



### THE CRACK GENERATION AND ITS EXPONENTS

In August 1996, a group of writers born in the 1960s published a manifesto calling themselves "The Crack Generation." Ricardo Chávez Castañeda (1961), Eloy Urroz (1967), Pedro Angel Palou (1966), Ignacio Padilla (1968) and Jorge Volpi (1968) are the signers. What does their manifesto propose? The will to embody a literary break to renovate contemporary Mexican narrative.

"Crack novels" they say, are not born of certainty, mother of the annihilation of all creativity, but of the most profound doubt about knowing. Therefore, we cannot say that there is one type of "crack novel," but many. They do not seek a better world; they do not believe in a utopia and, without trying to be, they are subversive. Their novels are not romantic, optimistic or "nice." Their novels' dilemma consists of seeking heroically to carry out the feat of finding what the famous Argentine novelist, Julio Cortázar, called their readers' active participation, just when what is being sold and consumed is an abominable reluctance to participate.

The manifesto says, "The narrative has been dying little by little of anemia and complacency. Risk-taking and the desire for renewal are languishing. A vacuum of several years mucks up the ground surrounding letters with absenteeism, absenteeism of novelists who do not write, or, worse, writers who cannot be called novelists."

This generation has no single prophet, but many. Their art is less the art of what has been completed than that of the incomplete.

*Graciela Martínez-Zalce*  
Researcher at CISAN, UNAM.

Now Renata has gone on to kiss his neck; she takes his shirt off little by little and puts her closed lips on the director's tanned skin. He picks her up and puts her on the floor. After a few moments they make love languidly, aware that after the next day things cannot be the same. They caress each other with enjoyment, but slowly, prolonging as much as possible the movements, textures and smells. It is a kind of last chance to enjoy a game of their own their making, far from the world, the old man and the young woman who do not see each other as such, but as two bodies, two minds united and carried away until exhausted. Later, it will no longer be like this. They are not sure what will happen, but they at least know it will be different, that the rhythm of filming will fill their lives, too, that they will concentrate the whole time on that, and as long as it lasts their energy will wane. For once, they do not think about whether they love each other or not, or whether their love is real. They do not stop to measure their actions or judge the acts of the other. They just let themselves go, lost in their sensations, while their wills are annihilated and they approach a vacuum. At last they recognize that this part of the story — the story of their encounters — will have to disappear as though it had never existed, as though no one knew of it, not even they themselves. Once the film begins, they will become strangers again, director and actress, boss and subordinate, subject to the unpredictable forces of fiction. Their common destiny will have vanished, leaving only a few traces, small glimpses, the fragments of a random and impossible story never filmed. ❧