History teaches us that men have always exercised all concrete powers; since the earliest patriarchates men have deemed it useful to keep women in a state of dependence by establishing codes against her; thus woman has been constituted concretely as the Other. This condition served not only the economic interests of men, but also their ontological and moral pretensions. Since the subject seeks to affirm itself, the Other—which limits and denies it—is thus necessary, for it cannot be reached except through that reality which it is not. For this reason, the life of men is never one of plenitude and rest [but] of privation and movement, struggle.

—Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Before learning what history says of a society, it behooves us to analyze how it functions. This institution is inscribed in a complex that allows only one type of production while prohibiting all others, whence proceeds the double function of place. Certain inquiries become possible thanks to common conjunctures and problems, while others become impossible. It excludes from discourse that which constitutes its condition at a given time; thus filling the role of a censor with respect to current postulates (social, economic, political) of analysis. Without doubt, this combination of permission with prohibition is the blind spot of historical research and the reason why it is incompatible with just any thing. It is precisely upon this combination that work which seeks to modify it must act.

—Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*
In his Presentation to *Relaciones* 132-bis, Thomas Calvo touched on a crucial problem: the relation between academia and indexed scientific journals at the dawn of the 21st century, and some of its limits. Every day we face the dilemma of how to resolve, in so few pages (maximum 350), the publication of important, rigorously refereed studies covering a broad range of interests and theoretical and methodological perspectives that we must organize in a way that assures sense and logic, whether dealing with the treatises of sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers or historians. This challenge stems from the disciplinary plurality of a journal that, from its very founding, set out to provide a link, to bridge the relations, among diverse ways of seeking to understand reality. The original strategy consisted in publishing issues with diverse content that often spanned a broad spectrum of knowledge. Then, with issue 69 (winter, 1997) *Relaciones* introduced the Thematic Section to provide each edition with a concrete focus, complemented by a Miscellaneous Section. The raison d’être of the Thematic Section, conceived by Oscar Mazín upon being named Director of our journal, likely reflected the need to establish coordinates that would make it possible to navigate more safely through the vast seas of multidisciplinarity. However, in practical terms, this measure limited the possibility to include the many articles on diverse themes that accumulate over the months and years. But this does not intimidate us: there are always means of dealing with it.

This explains why the issue with which volume xxxiii closed consisted of two tomes, the second of which had no Thematic Section. It further explains why the present issue includes an elaborate ex post. The edition we present today under the rubric of the seal that has characterized *Relaciones* for 16 years is not the product of a well-planned and structured dossier but, rather, of an effort to interrelate a series of articles received independently over a period of time by tying them together on the editing table.¹ Thus, what we present is an experiment—one that we hope will not be repeated frequently—in which the Thematic Section has been constructed on the basis of a

¹ A proposal owed to Dr. Laura Cházaro.
series of texts that, though received at random, could legitimately reside side-by-side on the margins of several viable monographic themes that problematize diverse perspectives. The underlying thematic that emerged to unite these particular essays turned out to be that of reconstructing margins.

References to margins in the context of our cognitive interests leads us to think as a function of our objects of study: subjects that have no voice in the traditional perspectives of our areas of knowledge: women, peoples without history, ethnic minorities, and outsiders, subjects who are marginalized from the grand explicative constructions of reality, and whose marginality is reinforced through discourses. But there exists another marginality, one juxtaposed to the place where discourses are created. We are especially interested in analytical, explicative or comprehensive discourses that do not blindly follow the strict rules of the scientific community, but that are nevertheless well-structured, though in accordance with other discursive logics and, so, can lay claim to validity because they reside on the margins of that paradigm. For the discourses of the subjects, such a study can be just as marginal as the objects or subjects of the study themselves.

