

The Southern Belle: Northern Representation of New Orleans in Literature, 1848-1867

Abstract: This study explores literature about New Orleans written by Northerners from 1848-1867. These works manipulated the city to represent a specific image of the South to the rest of the nation. I argue that Northerners saw New Orleans as a feminine city and used the city to justify their representations of New Orleanian women in literature. Specifically, Northerners used the figure of the quadroon to explore sexuality and sentimentality during the antebellum and images of white women to explore petulance and chaos during the Civil War. These representations emphasized the “weakness” of the South as a whole and appropriated the North as the stronger, more masculine counterpart.