

ABORTION, ITS REPRESENTATION, AND THE PENAL SYSTEM**Álvaro Aleman**

Sangre en las manos (*Blood in your hands*, Quito, 1958), written by Laura Pérez de Oleas Zambrano is the first literary manifestation in Quito, Ecuador on the theme of Abortion. The novel takes as its subject matter the death of a young woman, on the operating table of a midwife—Carmela Granja-- in the first half of the XX century and the subsequent popular uproar this event caused. The novel is not only a meditation on the conditions of (im) possibility of an abortion—a semantic and historic nexus that produces meanings, it is also a xxxx on representation itself. The paper will attempt to trace different ways of representing abortion itself, a continuously fluctuating discourse that oscillates between outright moral condemnation (of a catholic bent) and also includes rationalizations of different types as well as a pragmatic acknowledgement of its necessary existence.

How to represent abortion? With what images and in which symbolic regime? How is representation affected by the full weight of moral condemnation and the reticence of a woman writer? What intertextual moves facilitate the process? What rhetorical strategies, discourses and arguments allow it?

The paper is also concerned with the imprisonment of a flesh and blood, historical individual that practiced abortions in Quito in the first half of the XX century. Both the penal system and imprisonment in the novel appear as a system of oppression and also as the expression of a failed justice system. Gender is a fundamental concern in order to reflect on the intersection of abortion, representation, writing and the prison system.