3

Becoming Frida

Latinidad and the Production of Latina Authenticity

Central to mainstream media representations of Latinidad is the production of ethnic authenticity, of an authentic ethnic or panethnic identity often grounded in familiar and marketable characteristics. Furthermore, media produced by U.S. ethnic and racial minorities equally depend on a mode of "strategic essentialism" to produce authenticity. In the next two chapters, I build on Juana María Rodríguez's discussion of strategic essentialism as the reduction of "identity categories to the most readily decipherable marker around which to mobilize" to map out the discourse of Latinidad in global film and television shows produced by Latinas.[1] While the notion of strategic essentialism was initially coined by Gayatri Spivak[2] and has most readily been used by postcolonial scholars interested in studying how identity is used by activists to disrupt Western ethnic, racial, and gender hierarchies, I engage contemporary media to think through the uneasy deployment of strategic essentialism by Latina mainstream media producers, such as Mexican actor Salma Hayek, to manufacture ethnic authenticity as a representational intervention in to the mainstream.

In the case of the movie *Frida*, I examine Hayek's use of strategic essentialism to mobilize Mexican ethnic authenticity, which must then be negotiated by U.S. and Mexican media and audiences that foreground their identity discourses. That is to say, the movie itself, publicity about the movie, and Salma Hayek's role as lead actor and producer were all invested in promoting a definition of Mexican authenticity that situated the movie and Hayek's performance as unique and different from traditional Hollywood fare about Latinas and Latinidad. Nevertheless, analysis of English- and Spanish-language media coverage and Internet discussion boards about the movie illustrates a more complex reading of Latina identity and Mexican authenticity.

The reduction of complexity embedded in the "myth of authenticity," to borrow Gareth Griffiths' words, is a problematic but integral signifying practice in the effective global commodification of Latinidad.[3] Media stories

grounded in authenticity inevitably rely on constructions of identity based on reductive assumptions that homogenize cultural practices and reify racial differences. Thus, media practices that define one Latina as more "real" or "legitimate" than another inevitably participate in symbolic colonization by reproducing dominant norms, values, and beliefs about Latinidad. Consequently, global media produced by Latinas based on mainstream signifying practices of ethnic authenticity are especially scrutinized by audiences. Because of an environment in which Latinas remain generally underrepresented in the media, there are perpetual conflicts over what iconic Latina figures may be represented, by which ethnic and racial groups, and under what cultural conditions.[4] Such was the case for *Frida*. Mexican newspaper and online audience discussions about Hayek and *Frida* challenged the cinematic and publicity constructions of Mexican authenticity by circulating competing definitions of ethnic identity. Therefore, I begin the chapter with a discussion of how Frida Kahlo scholars imagine the artist's identity to contextualize Hayek's publicity campaign and the movie's representation of ethnic authenticity. The complex public response to Hayek and *Frida*'s production of ethnic authenticity is explored in the last half of the chapter, which turns to an online discussion board and the U.S. Latina/o and Mexican media coverage about Hayek and the movie.

The chapter analyzes interviews with Hayek and director Julie Taymor in the mainstream and U.S. Latina/o media. Specifically, I collected movie reviews, stories about the movie, and personality profiles through the Ethnic NewsWatch (ENW) database. Of the twenty-six Latina/o newspapers available on ENW, some are independently owned and geared to a specific ethnic audience, such as San Diego's *La Prensa*, which is primarily aimed at U.S. Mexicans and is owned by a Mexican American family. Others are owned by English-language chains, such as Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*, a former Knight Ridder (now McClatchy) property primarily aimed at U.S. Cubans. To further trouble the movie's representation of authenticity, I also examined 2002 news and editorial coverage about the film from two Mexico City newspapers, *Reforma* and *La Crónica de Hoy*.[5] Together these U.S. Latina/o and Mexico City news, reviews, and opinion stories are part of the pre- and postproduction machinery that influence a film's domestic and global success or failure. Lastly, included in the analysis is one discussion thread from the Internet Movie Database Web site (www.IMDb.com). Of the eighty-eight discussion threads on the IMDb *Frida* Web page, this chapter's analysis focuses on the longest-running and most relevant discussion thread, "Another case of the 'prostitution of mexican culture' " (sic).[6] Unlike the other discussion threads

that were short in duration (from two to fifteen postings) and covered such mundane topics as the soundtrack or nudity in the film, the postings in "Another case" remained active for more than a year and dealt explicitly with authenticity and the commodification of ethnic identity in the film. The discussion thread provides access, albeit problematically, to how audiences interpreted, negotiated, or contested the film's production of ethnic identity through their individual constructions of self.[7] Examining the process through which Kahlo's life story is translated through the global media and negotiated by audiences provides insight into the representational complexities surrounding representations of ethnicity, gender, and national identity.

Imagining Frida Kahlo

Born Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón in 1907 to a middle-class Catholic mother of Mexican descent and a bourgeois Jewish father of German descent, Kahlo attended elite private schools until she was eighteen, when a bus accident left her crippled and critically wounded. During her convalescence, she began painting portraits of her family and herself (a majority of Kahlo's paintings are self-portraits). Kahlo's folkloric *retablo*-style surrealist paintings became the first by a Mexican woman to be exhibited in New York, Paris, and Mexico. When Kahlo died in 1954 (there is disagreement over whether she died from natural causes or an intentional morphine overdose), she was such a revered Mexican cultural and political figure that her coffin was wrapped in the communist flag and lay in state in Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, the same theater where *Frida* premiered in November 2002. Despite her national fame in Mexico, it was Hayden Herrera's 1983 biography that brought Kahlo's introspective paintings—often dealing with life-altering events such as miscarriages, abortions, sexual infidelities, and the near-fatal bus accident—to the international arena.[8]

According to Herrera, Kahlo liked to play with notions of identity, making up bits about her life or replacing older accounts with more novel and interesting versions. Herrera argues that Kahlo often responded to questions about her age, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality with answers that differed depending on her reading of the interviewer's identity. Kahlo was also consciously self-aware of her selection of clothing and performance of beauty, Herrera suggests. For example, Kahlo often wore men's clothing during the periods when she was disenchanted with her husband and famous muralist, Diego Rivera, and mostly wore indigenous clothing and jewelry when she was interacting with non-Mexicans or traveling outside Mexico. Both prac-

tices, Herrera claims, allowed Kahlo to emotionally and politically distance herself from others through a visual and symbolic othering that could not be ignored by those around her.

Therefore, because of the fluidity with which Kahlo approached her life and identity, the lack of consensus about the details of her life is not surprising.[9] The most popular account of Kahlo's life is based on Herrera's biography, which maintains the authentic Kahlo was a woman obsessed with a desire for children, her husband, and his artistic and political work. However, feminist art critics and Chicana/o scholars present an alternative reading of Kahlo's life, sexuality, and femininity. Instead of emphasizing Kahlo's devotion to Rivera, contemporary Kahlo scholars focus on her individual work within Mexico's Communist Party in support of land redistribution; her political support for the nationalization of private industries; and her personal involvement in the United Front for Women's Rights group, one of Mexico's earliest feminist organizations.[10] Additionally, feminist art scholars suggest that a closer analysis of Kahlo's art and personal documents actually reveal a more ambivalent sexuality and desire for children.[11] Interestingly, Emma Hurtado, Rivera's last spouse and longtime administrator of Rivera's and Kahlo's estates, maintained strict control of Kahlo's personal documents—perhaps in an attempt to carefully manage Kahlo's life story. Regardless, most feminist art historians and cultural critics agree that Kahlo's life and art challenge normative constructions of gender, sexuality, and national identity.[12]

I begin this chapter by pointing out the disagreement over Kahlo's life story to show that, despite the lack of consensus about the artist's authentic life or identity, the characterization of Kahlo as an anti-establishment, defiant rule-breaker remains consistently romanticized within global popular culture—making her an alluring and profitable multicultural and political icon for contemporary audiences invested in multicultural identity politics.[13] Kahlo is often invoked as a strategic essentializing symbol of difference for multiple identity communities (feminist, queer, Chicana/o, among others) precisely because she vexed stable notions of identity through her art and life. To early Chicana/o activists, Kahlo's Mexican identity, anti-imperialist/capitalist politics, and performance of indigenous Mexican culture affirmed the movement's politics based on recuperating Mexico's mythologized indigenous empire and celebrating the indigenous racial heritage of U.S.-born or incorporated Mexicans. Similarly, in the 1970s, feminist and queer activists also laid claim to Kahlo by emphasizing her bisexuality, gender-bending behavior, and the personal themes of her paintings as symbols of female strength and early feminist consciousness. Kahlo's body and art become markers of

a collective ethnic, gender, and sexual difference that can be used to create cultural and political communities. They function as symbols of Chicana, Latina, postcolonial feminist resistance to patriarchal oppression, U.S. imperialism and, more recently, Western-led globalization. As a stand-in for the nation and national desires, in the words of Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallen, Kahlo is an "iconic signifier for the material, the passive, and the corporeal, to be worshipped, protected, and controlled by those with the power to remember and to forget, to guard, to define and redefine."[14] She stands in for and against the nation. The question becomes: In a global media environment, who has the power to imagine Kahlo's place within the nation?

Performing 'Frida'

I answer the question of who has the power to imagine Kahlo by first analyzing the work of producer and star Hayek and director Julie Taymor in depicting a profitable and particular narrative of ethnic, specifically Mexican, authenticity grounded in the signifying practices of strategic essentialism.[15] *Frida* is Taymor's most profitable cinematic directorial project and Hayek's most acclaimed cinematic role, culminating in Hayek's 2003 Oscar nomination for best actress. Before *Frida*, Taymor's most successful directorial project was the 1997 Broadway production of *The Lion King*. Throughout the past twenty years, several high-profile entertainment figures (Madonna, Jennifer Lopez) explored the possibility of producing a film about Kahlo. Hayek and her U.S.-based production company, Ventanarosa Productions, won the race to produce Kahlo's story in 2002 by bringing the English-language movie to the silver screen. Since its U.S. premiere in November 2002, the $12 million low-budget art-house movie has earned almost $26 million in U.S. box office receipts and another $30 million in worldwide receipts.[16] Hayek's and Taymor's production of the film, which is largely based on Herrera's work,[17] is central to understanding the global performance of ethnic authenticity by Latina producers working in the mainstream media.

To better understand the cultural and political economic context surrounding *Frida*'s production, it must be situated within the global production of culture.[18] Rather than positioning Hollywood at the center of cinematic production, most movies today are produced by a transnational industry. Therefore, Hollywood plays a central but not exclusive role in the production and consumption of cultural work. The transnational flow of people, audiences, labor, and capital requires that cinematic productions sell tickets and DVDs not only in their home country but also in other markets. Among others, one of the

key markets central to the success of Hollywood-based productions is Mexico and Latin America. Media analysts predict that Latin American audiences will eventually produce more than $1.6 billion in revenue, with Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina accounting for more than 88 percent of that market.[19] Thus, the flow of people, images, labor, and capital through the movie industry does not move exclusively from west to east or north to south. With the profitable rise of the Asian, Indian, and Latin American movie markets and industries, it is starting to move in the opposite direction, from south to north and east to west.

