spirit and life rather than a faceless gender role. Like an anthropologist, she explores aspects of indigenous life in all its rich religious and cultural symbolism. But she above all seeks to reveal, not the beliefs and behavior of any particular tribe, but rather the emotional texture of each unique person, regardless of ethnic identity. In so doing, she transcends descriptions of a given people and communicates the range of emotion and activity common to all humanity.

Iturbide's photographs in fact reflect her own ability to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. In this respect, she fulfills a goal that most social anthropologists strive to attain. Nearly a century ago, one of the great founders of our discipline, Bronislaw Malinowski, established the basic principles of anthropological fieldwork (Malinowski 1961:1–25). These include sharing the life of the people under investigation, taking up long residence among them, and communicating in the native language. The single overriding end of the anthropologist, according to Malinowski, is to see and convey the world through the eyes of the people themselves. Through the process of anthropological investigation, the strange becomes familiar and the familiar becomes strange.

Iturbide's procedures in the field consciously or unconsciously replicate those of the anthropologist.

I say consciously or unconsciously because, as stated earlier, she undertook her first major photographic study in Mexico among the Seri in collaboration with an anthropologist, Luis Barjau. The result of this project—*Los que viven en la arena* (Those Who Live in the Sand [Iturbide and Barjau 1981])—is a truly joint anthropological and photographic venture. It is uncertain whether working together with an anthropologist actually influenced Iturbide's photographic style and methods. But there is no doubt that she holds in common with anthropologists the desire to share the life of the people she studies. She furthermore understands that this methodology, however deliberate and slow, is the surest avenue to achieving her photographic goals.

Now let us listen to Iturbide's own description of how she came to work among the women of Juchitán:

I was lucky that in 1979 Francisco Toledo called me and offered me the opportunity to go to Juchitán What he wanted was for me to take photos so that my work would return later to the Juchitán Cultural Center. I went there to live for prolonged periods of time In Juchitán, I went to the market, I stayed with the women, those strong, fat, politicized, emancipated, marvelous women. I discovered the world of women. I tried to spend all my time with them and they volunteered to me a certain amount of protection. Of course, the fact of being a woman gave me access to their daily life and traditions. [Bradú and Iturbide 2003:25–26]

Iturbide's account of her life in Juchitán shows that the Zapotec women she came to know were more than photographic subjects. They were collaborators in her work and, perhaps more importantly, friends. She states:

They're strong women, physically large, and the whole time they were telling jokes and erotic tales in Zapotec—at times they translated for me, at times not I lived in their houses. They cared for me, they took me to the market, they in a way adopted me. They allowed me to take photos and notified me of fiestas. I went with them on eight hour-long pilgrimages. They taught me, for example, about the properties of the alligator, which is another Juchitán tradition, which few people know and which survives in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It wasn't only that they gave me permission to take pictures, but also that they took initiative and showed me things. I came to describe Juchitán through their eyes, but at the same time through mine It was thus that I entered into the Zapotec world. [Bradú and Iturbide 2003:30–31]

In the interview from which these words are extracted, Fabienne Bradu asks Iturbide, "What did the indigenous world give you as a person, rather than as an artist?" Iturbide's response: "Knowledge of the culture of my country and consciousness of marginality. From [those women] I learned that their culture is different from mine. It changed me to learn that there exist other worlds, remote from and at the same time close to us . . . I probably learned to see a bit through their eyes" (Bradu and Iturbide 2003:38).

A professional anthropologist's response to Bradu's question would probably be close to that of Iturbide's. In one project after another—among the Seri, the Zapotec, and the Mixtec Indians—Iturbide managed to enter the world of indigenous peoples in precisely the way that an anthropologist would—by sharing their life and acquiring their vision. And this approach yielded the kind of intimate knowledge and respect for people as individuals that one expects of any responsible ethnographer.

What is more, Iturbide's imagery reflects themes that anthropologists of Mexico, in particular, have made a priority: gender, ritual and religion, and death. Among Iturbide's corpus are important works concerning death, particularly people dressed in skeleton costumes, and the famous pregnant bride wearing a death mask, who is in reality a man. These photographs, states Iturbide, "concern Mexican fantasies about death, and surely my own as well" (Bradu and Iturbide 2003:36). Iturbide has never published a long-planned photographic essay on death, because, as she says, "I was afraid to confront death" (Bradu and Iturbide 2003:46). And yet it was the death of her young daughter that seems to have diverted her from her original cinematic projects and thrust her into the mentorship of Manuel Álvarez Bravo—the late dean of Mexican photography—and from there permanently into the world of photography. Photography, her own form of therapy, became the means by which she could transcend her immediate life circumstances, and show her audience a Mexico that even we anthropologists could barely imagine.

Acknowledgments

An earlier version of this article was presented at a public seminar dedicated to the Mexican photography of Graciela Iturbide, held at the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles on March 7, 2008, and sponsored by the J. Paul Getty Trust. The seminar was conducted in conjunction with an extensive exhibition of the artist's work. I wish to thank Peter Tokofsky for suggesting useful bibliography and stimulating my interest in this topic, as well as Jane Brandes for comments leading to stylistic improvements in the composition of this article. Peter Tokofsky at the Education Department of the Getty Center and Jennifer Robinson at the Communications Department of the Getty Center deserve enormous thanks for helping to bring this publication to light.

References

- Bradu, Fabienne, and Graciela Iturbide
2003 Graciela Iturbide habla con Fabienne Bradu. Madrid: La Fábrica y Fundación Telefónica.
- Brandes, Stanley
1968 Tzintzuntzan Wedding: A Study in Cultural Complexity. *Papers of the Kroeber Anthropological Society* 39:30–53.
2005 Retratos en acción: La España de Cristina García Rodero. In *Maneras de mirar: Lecturas antropológicas de la fotografía*. Carmen Ortiz García, Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, and Antonio Cea Gutiérrez, eds. Pp. 229–244. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
- Frigolé Reixach, Juan
1982 Estrategias matrimoniales e identidad sociocultural en la sociedad rural: "llevarse la novia" y "casarse" en un pueblo de la Vega Alta de Segura. *Agricultura y Sociedad* 24(2):71–109.
- Iturbide, Graciela, and Luis Barjau
1981 Los que viven en la arena. Mexico, D.F.: INI-Fonapas.
- Lockwood, William G.
1974 Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia. *Anthropological Quarterly* 47(3):253–269.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw
1961 [1922] *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Medina, Cuauhtémoc
2001 Introduction. In Graciela Iturbide. Pp. 2–15. London: Phaidon Press.
- Nanda, Serena
1999 *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Ortner, Sherry B.
1972 Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture? *Feminist Studies* 1:5–31.
- Shore, Bradd
1981 Sexuality and Gender in Samoa: Conceptions and Missed Conceptions. In *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, eds. Pp. 192–215. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stross, Brian
1974 Tzeltal Marriage by Capture. *Anthropological Quarterly* 47(3):328–346.
- Taylor, Analisa
2006 Malinche Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31(3):815–840.
- Whitehead, Harriet
1981 The Bow and the Burden Strap: A New Look at Institutionalized Homosexuality in Native North America. In *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, eds. Pp. 80–115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.