In order to probe the first marginality we can turn our gaze to subjects that are subsumed not only by the social reality of their surroundings but also by views of them, from history, from sociology, or from anthropology: women, for example. With the publication of Simone de Beauvoir’s *Le deuxième sexe* (Paris, Gallimard, 1949), the issue of gender emerged as a natural, and significant, element for intellectual debate in university circles. The critique of the traditional definition of gender roles in the modern West—begun by Mary Wollstonecraft and Catherine Macaulay, among others, in the late 18th century—was staged, at that time, in the arena of political activism as women’s movements in England and the United States in the 19th century sought to achieve recognition of juridical equality in the milieu of private law, as well as equal access to property, before extending their reach to fight for public rights like women’s suffrage, which was finally conquered in Great Britain in 1918, and in the U.S. in 1920. In this regard, it has always seemed noteworthy that
U.S. feminism went hand-in-hand with the struggle by abolitionists to guarantee the civil rights of people of African descent, as this demonstrates the highly political character of that early feminism. Also, we must recall certain dates that younger generations of women and men have quite forgotten; the fact that in many nations women did not finally win the right to vote until very recently: France in 1944; Mexico and Japan in 1947; Israel in 1948; not to mention countries in Africa or the Near East, like the Arab Emirates… in 2006!

While the writings of authors like Beauvoir never diverged sharply from political activism, they did include philosophical reflections on gender that sought to unravel the discursive strategies that lie behind the social, cultural and historical construction of women’s role in society, especially in the West. From the perspective of philosophy or sociology, for example, Beauvoir and Friedan posited a series of arguments devised to explain the cultural and social-psychological mechanisms that underlie society as a whole and thus buttress acceptance of gender inequality. For both men and women, education and the reproduction of the rules of socialization define gender identities and the obligation to assume a specific role vis-a-vis “the other”. The function of women—and of men, as we shall discuss in a moment—is defined in terms of a specific role: i.e., being “someone’s” daughter, wife, mother or sister. In this array of definitions, juridical, theological and political discourses carry great weight, but so do myths. The section of de Beauvoir’s book that focuses on this aspect is a must-read, and the source of our epigraph. With great clarity it elucidates how a marginal discourse (first political, later academic) comes to gain a voice in different fields of discussion and eventually becomes an area of interest, perhaps not one situated at the very center, but one that does make the transformation of paradigms possible.

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A common belief regarding power relations, especially those that exist between the genders—but also in other contexts that entail authority or control—is captured in the phrase “keep your woman on a short leash” (in Spanish: traer cortita a la mujer); though to be fair, we
must recognize that this saying is also often used by women in reference to their spouses (a quick Internet search will dispel any doubt on this point). The origins of this adage trace back to the daily experience of rural societies in Spanish America, where the use of the horse to herd cattle was a matter of course until relatively recent times. The cowboy would ‘shorten’ the reins if he felt unsure of his mount, felt uneasy, or was not relaxed, fearing for some reason that his steed might balk or bolt. ‘Shortening the reins’ was thus born of mistrust and the need to assert control. Hence, one must ‘keep one’s spouse on a short leash’, keep her/him from running wild; a sentiment widely accepted in certain social circles, though it derives from, and justifies, abuse and violence. Ramírez Rodríguez offers preliminary reflections for an analysis of this belief and timeworn expression among young people in Guadalajara. The author’s conclusions, though preliminary, suggest a phenomenon of profound transformation of the age-old structures of domination, the emergence of a new consciousness, and the role of contemporary resources like mobile telephones and the Internet. In another vein, it seems that the practices of domination and their mythical bastions are nearing a condition of marginality brought about by such changes in the early 21st century. However, the author’s sample consists of university and pre-university students, and so does not reflect a broad social spectrum. This fact casts doubt on whether or not such changes exist more extensively in that society, especially since older discourses are still disseminated in the mass media, warning that failure to ‘keep the leash short’ has repercussions for the dominator. The lyrics of a popular ranchero song say: “I lost strength in my left hand… and let go of the reins”.