Movies in particular are created through global production teams and sites and marketed with an eye toward worldwide distribution. As such, movie profits increasingly depend on international creative labor and ticket sales from global audiences. The production, marketing, and reception of *Frida* are then no different from other films. Most of *Frida* was filmed in Mexico by award-winning Mexican cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto (*Brokeback Mountain*, *Babel*, *21 Grams*); the much-touted animation effects were produced in a German studio by two German computer graphic artists; and the movie itself was edited at a Hollywood studio and directed by a white U.S. woman. A multinational media conglomerate, Walt Disney Corporation, financed, distributed, and marketed the art-house film through its subsidiaries Miramax International Films and Buena Vista International Films. The movie's top grossing markets were the United States, Mexico, and Germany.

The context that surrounds today's cinematic movie production and reception is what makes *Frida* especially interesting for this book. Hayek and Taymor strategically produced a very particular construction of Mexican identity as authentic to attain the broadest global commercial and artistic success. By highlighting the connections between Kahlo and Mexico's indigenous culture as well as Hayek's Mexican nationality, *Frida*'s director and producers strategically essentialize both Hayek's and Kahlo's identities to tell the story and promote the movie. The next two sections examine Hayek's deployment of her physicality and nationality to authenticate her performance of Kahlo, while Taymor called upon established Hollywood signifying practices for performing Latinidad to produce a recognizable representation of an authentic Mexican identity.

Salma's Frida

Without *Frida*, Salma Hayek's career might have been relegated to the unidimensional terrain of Latina stereotypes—one more emotionally unpredictable, sexually voluptuous, thickly accented Latina appearing in Hollywood

movies such as *Desperado* (1995), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996), *Fools Rush In* (1997), *54* (1998), and *Wild Wild West* (1999). In these movies, which are similar to other movies that incorporate secondary ambiguously coded Latina characters, Hayek's career exemplifies the enduring legacy of the cinematic gendering and racialization of Latinidad. Depictions of Latinas with olive skin, long dark hair, brown eyes, and Spanish accents call upon familiar visual and linguistic signifiers of Latina identity—what Arlene Dávila termed the "Latin look."[20] Hayek acknowledges that before *Frida*, she was often typecast as the "bikini girl," a modern version of the Latina spitfire. Hayek reprised the Latina "bikini girl" role in at least three of her more successful films: *54*, *Desperado*, and *Wild Wild West*.[21] In each of these films, Hayek portrays a sexually attractive, emotionally temperamental Latina who speaks Spanish at the angry drop of a hat. As such, these roles depend on the use of cinematic practices that symbolically colonize Latinidad through a gendering and racialization that subverts the economic, religious, and cultural multiplicity among Latina and Mexican American communities in the United States.

I argue that Hayek's national origin, national identity, and Spanish-accented English situate her within the Latin look yet keep her outside whiteness. Unlike Jennifer Lopez, Hayek's ability to move between cinematic representations of ethnic or racial specificity, such as in *Fools Rush In* where she plays a U.S. Mexican, and representations of ethnic or racial ambiguity, such as *54* where she plays a panethnic Latina, is constrained by the issue of language or, more specifically, linguistic accent. Hayek's Spanish-accented English and Mexican identity racialize her as nonwhite within U.S. racial formations. Her Mexican ethnicity marks her as brown, calling forth her Otherness, and bringing to bear upon her body a history of dominant Western signifiers about Latinidad. Together with Hayek's archetypical Latin look, her accent taps into popular cinematic representations of Mexicans from south of the border as hot, spicy, and exotic.

Indeed, English-language entertainment news coverage about Hayek often characterizes her through familiar media signifiers of Latinidad—such as the teaser for Hayek's February 2003 *Vanity Fair* interview, "The Fire and Passion of Salma Hayek" (*Salma* is spelled in bold red letters); the October 2002 *Cleveland Call and Post* footer, "Showtime goes to the canvas with the spicy superstar"; the July 1999 *in Style* headline "Salma likes it hot"; or the July 1999 *George* headline, "Mexican firecracker." Hayek's accented English is such a primary sign of her exotic otherness that when profiling her, journalists often emphasize her accent as much as they do other personality characteristics. For example, in a September 2002 *Premiere* story about *Frida*, the

reporter wrote out Hayek's accented pronunciations: "She starts to speak in her sing-songy voice—vowels are stretching, R's are rolling. 'We work in the *gaaarden*. We have Chai *teeeas* when we were on the phone or working on a script. We have lunch *outsiiiide*, with *sangriiia*.'"[22] Together with the reporter's descriptions of Hayek's curvaceous body and exotic looks, journalistic discussions of her accent contribute to the racialized hypersexualization of Latina identity.

Because Hayek cannot erase the linguistic accent that defines her as a racialized ethnic Other in the United States, the roles offered to her by Hollywood producers have been limited. Commenting on the sexualized typecasting that dominated her early roles, Hayek once said:

> That sexual side is a very small part of me. But those characters were more a reflection of how other people saw me—it's more about who they are. I used to whine and complain about it. And then I said, no more. I was done sitting around complaining that I am the victim of a society that doesn't like my accent because it reminds them of their service people.[23]

Without explicitly saying so, Hayek links the hypersexualization of her early roles with industry perceptions of her accent. She acknowledges that in California her accent is associated with Mexican domestic workers, an ethnoracial group that is racialized as nonwhite. Not only does her accent racialize her identity, but it also sexualizes it. In a profile of the actor, *Latina* magazine summarized Hayek's career in this way: "When she arrived in Hollywood, the industry didn't take her seriously: to them she was just a Mexican soap opera star with a heavy accent who could never play anything but a caricature."[24] Hayek's accent and body limited her to one-dimensional roles, the article goes on to suggest.

Although most audiences would categorize Hayek as phenotypically white—and so theoretically capable of performing the same range of roles as Jennifer Lopez—Hayek's accented English and Mexican origin reinforce ethnoracial hierarchies of identity in the United States. Even Hayek recognizes that her accent situates her as foreign, specifically as Mexican. Hayek, like other Mexican and Puerto Rican female actors with linguistic accents, is ultimately constrained by Hollywood's conservative typecasting culture regarding language.[25] Angharad Valdivia argues that linguistic accents, more so than any other racial signifier, have limited the Hollywood careers of stars such as Hayek and Rosie Perez.[26] The accents mark their ethnicity as "non-American" and code them as racially nonwhite. As Puerto Rican and Mexican women, their identities are already racialized as exotic and nonwhite in ways that, for instance, Penélope Cruz's accent and identity as a European is not. Hayek's and Perez's accents, alongside their national origins as Mexican and Puerto Rican, reinforce their status as outside the U.S. imagined nation, especially in the contemporary anti-immigration context.

Language and nationalistic ethnic discourses are precisely at the core of Hayek's effort to transform her Hollywood image. Through her performance of Kahlo, Hayek attempts a move away from the "bikini girl" by redefining Latina cinematic archetypes and opening a more diverse representational space for Latina/o actors. Part of the driving force behind Hayek's production company, Ventanarosa, which translates into "rose-colored window," is a desire to provide an outlet for more nuanced Latina images and stories. Discussing her motivation for producing *Frida*, Hayek explained:

> As an actor, I would like to be able to have a voice in order to talk about what interests me. [*Frida*] is a conviction, an extraordinary woman with an extraordinary story. It was worth telling this story, which develops during a Mexican era in which my country was a very interesting place. Actually it still is, but this is a part of Mexico that few people know about. So I was very passionate about telling the story of the heroes that I grew up with. I wanted the world to know that.[27]

Since *Frida*, Hayek has engaged in a variety of Latina/o-themed productions. She directed Showtime's *The Maldonado Miracle* (2003), a coming-of-age story about a young Mexican boy, and she starred in as well as co-produced *In the Time of the Butterflies* (2001), a cinematic version of Julia Alvarez's highly acclaimed historical novel about three feminist Dominican revolutionaries. Most recently, she co-produced and acted in ABC's *Ugly Betty*. Regardless, it is the role of Frida Kahlo that Hayek claimed as hers and worked for more than eight years to bring to fruition. Hayek's motivations for producing the film are not all political. The movie provided the actor with an opportunity to establish her credentials as a serious actor and producer.

Evidenced in Hayek's publicity campaign for the movie is the actor's ambivalent relationship to Latinidad—wanting to claim her place within Latinidad and simultaneously resisting its U.S. ethnoracial connotations. Indeed, Hayek has traditionally rejected the ethnoracial U.S. label "Latina" in favor of the more Europeanized identity "Latin." Hayek, whose father is of Lebanese descent, often unequivocally defines her heritage as Mexican.

She wields her accent and Spanish fluency as privileged signs of her Mexican or "Latin" authenticity. Nevertheless, Hayek often seeks to distinguish herself as different from other Latina actors, actors such as Jennifer Lopez and Rosie Perez, by marketing herself and her production company as authentically Latin. Because Lopez and Perez were born in the United States and cannot speak Spanish fluently, Hayek argues they are not Latin. Ignoring Lopez's and Perez's self-identification as Nuyoricans, Latinas or Hispanics, Hayek conflates the ethnoracial label *Latina* with the label *Latin* and then calls into question their right to claim or be claimed as Latin. In a July 2001 article in *el Andar* magazine, for instance, Hayek employs the politics of language to define her Latina authenticity and devalue Jennifer Lopez's: "'Her [Jennifer Lopez's] Spanish is very bad,' Hayek said, even though both films were in English, and 'now it's very convenient, because when she has to be Latin, she's Latin.'"[28] Throughout Hayek's publicity tour for *Frida*, she consistently engaged in nationalistic arguments based on language to differentiate between real and fake Latins (Latinas). Engaging language as a tool for marketing her identity in relationship to U.S. Latinas, Hayek claimed her right to perform the role of *Frida*. Thus, she turns her linguistic accent, a racialized marker of ethnic Otherness in the United States, into a marketable cinematic signifier of authenticity, particularly important for the biopic genre usually evaluated on its reproduction of realism. Hayek reframes her Spanish accent as desirable and indeed necessary for the realism of the film. In fact, all of the movie's actors speak Spanish-accented English to establish the movie's Mexican or ethnic mise-en-scène as well as make the movie more accessible for English-speaking audiences—an imperative of global Hollywood.

