ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

ABOLITIONISM IN THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH OF AMERICA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive literary and historical analysis of abolitionism in the Northern and Southern United States during the nineteenth century. Abolitionism is examined not as a unified national movement but as a regionally differentiated ideological phenomenon shaped by distinct economic systems, social structures, and cultural values. The study emphasizes the crucial role of literature as a medium through which abolitionist and anti-abolitionist ideas were articulated, disseminated, and contested.

The primary objective of the research is to identify and compare the ideological foundations of Northern abolitionist discourse and Southern pro-slavery rhetoric, with particular attention to their representation in literary texts. The article seeks to demonstrate how literature functioned both as a reflection of historical realities and as an active instrument of moral persuasion and ideological resistance. In the Northern states, abolitionist literature emerged as a powerful force aimed at mobilizing public opinion against slavery, while in the Southern states literary and political discourse largely served to justify and preserve the slaveholding system.

Methodologically, the study adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative approach that combines historical analysis, comparative literary criticism, and discourse analysis. Primary sources include abolitionist novels, autobiographical narratives, essays, and pro-slavery texts, while secondary sources consist of scholarly works in American history and literary studies. This methodological framework enables a balanced examination of abolitionism as both a socio-political movement and a cultural-literary phenomenon.

The discussion highlights significant thematic and rhetorical contrasts between Northern and Southern texts. Northern abolitionist writers employed sentimentalism, realism, and moral argumentation to expose the brutality of slavery and evoke empathy for enslaved individuals. In contrast, Southern discourse constructed an idealized image of plantation life, emphasizing paternalism, racial hierarchy, and social stability, while portraying abolitionism as a dangerous and radical ideology.

The results of the study demonstrate that literature played a decisive role in deepening sectional divisions and intensifying ideological polarization in the decades preceding the American Civil War. By revealing how competing literary narratives shaped regional identities and moral worldviews, the article underscores the scholarly value of abolitionist literature as a vital source for understanding nineteenth-century American history and culture.

Key words

Abolitionism, slavery, the North and the South of America, American literature, ideology, historical and literary analysis.

Абстракт

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Данная статья посвящена комплексному историко-литературному анализу аболиционизма в Северных и Южных штатах США в XIX веке. Аболиционизм рассматривается не как единое национальное движение, а как регионально дифференцированное идеологическое явление, сформированное под влиянием различных экономических укладов, социальных структур и культурных ценностей. Особое внимание уделяется роли литературы как ключевого средства формирования, распространения и противостояния аболиционистским и антиаболиционистским идеям.

Основная цель исследования заключается в выявлении и сравнительном анализе идеологических оснований северного аболиционистского дискурса и южной проработовладельческой риторики, отражённых в литературных текстах. В статье подчеркивается, что литература не только отражала историческую реальность, но и активно участвовала в процессе морального убеждения и идеологической борьбы. В Северных штатах аболиционистская литература способствовала мобилизации общественного мнения против рабства, тогда как в Южных штатах литературный и политический дискурс был направлен на оправдание и сохранение рабовладельческой системы.

Методологической основой исследования является междисциплинарный качественный подход, включающий исторический анализ, сравнительное литературоведение и дискурс-анализ. В качестве первичных источников используются художественные произведения, автобиографические тексты, публицистика и проработовладельческие сочинения. Вторичные источники представлены научными исследованиями в области американской истории и литературной критики. Такой подход позволяет рассматривать аболиционизм одновременно как общественно-политическое движение и как культурно-литературный феномен.

В ходе обсуждения выявляются существенные тематические и риторические различия между северными и южными текстами. Северные авторы использовали сентиментализм, реализм и моральную аргументацию для разоблачения жестокости рабства. Южный дискурс, напротив, формировал идеализированный образ плантационной жизни, акцентируя внимание на патернализме, расовой иерархии и социальной стабильности, одновременно представляя аболиционизм как радикальную и разрушительную идеологию.

Результаты исследования подтверждают, что литература сыграла значительную роль в углублении секциональных противоречий и идеологической поляризации американского общества накануне Гражданской войны. Статья подчеркивает научную значимость изучения аболиционистской литературы как важного источника для понимания истории и культуры США XIX века.

Ключевые слова

Аболиционизм, рабство, Северная и Южная Америка, американская литература, идеология, историко-литературный анализ.

Abstrakt

Ushbu maqola XIX asrda AQShning Shimoliy va Janubiy shtatlarida shakllangan abolitsionizm harakatini tarixiy va adabiy nuqtayi nazardan batafsil tahlil qilishga bag‘ishlangan. Tadqiqotda abolitsionizm yagona milliy harakat sifatida emas, balki turli iqtisodiy tizimlar, ijtimoiy tuzilmalar va madaniy qadriyatlar ta’sirida shakllangan mintaqaviy mafkuraviy hodisa sifatida ko‘rib chiqiladi. Adabiyot abolitsionistik va anti-abolitsionistik g‘oyalarni ifodalash va tarqatishda muhim vosita bo‘lganligi alohida ta’kidlanadi.

