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Anxieties, Mestizaje and National identity in Mexico: The Case of Sino-Mexicans

Before the rebellion in Chiapas, the key word in Mexico was "modernization," the illusion that Mexico's economic stability was around the corner with the signing of NAFTA (Monsivaís, 1996). The powerful Zapatista movement that erupted in January 1994 destroyed the mirage of modernity and, more importantly, it provided evidence that the cultural, social and political cohesiveness of Mexico is a myth. Since then, the Zapatista movement has denounced interlocking oppressions at the global scale so as to account for the multiplicity of those in the margins. In this conjuncture it is pertinent to reveal the lack of closure in the construction of *mestizaje*.

One of the aims of this work is to problematize the concept of *mestizaje* in the Mexican and Chicano discourse of cultural kinship, authenticity, and ethnic difference based on the idea that most Mexicans are *mestizos*—half Spanish and half Indian. In particular, I want to participate in a dialogue in which the concept of *mestizaje* gives account of the complex multiplicities of histories that are part of Mexico and *El Mexico de Afuera*.ⁱ Although other racialized diasporic communities have been excluded from the national and ethnic consciousness of Mexicans and Chicanos, my focus is on making visible the presence of Chinese in Mexico through the analysis of a poem of a diasporic subject ("Chio Sam") and, of a national gendered icon (*La China Poblana*).