In combination with language, Hayek foregrounds her national origin as Mexican and her physical similarity to Kahlo as further evidence of her and the movie's authenticity. In an interview with *Vanity Fair* about her version of the biopic, Hayek explains why she was able to embody the famous artist with so much skill and authenticity: "She was very graceful and feminine. We have the same bone structure, and she was my size. I put on her clothes—maybe I am a half-inch taller."[29] Hayek's emphasis on her physical likeness to Kahlo allows her to claim that she is the authentic spiritual descendant and biological embodiment of the artist. For Hayek, her Mexican identity, Spanish fluency, and physical resemblance to Kahlo reinforce her ethnic authenticity. Not surprisingly, Hayek routinely called attention to her nationality and resemblance to Kahlo in publicity for the movie, such as this story in *Hispanic* magazine:

> Hayek, who fought for nearly a decade to get the movie made (beating out rival projects led by Jennifer Lopez and Madonna), obviously feels a personal connection to her subject: Her magnetic performance is not so much an impersonation of Kahlo as it is top-to-bottom inhabitation, channeling the artist's pride, determination, sexuality and brash, defiant spirit.[30]

Picking up on arguments by the movie's lead actor, director, and producers, ethnic authenticity cannot be performed by any actor (Latina or not), it must be performed through a "personal connection" facilitated through the "real" body of another Mexican woman. Hayek, not Madonna or Jennifer Lopez, is the authentic ethnic or, more specifically, the biologically authentic Mexican woman.

Frida's promotional campaign is grounded in strategic essentialist arguments about authenticity based on unsustainable biological definitions of race and nation. Hayek's performance of ethnic authenticity ultimately elides the complexity of identities in Mexico, Latin America, the United States, and elsewhere.[31] In other words, Hayek's construction of identity suggests that only someone who is born in the correct country, who speaks the correct language, and who looks like the actual person or character is authentic enough to perform the role. Hayek's definition of ethnic authenticity erases her own mixed heritage as the daughter of a first-generation Lebanese father whose family immigrated to Mexico. She draws attention to her childhood in Mexico, knowledge of Mexican history, early acting career in Mexico, and continued relationship with her country of origin to establish her right to the role over other actors, such as Jennifer Lopez and Madonna.

Taymor's Mexico

Stories featuring Latinas that counter the traditional cinematic narratives of Latinidad are generally not economically viable. Latina stories can be told, but only within expected and socially acceptable parameters. Speaking about her experiences after the global hit *Real Women Have Curves* (2002), Josefina López said, "After *Real Women* I got mad. I thought that this opened doors for me, but it's still very hard. So much of the industry is about tits and ass and the exploitation of women, and it's very hard to change that. Women are the window dressing for a story."[32] The predominantly male-dominated cinematic industry, Josefina López suggests, demands beautiful heterosexual bodies and makes it difficult to produce complex stories about any women, much less Latinas. As a result, women screenwriters and directors are forced

to compromise. In the case of *Frida*, Kahlo's anti-imperialist politics, her nonconformist performance of self, and her defiance of Western notions of femininity do not fit within accepted cinematic representations of Latinidad. Such elements of Kahlo's life are therefore erased through a more conventional telling of her life in Taymor's *Frida*.

In addition to dealing with industry constraints regarding depictions of Latinas, Taymor also had to negotiate the constraints of the biopic genre itself, a cinematic mode of storytelling that rewards authenticity as a tool for approximating some objective definition of reality. Not surprisingly, Taymor's directorial decisions produce a Latinidad familiar to audiences. In particular, the movie's uses of dress, color, music, and Hayek are informed by the media's traditional representation of Latina identity.[33] Cinematic marketing relies on syncretic identity constructions that yield more stable, long-term, and economically viable demographic categories through suppressing differences and highlighting cultural similarities within an ethnic group.[34] As noted in the book's introduction, the key media signifiers of Latina identity are "the Latin look," Spanish language, conservative values, and Latin American cultural practices. Therefore, successful cinematic marketing and depictions are dependent on a syncretic ethnic identity that homogenizes rather than emphasizes the group's multiplicity.[35]

Working within a media industry that depends on syncretic constructions of ethnic identity, *Frida's* biographical adaptation elides the complexity of Kahlo's life and Mexican culture, choosing instead to simplify the cinematic story line by featuring the heterosexual love story between the artist and her husband. The movie shifts the anti-capitalist and feminist themes of Kahlo's life and artwork to the cinematic background, instead portraying Kahlo/Hayek as an ethnically gendered body that is culturally accessible, biologically natural, and sexually exotic.[36] Taymor portrays Kahlo's life story by employing familiar signifiers of Mexican identity and depoliticizing Kahlo—in particular her involvement in the nationalist politics of *indigenismo*, an ongoing cultural and political movement grounded in the recuperation of Mexico's indigenous culture.[37] By reimagining Kahlo's life through standard Western cinematic signifying practices and familiar story lines, Taymor produces a cinematic aura of authenticity that contributes to the symbolic colonization of Latinidad.

First, signifying practices such as the use of accented English, primitive colors, folkloric dress, and music present a seemingly authentic global Latina/o identity dependent on writing out differences within Mexico and

Mexican identity. For example, with regard to the purposeful use of primitive primary colors, during an interview at the American Film Institute Taymor commented:

> We talked about the color of Mexico. It's the first thing we said. The color of Mexico in the '20s is unpolluted color, meaning that if you shoot in Mexico City now you can't get that color. So the exterior of Mexico City, when they are running from the bus and the schools, is shot in San Luis, which really is a small town and probably still looks the way that Mexico City did in the 1920s. . . . At E-Films we did a lot of work with true color . . . but a lot of those Tehuanas, that's the color, so it is the color of Mexico. It is the color of Mexico at the time and still Mexico if you go to Oaxaca or you go to Puebla. You still see that kind of rich vital color, and we really wanted that.[38]

The ultravibrant terra cotta reds and primary blues and yellows are characterized as more important cinematic signifiers of an authentic Mexican identity than the Spanish language. Moreover, the bright colors—along with scene props such as junglelike foliage, tropical-looking flowers, and pet monkeys—are part of a signifying schema that creates an image of a safe and acceptable Latin America by defining it as a primitive, exotic, and historical space. Color was so central to the movie's production of Mexican authenticity that Taymor worked with E-Films to digitally filter and cleanse the vestiges of industrialization polluting the landscape of today's Mexico into an imagined construction of the untouched, pure colors of Mexico's less industrialized past.

Folkloric dress, indigenous artifacts, and Hayek's physicality are equally integral to producing an authentic Mexican identity devoid of politics (see figure 3.1). Indeed, the movie continually emphasizes the most popular signifiers associated with Kahlo—her unibrow, braided hair, and colorful indigenous clothing. Colorful dresses, bright red flowers, and indigenous jewelry further define Kahlo and Hayek as authentically Mexican and universally exotic without referencing the political intent embedded in the artist's motivations for wearing these particular clothes. In Kahlo's biography, Herrera notes:

> In the costumes flaunted by Kahlo . . . she embodies the two main goals of postrevolutionary Mexican leaders: She exalts contemporary manifestations of Mexico's pre-Hispanic past (the Aztec jewelry and her achievement of a "native look" with her simple coiffure) and simultaneously directs

attention to the rich diversity in Mexican culture (the different types of *rebozo*, her dress, pose, and props).[39]

Frida's signifying practices privilege Kahlo's "native look" but do so by eliding the artist's political critique of imperialism. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Hayek's ability to wear Kahlo's actual clothing is touted as central to her performance of the artist and the movie's aura of authenticity.[40] The aesthetic celebration of indigenous cultural forms within *Frida* co-opts indigenous Mexican culture as signifiers of an authentic Kahlo and Mexico at the cost of erasing the continued economic and political marginalization of indigenous Mexicans at the heart of Kahlo's political work. Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera were both active proponents of the Mexicanidad movement, which called for the nationalization of Mexico's major industries, redistribution of wealth and property, and establishment of land rights for Mexico's indigenous and peasant populations. Culturally, the movement called for the privileging of *lo indigena* or *indigenismo*, Mexico's indigenous and folkloric culture and heritage, as the site of authentic Mexican identity.[41] To Kahlo, wearing indigenous clothing and jewelry was a sign of her political allegiance to indigenous communities. Yet Taymor's decision to predominantly feature Hayek in Kahlo's folkloric style without referring to its political intent contributes to the production of authenticity and the movie's marketability. In other words, the movie's production of an authentic Mexican identity that is commercially viable and globally consumable depends on stripping the political content of Kahlo's life by depicting more popular symbols of Mexican culture.

Closely drawing upon Herrera's biography, the movie's script further depoliticizes Kahlo's identity by focusing on her obsessive desire to please her husband, the famous Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. The decision to background Kahlo's political identity and complicated sexuality shifts the art-house movie story to more popular and familiar Latina narratives of ethnic femininity, sexuality, and domesticity. Like other Hollywood films, it is Kahlo's love story and not the political story that carries the cinematic story forward. Kahlo's complicated sexuality and politics are not central components to the audience's understanding of the artist's life. Responding to questions about the erasure of Kahlo's politics and queer sexuality, Taymor suggested:

> Frida adored her husband, Diego. As monstrous as he was with his infidelity, they really loved and supported each other as artists, and she really wanted to be with him. . . . She was political, but that was not her essence.