These reflections on issues of gender and women (but not “the feminine”), the so-called “third wave” of feminism —closely associated with intellectual phenomena similar to those derived from postcolonialism— invite broader reconsiderations of other problems entailed in the construction of alternate identities. In Mexico, for instance, the topic of masculinity has attracted the attention of important theoretical thinkers, including the recently deceased Daniel Cazés. Their research has produced many texts, including doctoral
Badillo and Alberti approach the construction of masculinities through a case that can be considered marginal to the identity conformations that commonly characterize the male gender: those of men who opt for the priestly way of life. Their analysis, conducted in a seminary, suggests an interesting distinction between the identity of the men who have entered the priesthood and the young men who are in training for that vocation.

This brings us to a leap into yet another margin: that of discourses on past and present and the authority they embody with respect to rules and paradigms. For this, we are transported to South Africa in the aftermath of the fall of apartheid, and to Argentina, to focus specifically on the discourses of indigenous intellectuals (organic intellectuals?) that demand inclusion in the history of social segments made invisible by the discourse of official history (and politics). Mario Rufer presents a dense, though very readable, text on the criteria of authority in discourses on otherness. Who says what of whom? and, Who is authorized to say it? In an essay whose drafting surpasses its theoretical and documental referents—conscientiously cited in footnotes—Rufer takes the reader on a voyage of construction and deconstruction of discourses of identity and marginal histories that runs from South Africa to Argentina. His text needs no further introduction; it must be read but, of course, only when seated between the center and the margin.

Who among us has never attended a fandango or a bash? Festivity, dance, drunken revelry. But these two events are distinct. A bash is collective, general, where personal identity is usually blurred as the individual comesling with a collectivity. The fandango is something else: focused on the dance, the face-to-face encounter of woman and man on the dance floor, a preamble to something more as couples dance to the strains of El Chuchumbé with “gyrations, wriggling and shaking contrary to all [modesty]…”, as one scandalized friar in the port of Veracruz put it around the year 1766. Dancing, release and

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2 For example, Oscar Misael Hernández, Masculinidades en Tamaulipas. Una historia antropológica.
enjoyment of the body, competition among men to flaunt their virility in the presence of fiery, empowered women. Martínez de la Rosa offers us a view that juxtaposes the concerns of the Viceregal authorities over this phenomenon with field observations and reflections on the discourses that censure and marginalize such practices in today’s world.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, a new policy to reorganize the *pueblos de indios* set off a discussion on the advisability of founding congregations in, or near, mining districts as a means of resolving the problem of the shortage of labor for the mines that resulted from the demographic crisis of colonial times. The document published herein has a presentation by Jiménez Abollado that contextualizes this debate. Finally, the authorities opted to create marginal settlements on the outskirts of the mining districts, *hospital*-towns, each with its own *doctrina*.

Two of the articles in the Miscellaneous Section touch on a topic that has long been a focus of research projects at El Colegio de Michoacán: the Catholic Church and its members. In the first, Pérez Puente presents a suggestive hypothesis on the intentions behind the founding of the Tridentine seminaries in the 16th century. He argues that the objective was not only to provide centers for the training of aspiring priests, but also to implement a project devised to strengthen the political position of the diocesan clergy in a space—the Indian territories—crisscrossed with, and controlled by, the provinces of the regular clergy.

In the second, Carlos Herrejón Peredo expounds an especially interesting facet of the priest who would enter the annals of Mexico’s national history as the hero of independence: Miguel Hidalgo. His text explores the activities of Father Hidalgo and his family as rural landowners and entrepreneurs whose properties and profits were used to provide not only for themselves but also for the folk around them. This approach opens the door to a stimulating analysis of networks of regional relations and the impact of the agricultural crisis on landowners of this type.

The third, and final, article in this section takes us back to the problem of margins; in this case, the question of public policies con-
cerning nutrition and the popular diet in Mexico in the first half of the 20th century. Martínez describes the tension that emerged between existing ideas and practices in Mexico in this field with the introduction of the science of nutrition as it developed in western cultural complexes and centers: one more aspect of the center-periphery dialogue.

Víctor Gayol

*English translation by Paul C. Kersey Johnson*