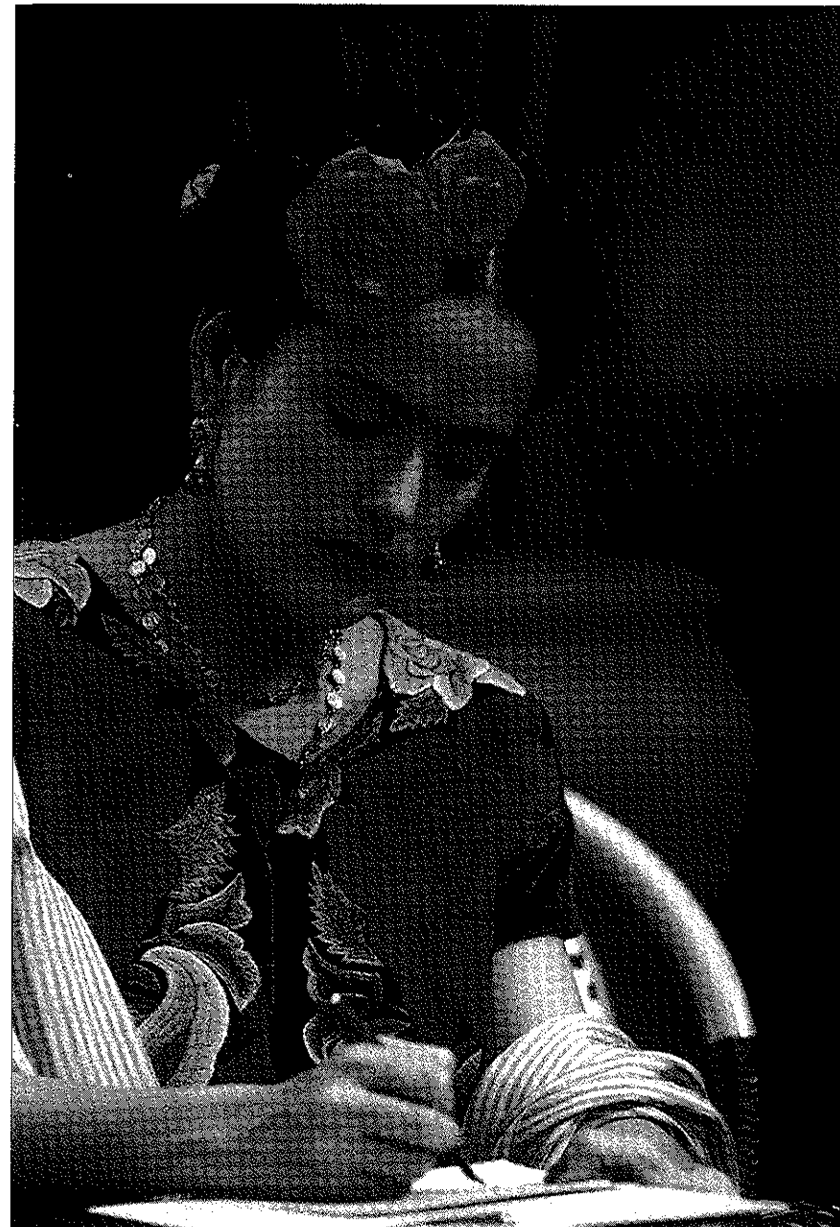

Figure 3.1. As many mainstream and U.S. Latina/o media claimed, Salma Hayek did not depict Frida Kahlo, she personified her. In this image from the movie, Hayek is costumed in many of the signifiers of "authentic" Mexican identity used to signal Latinidad—tropical flowers, bright colors, and folkloric clothing.

Her essence was herself. Who is Frida without Diego? You don't have to be faithful to be loyal. Where do you draw the line? In our culture that's very difficult. If you show her sleeping with this person or this person, then how do you believe that she loved Diego?[42]

To Taymor, the important relationship, the one with emotional and cinematic significance, is Kahlo's heteronormative relationship with her husband. Depicting Kahlo's numerous and meaningful nonmonogamous long-term relationships with women and men violates the cinematic rules of Latina/o heterosexual love upon which the movie and Hollywood's general treatment of ethnic women relies.[43]

Although I recognize and celebrate queer readings of the film (it earned a GLAAD nomination for outstanding film), Taymor downplays the emotional significance of Kahlo's lesbian relationships in favor of the heterosexual love story. Any *meaningful* lesbian relationship is relegated to the background and subtext and between-the-lines readings. For instance, the movie incorporates the music, vocals, and images of the great Mexican singer Chavela Vargas, but any mention of Vargas's long-term lesbian relationship with Kahlo is tragically relegated to the DVD's special features. Furthermore, while one of the most circulated images from the movie is the sexually charged tango/kissing sequence between Kahlo/Hayek and Tina Modotti, played by Ashley Judd (see figure 3.2), the scene and kiss are not integral to the plot or character development. Regardless, the tango sequence was featured on a movie poster, screened on programs such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and published in newspapers and magazines. However, the interesting platonic friendship and one-time romantic relationship between the women is erased from the movie's story. Instead, the dance sequence, similar to the movie's other references about Kahlo's bisexuality, serves to titillate audiences while further defining Kahlo's life through common signifiers of Latinidad, particularly the tango as a popular symbol of Latin America, Latinidad, and Latina/o sexuality.[44]

Finally, Hayek's performance of Kahlo is itself integral to maintaining the dominant heteronormative gaze of the movie and contributing to the marketable production of authenticity. I cannot ignore that in this rendition of her life, Kahlo's non-normative beauty, body, and sexuality are cinematically reinterpreted through the body of the glamorous Hayek. Prior to *Frida*, Hayek appeared in countless movies, magazine covers, and advertisements for Revlon cosmetics and Lincoln cars. Hayek's global visibility, history of highly sexualized roles, and familiar beauty are impossible to erase from the screen. She might look like Kahlo, but she is still the beautiful Salma

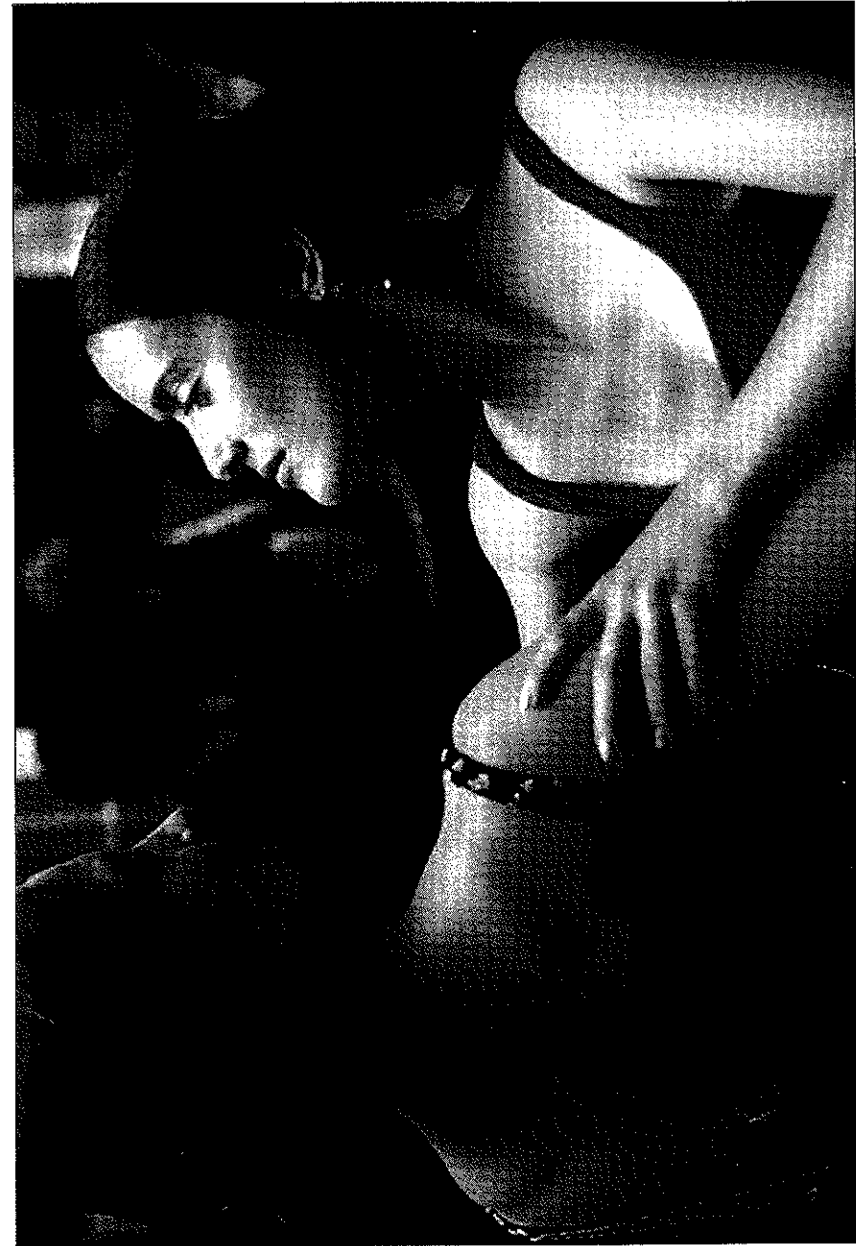

Figure 3.2. The tango sequence between Salma Hayek and Ashley Judd was one of the most widely circulated scenes. Featuring a scene that amounted to less than five minutes of total screen time allowed the movie's director to feature Hayek's body and sexuality as ethnic spectacle.

Hayek. The movie's cinematography takes advantage of Hayek's iconic face and voluptuous body. It is difficult to imagine that a "realistic" depiction of Kahlo, who was severely injured and crippled, would have been much fun to watch. Even with cosmetic enhancements to re-create Kahlo's hairy eyebrows and light facial mustache, Hayek's beauty cannot be hidden. Nor, I contend, is there any real intent to do so by the actor or director. Together the cinematic focus on Hayek's body and face along with the visual representation of indigenous culture and emphasis on Kahlo's relationship with Rivera produce a consumable albeit homogenous representation of Latina and Mexican authenticity.[45]

To highlight the conscious production and directorial decisions of the *Frida* project, I draw attention to the first but little-known biopic about Kahlo, *Frida, Naturaleza Viva* (1984), directed by Paul Leduc. Leduc's film was shot in Spanish with English subtitles, used a nonlinear narrative script, had minimalistic dialogue/sound, and highlighted Kahlo's Marxist commitment over her personal relationships. Ofelia Medina, the popular Mexican actor who played Kahlo in Leduc's movie, de-emphasized her natural physical beauty by wearing minimal stage makeup and drab, loose-fitting laborers' clothing. Medina actually spoke out in the Mexican press against Hayek's hypersexualized performance of Kahlo.[46] Like *Frida*, Leduc also marginalizes Kahlo's lesbian relationships by associating it with her alcohol and drug problems. However, his script rarely focuses on the relationship between Kahlo and Rivera, choosing instead to foreground her political activism in Mexico's Communist Party and personal struggles with her physical injuries. I raise the contrast between the two movies not to say one is better than the other, although *Frida* was the clear commercial success, but rather as an illustration of how both films are shaped by different directorial and screenwriting decisions—what one director/screenwriter omits, another emphasizes. The deletions and selections in turn have implications for the ideological articulations and success of each movie.

Reinforcing Hollywood's historical constructions of authentic Latina femininity, Taymor's decision to minimize Kahlo's leftist politics and emphasize Hayek's body, beauty, and sex appeal inevitably makes the radical Mexican artist a more consumable cinematic figure for global audiences. Speaking about the use of Kahlo to promote a 1990 exhibit of Mexican artists, Jean Franco observed, "The private had not only become public, as feminists once claimed, but had become publicity."[47] Likewise, Taymor's *Frida* privileges Kahlo's private life, not her public political life, as the focus of the cinematic story. An interesting paradox is produced. On the one hand, *Frida* provides

unprecedented and celebratory visibility to an actor, woman, and nation generally erased within mainstream visual culture. However, the economic imperatives of global cinema shape the movie's construction of authenticity by locating Kahlo's Mexican identity within a symbolically colonizing discourse of Latinidad. The actors' use of accented English and the director's decision to use colorful scenery and costumes, indigenous cultural artifacts, folkloric Mexican music, and Hayek's eroticized body call forth dominant syncretic constructions of Latina identity. Displacing the anti-capitalist and feminist themes of Kahlo's art and life provides a more familiar rendition of Mexican gendered identity as passionate, festive, and heterosexual and racialized ethnic women as culturally accessible and consumable.

Making Sense of 'Frida'

Despite the constraints the movie faced, my analysis of the media and audience reception regarding the film points to its complicated reception. In this section, I treat journalists writing about the movie as a specialized type of media audience, and I look to one online discussion about the movie as a unique form of media reception. I begin this section by exploring the response of the U.S. Latina/o media and one IMDb discussion thread about the movie. While the majority of Latina/o media outlets and IMDb posters in the discussion thread unequivocally celebrate the film, how they make sense of Hayek and the movie reveals a more complex articulation of Latina identity. Additionally, I examine two Mexico City newspapers (*Reforma* and *La Crónica de Hoy*) to further illustrate how different audiences interpret and sometimes oppose the movie's production of ethnic authenticity. The Mexico City journalists' use of strategic essentialism stands in stark contrast to a majority of IMDb discussion participants who often propose more fluid constructions of ethnic and racial identity. Together, the analysis of U.S. Latina/o media, online audiences, and Mexican news accounts demonstrate the potential for symbolic ruptures of commercialized media constructions of Latinidad.

Celebrating 'Frida'

The movie premiered in the United States amid a void in mainstream programming about Latinas/os and an increase in social tensions over Latina/o immigration. In 2002, with the exception of the movie *Selena* (1997) and the *George Lopez* television show (2002–2007), the U.S. television and film media

landscape remained a relatively barren space for Latina/o images, much less representations produced by Latinas/os themselves. According to a National Association of Hispanic Journalists annual *Network Brownout Report*, only 0.75 percent of the news stories aired on ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC in 2002 were about Latinas/os, a majority of which were about crime, terrorism, and illegal immigration.[48] In 2005, that number rose to 0.83 percent on the three major networks.[49] Figures for 2006 and 2007 are not yet available. Entertainment representations did not fare much better. A Chicano Studies Research Center report found that in 2004, only 4 percent of regular characters on prime-time shows were Latinas/os, down from 4.2 percent in 2002.[50] As of 2007, Latina/o actors and writers remained woefully underrepresented in the television and film industries.[51] Amid this hostile representational void, *Frida* appeared.

Because of the culture of invisibility that surrounds Latinas/os in the mainstream media, it is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of the movie's public reception in the United States celebrated the cultural importance of Kahlo as well as Hayek's role in making the movie.[52] U.S. Latina/o news coverage often extolled Kahlo's and Hayek's visibility by replicating the discourses of ethnic identity and authenticity embedded in the film. Most IMDb discussion participants also reveled in the women's cultural visibility. On a personal note, I can vividly remember viewing *Frida* when it premiered at my local theater in Champaign, Illinois. Accompanied by Ecuadorian and Chilean friends, the three of us sat spellbound as we watched images of Hayek, Mexico, and Kahlo's life and art flash before our eyes with both a dignity and beauty that was rarely visible in U.S. cinema. We left the theater with the belief that we had seen something truly special, a sensitive representation of Mexican, Latin American, and Latina/o culture, and we joyfully toasted that unprecedented visibility. Despite its directorial omissions and simplifications, *Frida* still remains one of the few "positive" representations of Latinas in global Hollywood cinema. My personal reaction is illustrative of the *burden of representation* that faces most cultural representations of marginalized communities.[53] Because there are so few cultural representations of Latinas to begin with, those that do exist are often asked to speak for the entire community. The burden to represent an entire community and its complexity is rarely asked of dominant media depictions of men, heterosexuals, or white people.

The majority of Latina/o media journalists and posters in the discussion thread I analyzed lauded one of the few globally available images produced by Latinas/os, starring Latina/o actors, about a Latina and Mexicana.[54] For

instance, in response to a posting that Salma Hayek's *Frida* had "sold-out" Mexican culture, one poster argued, "Salma did not sell Mexican culture . . . she exposed it to the world and in my mind, added more layers to dismantle gringo-fied, stereotypical portrayals. My friends and I are all Chicana or Mexican-American from Mexico, and we loved the film."[55] A majority (16 out of 23) of the IMDb posters for this thread self-identified as U.S. Latina/o or Latin American. All sixteen of those participants described the movie as an important cultural intervention that helped to demonstrate the cultural depth, beauty, and complexity of Mexico and its people. For these posters, the movie ruptured symbolically colonizing discourses of Latina/o and Mexican identity simply by existing and giving visibility to a strong feminist Mexicana portrayed by a strong Latina/Mexicana actor. It did not matter that Mexican culture had to be homogenized to be commercially viable. To them, the movie's cultural visibility (in particular the visibility of an iconic figure who challenged dominant notions of Latinidad) within a mainstream media environment defined by erasure was the intervention.

A similar discourse of visibility and cultural respectability dominated U.S. Latina/o news coverage of Hayek and *Frida*. Latina/o journalists identified both women as belonging to Mexico and U.S. communities of Mexican and Latina/o descent. In all of the fifty-one U.S. Latina/o news stories I collected about the movie, Hayek's Mexican nationality by birth was described as an important element of her identity and the movie's success. Simultaneously, Hayek, who was a legal U.S. resident at the time of the movie's release and who is now a U.S. citizen, was also identified as belonging to the U.S. Latina/o community, despite her own ambivalence regarding the term. Thus, the desire to identify Hayek as both Mexican and Latina by U.S. Latina/o journalists disrupts syncretic notions of Latina identity. Both women come to occupy an in-between transnational space—Hayek and Kahlo are both from here/*aquí* and from there/*allá*.[56] Hayek in particular was characterized as a Mexican woman living in the United States whose identity as a Latina immigrant made her vulnerable to racial discrimination based on national origin, and she was a Mexican citizen proudly representing her nation of origin. The transnational construction of Hayek's identity in the U.S. Latina/o media as both a U.S. Latina and a Mexican national further complicates the reception of Latina/o authenticity.

Although at the time of the movie's release Hayek had been living for more than a decade in the United States, to U.S. Latina/o journalists, Hayek's Mexican identity remained an essential aspect of the news story. For example, Miami's *El Nuevo Herald* discussed Hayek's nationality as pivotal to

the role: "By large coincidence, this is the same project that almost went to Madonna. Later, Laura San Giacomo and Jennifer Lopez were mentioned as possible candidates for the role, but it was Hayek, as a Mexican, who received the privilege of representing her compatriot."[57] Interestingly, the journalistic emphasis on country of origin displaced any identity problems raised by Hayek's mixed Mexican and Lebanese heritage. What mattered most in these news stories was where Hayek was born, not the heritage of her parents or what country she currently resides in. Picking up on the language of authenticity in Hayek's publicity campaign, the news stories framed Hayek's ethnicity by virtue of her birthplace as more authentic to the role than the identity of other white or Latina actors. Not only did her ethnic identity make Hayek more authentic, but that authenticity also enhanced her artistic performance. By drawing attention to place of birth as the source of Hayek's authenticity, the U.S. Latina/o news media reaffirmed the transnational experience of millions of Latina/o immigrants who no longer live in their homeland but still identify it as home.[58] Journalistic accounts of authenticity play a significant role for U.S. Latina/o newspapers because they must carefully speak to their specific ethnic-national readerships (usually Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto Rican) without excluding any particular national backgrounds to draw the largest revenue stream.[59] Invoking Hayek's nationality allowed the Latina/o media to foreground her Mexican identity while still celebrating the movie as a panethnic success. U.S. Latina/o journalistic coverage demonstrates the production of news that builds panethnic U.S. Latina/o national identities while recognizing the specific transnational identities of their audiences.

Before its release in November 2002, national identity also was a central component of Mexico City coverage of the movie. Journalists demonstrated a desire to claim or reclaim, given Hayek's U.S. residency status, the actor as one of their own with articles such as "Salma muestra su espíritu en *Frida*" ("Salma shows her spirit in *Frida*") or "*Frida* de Salma, una película mexicana" ("Salma's *Frida*, a Mexican film") that highlighted Hayek's Mexican identity as proof of the movie's cultural value.[60] For example, the "*Frida* de Salma" article foregrounded Taymor's claim that *Frida* is intrinsically a Mexican film because, despite its U.S.-based financing, it was made possible only through the labor and efforts of Hayek, a Mexican woman. The "Salma muestra su espíritu" piece suggested that Hayek's efforts to embody Kahlo allowed her to explore her own identity as a Mexican woman, presumably an experience that neither Madonna nor Jennifer Lopez could have shared. Similar to the U.S. Latina/o news coverage, the Mexico City newspapers initially described Hayek's Mexican identity as central to producing Mexican

authenticity. However, unlike the U.S. Latina/o media, the Mexico City coverage actively worked against a transnational reading of Hayek and Kahlo in favor of the women's local and ethnic-specific identities. That both the U.S. Latina/o and Mexico City media claim Kahlo and Hayek in different ways demonstrates how audiences (in this case journalists) engage in subjective readings of media representations of Latinidad.

Rupturing Hayek's 'Frida'

If the mainstream media function through a set of social and institutional practices that manufacture globally familiar ways of understanding Latina identity, then online audience responses to the movie redefine the popular contours of that identity. Consequently, the symbolic colonization of authentic ethnic identity in the film stands in tension with less stable hybrid identity discourses circulated among some Latina/o audiences. Expressions of fluidity and multiplicity among Latina/o audiences emphasize the symbolic rupturing of U.S. ethnoracial classifications. In particular, the online IMDb discussion thread I analyzed characterized Latinidad as existing at multiple and shifting intersections of identity. Unlike the movie's commodification of Latina authenticity that is predicated on the long-term stability of identity categories through cultural homogenization, identity discourses among the online audiences assumed the continual dynamism of ethnicity, race, and nation.

Specifically, the majority of IMDb posters engage the complicated ethnic and national identity of both women to think through their own identities. As ethnic hybrids, both women embody the problematic nature of national identities based on essentialistic definitions of ethnic origin. Néstor García Canclini suggests that Latin American hybridity is best characterized as liminality, as the border spaces where stabilized homogenous notions of identity and culture are decentered and negotiated.[61] Kahlo rejected her mother's Catholic faith and embraced her father's Jewish identity. A self-avowed communist from middle-class roots, she never enjoyed her visits to the United States. Hayek, the daughter of an upper-class Mexican mother and Lebanese father, is now a naturalized U.S. citizen. While she claims to fight against the discrimination she has faced as a Mexican woman in Hollywood, she continues to live an economically privileged lifestyle in the United States and Europe.

Hayek's and Kahlo's fluid and unclassifiable identities are integral to deployments of strategic essentialism in the IMDb discussion thread I ana-

lyzed. The discussion, which continued for several months, dealt with a range of arguments about the politics of ethnic, racial, and national identity. With the exception of two participants, all of the posters who responded to the initial post critical of Hayek's right to represent Kahlo challenged attacks on the movie while putting forth more complicated definitions of ethnic, racial, and national identity than those produced in the film. Their reading of the movie used knowledge about Kahlo's and Hayek's life to recuperate the movie's homogenizing constructions of Mexican identity. Defending Hayek's right to claim a Mexican identity, AlexThomas17, who identified himself as Mexican American, wrote:

> Thank you for perpetuating the stereotype that all Mexicans are the same, having brown, Mestizo skin and Spanish surnames. . . . I have commented to many people that Salma is in fact the ideal match for Frida. If you hadn't noticed, Kahlo is not Spanish either. It is German. Frida's father was from an Ashkenaicz Jewish, east-European-immigrant family in Mexico.[62]

Although the movie does not delve into Kahlo's multiethnic background, the poster engages Hayek's mixed-ethnic background to disrupt an essentialized definition of Chicana/o and Mexican nationality. For this poster, both Hayek and Kahlo inherently trouble binary or essentialist constructions of ethnic, racial, and national identity as pure, fixed, and stable. Like the majority of the posters, AlexThomas17 uses a discourse of hybridity to make sense of Kahlo, Hayek, and the movie.

Continuing discussion about the fluidity of Mexican/Latina/o identity, another poster who identified herself as Mexican American argued:

> Mexican/Chicano culture is Mexica or "indigenous," African, and Spanish. AND German (in the case of Frida Kahlo) AND Lebanese (in the case of Salma Hayek), AND whatever other ethnicities one happens to be. ALL of these ethnicities have contributed to Mexican culture as a whole, as well as to many individual Mexica (in whatever combination and to whatever degree).[63]

Another poster succinctly responded, "Her [Salma's] father is Lebanese. Her mother is Mexican. So, Salma Hayek IS Mexican. She is also Lebanese. So, she is Mexican/Lebanese,"[64] and yet another said, "I hate to break this to YOU, but regarding ethnicity, both Tiger and Salma are of mixed heritage, and can't be labeled 'black,' 'asian,' 'middle eastern' or 'mexican' so easily."[65] To online audiences, racial and ethnic identities are fluid and complex. The rich, sometimes violent, continual

mixture of cultures brought about through colonization, imperialism, and globalization thus influences audience sense-making of contemporary media depictions of Latinidad. Hybridity is not relegated to the historical or theoretical but is informative of the everyday experiences of Hayek, Kahlo, and audience interpretations of *Frida*. Symbolically rupturing the commodified constructions of authenticity and Latinidad, both women are heralded by the online posters as embodied manifestations of communities that share ethnic ties but racially, geographically, symbolically, and politically straddle multiple, shifting identity locations.

Challenging Hayek, Opposing 'Frida'

The celebratory U.S. Latina/o and online audience reception of Hayek, and to some extent Kahlo, stands in stark contrast to the women's more complicated cultural reception in Mexico. Once the movie was released, Mexico City journalists began critiquing Hayek's strategic essentialism grounded in a biological claim to authenticity (i.e., If you are born in Mexico, you are Mexican) by proposing an oppositional definition of Mexican identity based on culture and politics rather than ethnicity and national origin. Given the economic and political tensions between Mexico and the United States, it is not surprising that despite the movie's critical success, Hayek and *Frida* met with both protest and adulation in Mexico and the United States. Globalization and transnational policy mandates such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) stitch Mexico and the United States in an interdependent yet unequal economic relationship that contributes to a social and material environment where movies about culturally iconic Latin American figures find themselves in uneasy territory. The syncretic production of ethnic identity in a film designed to reach global audiences succeeded and failed, particularly among Mexico City and Chicana/o cultural critics. Such responses once again demonstrate that the process of symbolic colonization is not totalizing or complete; instead, it continually speaks to ongoing power negotiations regarding identity and the nation. While Kahlo unequivocally stands in for the authentic ethnic body within the transnational space of global commodity culture, Hayek's and Taymor's cinematic representation of Kahlo does not.

Although Mexico City journalists originally saluted Hayek and the movie, the coverage shifted quickly and dramatically after the movie's press screening in Mexico. Hayek and her film were protested by government officials, journalists, and fellow actors decrying her performance of Kahlo and the cinematic production of Mexican culture as offensively inauthentic. Cultural

critics in Mexico, including Dolores Olmedo, former director of the Frida Kahlo Museum, further muddied the movie's reception by arguing that Kahlo was an insignificant figure within the history of Mexican art.[66] A plethora of columns and articles also criticized the film's U.S.-based production, its use of English, and its negative portrayal of Rivera. Ticket sales (about $3.6 million U.S.) in Mexico—one of the world's best theater markets—paled in comparison to its take in the United States (about $26 million U.S.) and Germany ($6 million U.S.).[67] In Mexico, *Frida*'s ticket sales never topped its Mexican-produced cinematic competitors, *El Crimen del Padre Amaro* ($16.3 million U.S.) and *Amor que duele*, or U.S. blockbusters *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* ($17 million U.S) and *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* ($16 million U.S).[68]

Frida, as one of the few popular representations of Mexican icons circulated through the global media, provoked a fierce debate about identity and authenticity, the burden of representation, and the cultural rights to representation. The U.S. Latina/o news coverage celebrated and affirmed the movie's syncretic notion of Mexicana/Latina ethnic identity, but both the Mexican news coverage and online discussions used a more complex construction of nationality, language, race, class, and geographical space to interpret the movie. Specifically, Mexican journalists and cultural critics accused Hayek of selling out Mexican culture and behaving like a Malinche, a reference to the controversial Aztec figure who is simultaneously described as the mother and betrayer of the Mexican nation. *Malinchismo* is often used as slang for the selling out of Mexico and the Mexican people to outsiders. A similar discourse contesting the cinematic commodification of Mexican culture initiated the IMDb discussion thread I examined for this chapter.

A month before the movie's Mexico City premiere, two Mexico City newspapers (*Reforma* and *La Crónica de Hoy*) published the same Notimex wire story about a U.S.-based protest regarding the lack of Mexican actors in the movie. Each of the newspapers' headlines focused on the group's accusation of racism ("Salma Hayek, una racista" and "Salma Hayek, racista: Mexica Movement," which translate to "Salma Hayek, a racist" and "Mexica Movement: Salma Hayek, racist") as well as claims that Hayek engaged in the same type of discriminatory actions she argues others in the movie industry have committed against her.[69] Particularly offensive to the Los Angeles–based group Defense of Indigenous Rights was the casting of European actors Alfred Molina and Antonio Banderas as two of the main characters. As one protester cited in the story argued, "Because Salma contracted two Europeans to play the roles of Rivera and Siquerios, *Frida* is an insult to the almost 30 million Mexicans who live in the United Sates and 100 million who live in Mexican territory."[70] Alongside other news stories about protests against the film in Mexico City, the news and editorial coverage opposed *Frida*'s and Hayek's construction of authenticity. At the very least, the Mexico City coverage points to a multiplicity of perspectives about ethnicity and nationality. Mexico City journalists and critics argued it was not enough to be Mexican (Hayek) or to have Latina/o roots (Molina) or to be Spanish (Banderas). One must be Mexican and demonstrate an ongoing political and cultural commitment to Mexico by living and working in Mexico. Hayek's national identity was of little significance. As one Mexico City news source argued, "*Frida* is a gringo movie. It's of no consequence to me. It is not Mexican cinema. That is to say, it does not matter that Salma is in it."[71] Because the movie featured only a few Mexican actors, was directed by a U.S. director, and was financed by U.S.-based conglomerates, the Mexico City coverage framed the film as a U.S. rather than a Mexican cultural production.

Not only was it insignificant to Mexico City journalists that Hayek starred in the film, but Hayek's residency in the United States was called upon to discredit her strategic claims to authenticity and Mexican identity. News stories such as "Frida made in USA" and "Dice que daña a Frida" ("She ruined Frida, they say") further framed Hayek as a cultural interloper and the movie as a homogenized and distorted U.S. commodification of Mexican culture.[72] Significantly, the coverage did not suggest, as I would, that authenticity is an impossible and problematic identity construction but instead argues that it is impossible for the U.S. media to get Mexican authenticity correct. The use of accented English may have made the movie more attractive to international and English-speaking audiences, but it infuriated Mexican journalists, activists, and critics who interpreted the practice as a betrayal of an authentic Mexican cultural icon.

Hayek was labeled by cultural critics as the new Malinche, the historical figure accused of speaking the enemy's language (Spanish) to help Spain and sabotage the country's indigenous nations. To these critics, everything from the appearance of traditional Mexican foods to the look of the folkloric costumes is tainted by the movie's economic imperative and desire to target a global audience. Language and national identity are once again front and center in the debate over *Frida*. One film critic wrote of the movie's Mexico City premiere, "Scarcely a few minutes into the movie screening, the first sounds of laughter rose in the darkness. The reason: the use of a few Spanish words in a movie predominantly filmed in English."[73] The movie's use of

Spanglish and Spanish slang to establish Mexican authenticity is sarcastically read as a superficial and offensive attempt to woo Mexican audiences. Mexican journalists and public figures argued that given Kahlo's political beliefs, she never would have supported an English-language adaptation of her life, especially if it meant increasing movie sales to English-speaking audiences. Of course, such arguments by the Mexico City press ignore the fact that Rivera's and Kahlo's primary art patrons were wealthy U.S. industrialists and philanthropists. Nevertheless, the contemporary rebirth of Mexican cinema, Kahlo's iconic cultural status in Mexico, and the fraught political and economic relationship between the North American neighbors complicates the movie's reception in Mexico.

However, opposition to the movie did not rest solely on Mexican notions of national identity and authenticity. U.S. Chicana/o activists relied on a strategic essentialism based on fixed and stable constructions of identity to disrupt both Hayek's and *Frida*'s production of Mexican authenticity. In the IMDb discussion thread, the initial poster and most active participant, who identified himself as an indigenous Mexican living in the United States, argues for a biological definition of nationality determined by biological purity, specifically indigenous blood lineage. The poster uses *lo indigena* to place Hayek outside the borders of cultural Mexican citizenship:

> 1. Salma Hayek felt very strongly that a "mexican" should do the film about Frida (Madonna had been wanting to do the film for a while).
> 2. Salma Hayek is not Mexica—she is Lebanese.
> 3. She refused to hire any Mexicans to play Mexicans in the lead roles.
> 4. She refused to allow the Mexican Press during filming in Mexico.
>
> Conclusion: She sold Mexica culture and a Mexican Icon to win friends and awards in hollywood.[74]

Much like Kahlo's politics of *indigenismo*, this poster privileges the "racially pure" bodies of indigenous people as the site of Mexican racial and ethnic authenticity. Embedded in the poster's discussion is a hierarchical value structure that defines authenticity through racial and ethnic fixity and stability above fluidity and hybridity.

On the surface, the poster's discourse of ethnic identity is not much different from the movie's use of the indigenous or the U.S. Latina/o news media's privileging of nationality. Calling upon his racialized experiences of U.S. economic oppression, the poster disrupts the media discourse of Latinidad by privileging a strategically essentialist identity grounded in the nationalist and Marxist politics of the Chicano movement, which positions indigenous Mexico as a source of collective power against U.S. racial and economic oppression.[75]

> Hayek has never lived a day in a "barrio"—she was born to a wealthy Arab family. . . . Hayek does not exclusively have "guts, talent, beauty, brains and spirit." The person struggling to raise a family with limited means has "guts, talent, beauty and brains." That is "spirit"—look THAT up.[76]

Throughout his postings, *lo indigena* is inserted into a broader discussion of economic conditions in Mexico and the United States—drawing a class distinction between Hayek and the communities that he identifies as authentically Mexican. Hayek's economic wealth and ability to become a U.S. citizen thwart her claims to Mexican authenticity. Through strategic essentialism based on race and class, the poster creates another symbolic rupture by defining a politics of transnational identity based on racial and economic discrimination.

Latina Bodies in Global Commodity Culture

Because of the film's global circulation and Kahlo's cultural role as a feminist, bisexual, Latina, and Mexican icon, she becomes one of the primary sites through which constructions of Latina identity and Latinidad are performed, contested, and negotiated.[77] Latina bodies are a primary visual symbol for panethnic identity formations among U.S. Latina/o communities as well as a commercialized symbol of an exotic racial difference that is socially acceptable and consumable by domestic and global audiences. It is the ethnic female body that is most often the site of ideological contestation over national identity. As Ella Shohat notes, "Whereas a white female body might merely undergo surveillance from the reproductive machine, the dark female body is subjected to what I would call a *disreproductive* apparatus programmed by a hidden racially coded demographic agenda."[78] The media and audience negotiations over the symbolic colonization of iconic Latinas inform how the bodies of ethnic women are used to discipline definitions of race, ethnicity, nation, and national identity.

At the center of the instability surrounding ethnic identity, nation, and culture is the notion of authenticity. In the case of *Frida*, the interdependent economic relationship between Mexico and the United States—driven by the U.S. need for scarce resources such as Mexican oil and inexpensive human

labor—informs the cultural politics surrounding the production and reception of the movie both in the United States and Mexico. For Mexican and some U.S. Latina/o audiences, the making of *Frida* was yet another form of exploitation that used a Mexican icon and precious Mexican locales—but not local Mexican acting talent—for the pleasurable consumption of non-Mexican audiences. For others, the movie recuperated a culture and a racialized ethnic group often erased or marked as foreign, alien, and marginal within U.S. culture. The movie's complicated audience reception points to *Frida* as a movie that speaks to multiple subjectivities. Kahlo eludes or defies borders for some but simultaneously establishes borders for others.

Thus, the demand for global audiences required *Frida's* producers and director to make creative decisions dependent on homogenized definitions of ethnic, specifically Mexican, identity to meaningfully communicate authenticity. Privileging one set of characteristics and values over another, such as Kahlo's sexuality over her leftist politics, to sell the movie contributes to the symbolic colonization of Mexicanas and U.S. Latinas. In other words, the movie reaffirms dominant values and beliefs associated with Latinas—consequently maintaining the status quo. A story about a politically and artistically radical Mexican woman who openly opposed the imperialist policies of the United States can be sold to global audiences, but only if her life is framed and reduced to familiar homogenizing tropes.

Tapping into more facile constructions of Latina identity grounded in notions of authenticity did provide increased visibility to a woman and cultures rarely depicted with sensitivity in the mainstream media. Through their institutional participation in the publicity machinery surrounding Hollywood films, U.S. Latina/o entertainment journalists are problematically implicated in the circulation of syncretic identity discourses. Nevertheless, they are simultaneously invested in defining Latina/o ethnic identity in more complicated ways, as transnational, as simultaneously ethnic-specific and panethnic. However, as the divergent readings by U.S. Latina/o and Mexican audiences demonstrate, ethnic identity is fluid. Chicana/o activists and Mexico City media opposed the cinematic commodification of Kahlo and Mexico by interjecting a different yet equally unsustainable criterion for authenticity grounded in race, citizenship, and politics—to be authentic is to be a Mexican citizen who rejects "Americanization." Such a construction of authenticity ignores both the global nature of media production and the transnational experiences of millions of Mexican citizens who live or cross the border to work in the United States. Finally, online audiences eager for representational visibility applauded and reimagined the movie's depiction

of ethnic authenticity in terms that made sense to their lives, which resulted in definitions of Latina/o and Mexican identity that were more complicated and dynamic.

This chapter reflects on my conceptualization of symbolic colonization to think about the question: Under what conditions can ethnic authenticity be deployed by Latina producers? Clearly, using familiar signifiers of Latina authenticity helps sell media, capture larger audiences, and provide more visibility. Nevertheless, the politics of representation surrounding ethnic women in the media (films, television, newspapers, Web sites) challenge us to think through reductive representations that inevitably discipline the boundaries of identity categories. As competing ideas about ethnic and racial identity disseminated through the online discussion thread illustrate, more complex definitions of ethnic identity and culture are possible and desirable. Ethnic identity is not fixed; rather, it is in a constant state of formation and reformulation as it responds to the ever-shifting terrain of postcolonial global culture. *Frida*, the U.S. Latina/o news coverage, Mexican news stories, and the IMDb discussion thread show how the complex act of crossing borders—geographical, symbolic, and imagined—provide an opportunity for reflexivity, a moment in which to question the often unconscious reification of racial, ethnic, and national hierarchies. In particular, the discussion thread exemplifies the struggle for recognition and legitimacy through more complex constructions of Latina bodies and identity.[79] Transnational and diasporic cultures are continually engaged in shifting categories of authenticity, difference, and identity. The debate over Hayek, Kahlo, and Mexican ethnicity exemplifies the tensions for communities whose competing definitions of identity challenge dichotomous thinking. By questioning how we are represented, we are provided the opportunity to redefine ourselves, and in redefining ourselves critique dominant systems of social signification. Competing constructions of ethnic identity provide an opportunity to negotiate the symbolic colonization of Latinidad and open up more fluid understandings of the mediated performance of gendered Latinidad.

112. Connell, "Personalities in the Popular Media," 73–74.

113. Gledhill, *Stardom*. For a more specific discussion of the ideological struggles surrounding Latinidad, see Beltrán, "The Hollywood Latina Body as Site of Social Struggle"; María Elena Cepeda, "Shakira as the Idealized, Transnational Citizen: A Case Study of *Colombianidad* in Transition," *Latino Studies* 1, no. 2 (July 2003).

114. Gina Pérez discusses the race and gender discrimination faced by Operation Bootstrap migrants during this era. See Gina M. Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

115. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*.

116. "Jessica's the New Booty Queen," *in Touch*, September 4, 2006.

117. Mara Reinstein, "Jennifer's Pregnant," *Us Weekly*, October 22, 2007.

118. Erin Bried, "Doing It Right," *Self*, September, 2008; Charlotte Triggs, "J. Lo's Triathlon after Twins!" *People*, September 8, 2008.

119. Josef Adalian, "Lopez, Univisión in Unison on Drama," *Variety*, April 9, 2007 [accessed January 4, 2009]; available from http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117962769.html?categoryid=14&cs=1.

CHAPTER 3

1. Juana María Rodríguez, *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 11.

2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

3. Gareth Griffiths, "The Myth of Authenticity," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, 237–241 (London, New York: Routledge, 1995).

4. For a discussion of the "authenticity" debates between and within Latina/o communities, see Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: New Press, 1995).

5. A total of sixty-four stories published in U.S. Latina/o newspapers from 1997 through 2003 were collected using the terms *Hayek*, *Frida*, and *Hayek and Frida*. Of those, only news stories, features, and reviews dealing with the movie or Hayek's role in the making of the movie were analyzed. The resulting fifty-one stories included nine profiles of Hayek, eighteen *Frida* movie reviews, and twenty-four news stories about the production or reception of *Frida*. More than half the stories appeared in 2002, when seventeen reviews of the film were published.

6. All comments from Internet discussion boards are quoted as they appear on the Web sites.

7. The IMDb discussion thread was initiated by member xxxvidsring on July 21, 2003, with the last posting on December 28, 2004. During that time, 59 IMDb users posted 116 responses dealing with the film's representations of Mexican culture and broader issues of Mexican, Chicana/o, and Latina/o identity. The average number of postings per participant was two, with xxxvidsring posting the most responses at twenty-six. Twenty-three posters, including xxxvidsring, identified themselves as Mexican, Chicana/o, Mexican American, Latina/o, or Latin American. The remaining users did not identify themselves explicitly by race or ethnicity. Although the identities of online participants are difficult to verify, at the very least they are people who are part of the public discourse about the movie, however limited their participation might be.

8. Hayden Herrera, *Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1983). The biography is considered the canonical work on Kahlo. However, several scholars and popular critics challenged Herrera's construction of Kahlo's identity. See Rebecca Block and Lynda Hoffman-Jeep, "Fashioning National Identity: Frida Kahlo in 'Gringolandia,'" *Woman's Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 1998); Irma Dosamentes-Beaudry, "Frida Kahlo: The Creation of a Cultural Icon," *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 29, no. 1 (2002); Sarah Kerr, "Viva Frida," *Vogue*, December, 2001.

9. Dosamentes-Beaudry, "Frida Kahlo: The Creation of a Cultural Icon"; Steven Volk, "Frida Kahlo Remaps the Nation," *Social Identities* 6, no. 2 (2000).

10. Julia Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled* (Austin: University of Texas, 1999); Volk, "Frida Kahlo Remaps the Nation."

11. Block and Hoffman-Jeep, "Fashioning National Identity"; Jean Franco, Mary Louise Pratt, and Kathleen E. Newman, eds., *Critical Passions: Selected Essays* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Margaret Lindauer, *Devouring Frida: The Art History and Popular Celebrity of Frida Kahlo* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1999); Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*; Volk, "Frida Kahlo Remaps the Nation."

12. Lindauer, *Devouring Frida*; Volk, "Frida Kahlo Remaps the Nation."

13. Janis Bergman-Carton, "Strike a Pose: The Framing of Madonna and Frida Kahlo," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 35, no. 4 (Winter 1993); Seth Fein, "Film Reviews," *American Historical Review* 108, no. 4 (October 2003); Isabel Molina-Guzmán and Angharad Valdivia, "Brain, Brow or Bootie: Iconic Latinas in Contemporary Popular Culture," *Communication Review* 7, no. 2 (April–June 2004).

14. Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, "Introduction: Between Woman and Nation," in *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, ed. Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Minoo Moallem, 1–18 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 10.

15. Portions of this section were first published in Isabel Molina-Guzmán, "Mediating Frida: Negotiating Discourses of Latina/o Authenticity in Global Media Representations of Ethnic Identity," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23, no. 3 (August 2006); Isabel Molina-Guzmán, "Salma Hayek's *Frida*: Transnational Latina Bodies in Popular Culture," in *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, ed. Myra Mendible, 117–128 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

16. *Frida*, Box Office Mojo [accessed January 17, 2009]; available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=frida.htm.

17. Herrera received a writing credit for the movie, and a still from the movie now graces the most recent edition of the biography.

18. Toby Miller et al., *Global Hollywood* (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

19. Kevin Zimmerman, *Latin American Filmed Entertainment Market*. The Hollywood Reporter, February 21, 2005 [accessed August 20, 2007]; available from http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000809514.

20. Arlene M. Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

21. Michael Quintanilla, "Having Her Say," *Latina*, December, 2004, 120.

22. Christine Spines, "One from the Heart," *Premiere*, September, 2002, 40.
23. Ibid.
24. Quintanilla, "Having Her Say," 120.
25. Chris Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002); Angharad Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000).
26. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood.*
27. Isis Sauceda, "Salma Le Dio La Bienvenida a 'Frida'," *La Opinión*, October 16, 2002. The original text stated: "Como actriz, me gusta ser capaz de tener una voz y poder hablar de algo que me interesa. [Esta cinta] es una convicción. Una historia extraordinaria de una mujer extraordinaria. Valía la pena contar esta historia, que se desarrolla en un tiempo en que mi país era un lugar muy interesente. Aún lo es, pero es una parte de México con la cual la gente no está muy familiarizada. Así que me apasioné por contar la historia de los heroes con los que crecí, quise que el mundo supiera eso." For other examples of Hayek's use of language and authenticity, see the English-language articles Krista Smith, "An Irresistible Force," *Vanity Fair*, February, 2003; Spines, "One from the Heart"; Anne Stockwell, "The Velocity of Salma," *The Advocate*, December 10, 2002.
28. Julia Reynolds, "Las Dos Fridas: Hollywood's Long, Slow Race to Make the Definitive Frida Kahlo Film," *el Andar*, Summer 2001, 39.
29. Smith, "An Irresistible Force," 181.
30. René Rodríguez, "Imaginative Directing, Acting Illuminates Frida," *Hispanic Magazine*, October 2002, 38.
31. Griffiths, "The Myth of Authenticity."
32. Josefina López, personal interview, Paris, France, June 30, 2006.
33. Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies.*
34. Elana Levine, "Constructing a Market, Constructing an Ethnicity: U.S. Spanish-Language Media and the Formation of a Syncretic Latino/a Identity," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 20 (2001): 45.
35. Dávila, *Latinos, Inc*; Marilyn Halter, *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books, 2000); Levine, "Constructing a Market, Constructing an Ethnicity"; América Rodríguez, *Making Latino News: Race, Language, Class* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999).
36. Franco, Pratt, and Newman, eds., *Critical Passions.*
37. See Herrera, *Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo*; Anthony Lee, *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico.*
38. Taymor's comments come from a 2001 question-and-answer session with Dezsö Magyar at the American Film Institute. This quote comes from a transcription by the author of the session, which is included as a special feature on the *Frida* DVD.
39. Herrera, *Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo*, 110.
40. René Rodríguez, "Salma: Living Free, Like Frida," *Hispanic Magazine*, October, 2002; "Salma Muestra Su Espíritu En Frida," *La Crónica de Hoy*, September 1, 2002.
41. See Herrera, *Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo*; Lee, *Painting on the Left*; Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico.*
42. Taymor's quote comes from the 2001 question-and-answer session with Dezsö Magyar at the American Film Institute. It was included as a special feature on the *Frida* DVD.

43. Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies.*
44. Angharad Valdivia, "Community Building through Dance and Music: Salsa in the Midwest," in *Double Crossings: Entrecruzamientos*, ed. Mario Martín Flores and Carlos von Son, 153–176 (Fair Haven, NJ: Ediciones Nuevo Espacio, 2001).
45. Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies.*
46. Fein, "Film Reviews."
47. Franco, Pratt, and Newman, eds., *Critical Passions*, 43.
48. Serafín Méndez-Méndez and Diane Alverio, *Network Brownout 2002: The Portrayal of Latinos in Network Television News, 2001.* Washington, DC: National Association of Hispanic Journalists, 2002, 3.
49. Daniela Montalvo and Joseph Torres, *Network Brownout Report 2006: The Portrayal of Latinos & Latino Issues in Network Television News, 2005.* Washington, DC: National Association of Hispanic Journalists, 2006, 4.
50. Alison R. Hoffman and Chon A. Noriega, *Looking for Latino Regulars on Prime-Time Television: The Fall 2004 Season* (No. 4). Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (December 2004), 2.
51. Carl DiOrio, "SAG: Minority Actors See Gains," *The Hollywood Reporter*, October 30, 2007; Dave McNary, "WGA Issues Minority Report," *Daily Variety*, May 9, 2007; Carlina Rodríguez, *Remarks before FCC Public Hearing on Media Ownership.* Screen Actors Guild, 2007 [accessed January 28, 2008]; available from http://www.sag.org/files/documents/CRodriguezFCCTmny043007.pdf.
52. Eva Sanchis, "Salma Hayek Defiende Su Pelicula *Frida*," *El Diario La Prensa*, October 25, 2002.
53. Although the movie's negative reception in Mexico barely made the pages of U.S. Latina/o newspapers, it did seep into the Latina/o television news through such popular programs as *Noticiero Univisión* and *El Gordo y La Flaca.*
54. Viviana Rojas, "The Gender of Latinidad: Latinas Speak About Hispanic Television," *Communication Review* 7, no. 2 (April–June 2004).
55. ErikaP22, "Re: WRONG! Not another case of the 'prostitution of mexican culture'," comment posted September 4, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).
56. In *Making Latino News*, Rodríguez discusses the transnational imperative of most U.S. Latina/o news media to cater to U.S. Latina/o audiences with nostalgic and familiar connections to their countries of origin.
57. Rene Jordan, "Frida, De Julie Taymor El Color De La Pasión," *El Nuevo Herald*, November 7, 2002. All of the translations from Spanish to English are the author's. The original Spanish text read: "Este fue el proyecto que, por enorme suerte, se le malogró a Madonna. Después, Laura San Giacomo y Jennifer López se mencionaron como candidatas, pero a Hayek, com o mexicana, le iba de orgullo interpretar a su compatriota."
58. Sauceda, "Salma Le Dio La Bienvenida a 'Frida'." In this *La Opinión* article, Hayek emphasizes her identification with Mexico by stressing the importance of "telling this story, which develops during a Mexican era in which my country was a very interesting place. Actually, it still is, but this is a part of Mexico that few people know about. So I was very passionate about telling the story of the heroes that I grew up with. I wanted the world to know."

59. Latina/o media are produced in English and Spanish for the primary consumption of Latina/o audiences.

60. César Huerta and Omar Cabrera, "Frida, Muy Mexicana," *Reforma*, August 1, 2002; "Salma Muestra Su Espíritu En Frida."

61. Néstor García Canclini, *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

62. AlexThomas17, "Re: Ignorance of Mexican Culture," comment posted July 26, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

63. cheapdate, "Re: (how sad, cheapdate)," comment posted November 27, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

64. FLuMpKiNz, "Re: Ignorance of Mexican Culture," comment posted August 4, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

65. Kielbaso, "Re: Ignorance of Mexican Culture," comment posted August 6, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

66. Judd Tully, "The Kahlo Cult," *ARTnews* 93, no. 4 (April 1994). Olmedo, reportedly one of Rivera's last lovers, was named by him as the trustee of the Diego Rivera Foundation. The Frida Kahlo Museum is part of the Rivera Foundation. Olmedo died in 2005.

67. *Frida*, Box Office Mojo [accessed January 17, 2009]; available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=frida.htm.

68. *El Crimen Del Padre Amaro*, Box Office Mojo [accessed January 17, 2009]; available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=elcrimendelpadreamaro.htm; *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Box Office Mojo [accessed January 17, 2009]; available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=harrypotter2.htm; *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Box Office Mojo [accessed January 17, 2009]; available from http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=twotowers.htm.

69. "Acusan a Salma De Racismo," *Reforma*, October 9, 2002; "Salma Hayek, Racista: Mexica Movement," *La Crónica de Hoy*, October 8, 2002. The Notimex wire service story was picked up by several other Mexico City newspapers.

70. "Salma Hayek, Racista: Mexica Movement."

71. Huerta and Cabrera, "Frida, Muy Mexicana." The original Spanish text read: "Frida es una pelicula gringa, no me importa, no es cine mexicano. Digo, no tiene nada que ver que esté Salma."

72. Omar Cabrera, "Dice Que Daña a Frida," *Reforma*, November 8, 2002; Guadalupe Loaeza, "Frida Made in USA," *Reforma*, November 7, 2002.

73. Solange García, "Con dudas sobre la fuerza con que Salma encarnó a Frida preparan en México la premier de la pelicula," *La Crónica de Hoy*, November 7, 2002. Con dudas sobre la fuerza con que Salma encarnó a Frida preparan en México la premier de la película (Novembre 7, 2002): The original Spanish text read: "Las primeras risas estallaron en la oscuridad, apenas unos minutos de iniciada la proyección. El motivo: el uso de palabras en espanol dentro un largomentraje filmado en ingles que hacia pensar en el famoso spanglis."

74. xxxvidsring, "Another case of the 'prostitution of mexican culture,'" comment posted July 21, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

75. Alma M. García, "Introduction," in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, ed. Alma M. García, 1–20 (New York: Routledge, 1997).

76. xxxvidsring, "Re: Another case of the 'prostitution of mexican culture,'" comment posted August 3, 2003, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120679/board/flat/2391685 (accessed February 14, 2005).

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78. Ella Shohat, "Introduction," in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat, 1–63 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 24. The italics are in the original.

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CHAPTER 4

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2. Allison J. Waldman, "Hispanic Interests Move to Mainstream," *TelevisionWeek*, November 26, 2007.

3. Steve Clarke, "Rise of Telenovelas: U.S. Fare Gets Competition," *Variety*, February 16, 2006 [accessed March 5, 2008]; available from http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117938390.html?categoryid=14&cs=1.

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6. Timothy Havens, "'The Biggest Show in the World': Race and the Global Popularity of *The Cosby Show*," in *The Television Studies Reader*, ed. Robert Clyde Allen and Annette Hill, 442–456 (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

7. Wayne Karrfalt, "A Novela Approach to Mainstream TV," *TelevisionWeek*, September 25, 2006.

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9. Arlene M. Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Marilyn Halter, *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books, 2000).

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