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Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi Shimoliy shtatlardagi abolitsionistik oqim va Janubiy shtatlardagi qullikni oqlovchi mafkura o‘rtasidagi asosiy farqlarni aniqlash hamda bu g‘oyalarning adabiy matnlarda qanday aks etganini tahlil qilishdan iborat. Maqolada adabiyot tarixiy voqelikni aks ettirish bilan birga, axloqiy targ‘ibot va mafkuraviy qarama-qarshilik vositasi sifatida faol rol o‘ynagani ko‘rsatib beriladi. Shimolda adabiyot qullikka qarshi jamoatchilik fikrini shakllantirishga xizmat qilgan bo‘lsa, Janubda u mavjud ijtimoiy tuzumni saqlab qolish va himoya qilishga qaratilgan.

Tadqiqot metodologiyasi fanlararo yondashuvga asoslanadi va tarixiy tahlil, qiyosiy adabiy tahlil hamda diskurs tahlil usullarini o‘z ichiga oladi. Tadqiqotda badiiy asarlar, avtobiografik matnlar, publitsistik materiallar va qullikni oqlovchi yozma manbalar asosiy manba sifatida qo‘llaniladi. Shuningdek, Amerika tarixi va adabiyotiga oid ilmiy tadqiqotlar tahlil qilinadi.

Izlanish jarayonida Shimoliy va Janubiy Amerika adabiyotidagi mavzu va ritorik farqlar aniqlanadi. Shimoliy abolitsionistik adabiyotda qullikning g‘ayriinsoniy mohiyati ochib berilib, o‘quvchining axloqiy his-tuyg‘ulariga murojaat qilinadi. Janubiy diskurs esa plantatsiya hayotini ideallashtirib, qullikni tabiiy va ijtimoiy jihatdan oqlangan tizim sifatida tasvirlaydi hamda abolitsionizmni xavfli mafkura sifatida talqin qiladi.

Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, adabiyot Amerika Fuqarolar urushidan oldingi o‘n yilliklarda mintaqaviy tafovutlarning chuqurlashuvi hamda mafkuraviy qutblashuvning kuchayishida hal qiluvchi rol o‘ynagan. Qarama-qarshi adabiyotlar orqali mintaqaviy o‘zlik va axloqiy dunyoqarashlar qanday shakllanganini ochib berar ekan, mazkur maqola abolitsionistik adabiyotning XIX asr Amerika tarixi va madaniyatini anglashda muhim ilmiy manba sifatidagi ahamiyatini asoslab beradi.

Kalit so‘zlar

Abolitsionizm, qullik, Shimoliy va Janubiy Amerika, Amerika adabiyoti, mafkura, tarixiy-adabiy tahlil.

Introduction: Abolitionism emerged as one of the most influential moral, political, and cultural movements in the United States during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rooted in Enlightenment ideals of human equality and reinforced by religious, humanitarian, and democratic principles, the abolitionist movement sought the complete eradication of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. However, abolitionism did not develop uniformly across the United States. Profound ideological, economic, and cultural differences between the Northern and Southern states shaped divergent attitudes toward slavery and, consequently, toward abolitionist thought.

In the Northern states, abolitionism gradually evolved into a powerful reform movement supported by intellectuals, clergy, politicians, and writers. Literature became a crucial instrument for shaping public opinion, exposing the moral atrocities of slavery, and mobilizing resistance against the institution. In contrast, the Southern states, whose economy and social hierarchy were deeply dependent on slave labor, largely resisted abolitionist ideas, framing slavery as a natural, legal, and even benevolent institution. Southern literature and political discourse frequently defended slavery and portrayed abolitionism as a radical and destabilizing threat.

This article examines abolitionism through a comparative Northern–Southern framework, emphasizing both historical realities and literary representations. By integrating historical analysis with literary criticism, the study highlights how abolitionist ideology functioned differently across regions and how literature became a contested space for moral and

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ideological struggle. Scholarly engagement with abolitionism spans multiple disciplines, including history, literary studies, sociology, and cultural theory. Early historical studies focused primarily on abolitionism as a political reform movement. Works by David Brion Davis emphasize the moral and ideological foundations of antislavery thought, tracing its development within transatlantic intellectual traditions (Davis, 1984). Davis argues that abolitionism was not merely a political reaction but a profound moral transformation in Western consciousness.

From a historical standpoint, Eric Foner situates abolitionism within the broader narrative of American freedom, highlighting its role in reshaping democratic ideals and constitutional debates (Foner, 2010). His work underscores the tension between Northern free-labor ideology and Southern slaveholding interests, revealing how these conflicting systems contributed to sectional polarization.

Literary scholars have explored abolitionism primarily through sentimental and reform literature. Jane Tompkins (1985) re-evaluates antislavery novels, particularly "Uncle Tom's Cabin", arguing that sentimental literature wielded cultural power by appealing to readers' moral emotions rather than intellectual abstraction. Similarly, Elizabeth Ammons (1998) highlights the role of women writers in advancing abolitionist discourse, noting that literature offered a platform for marginalized voices excluded from formal political participation.

In contrast, Southern literary responses to abolitionism have received comparatively less critical attention. Studies by Paul Christian Jones and William L. Andrews explore pro-slavery narratives and plantation literature, revealing how Southern writers constructed ideological defenses of slavery through romanticized depictions of plantation life and racial hierarchy.

Despite this extensive scholarship, most studies treat Northern and Southern abolitionist discourses separately, focusing either on antislavery literature or on pro-slavery ideology. Comparative analyses that integrate literary and historical perspectives across regions remain limited, indicating a clear research gap. Moreover, historical studies often prioritize political events and legislative outcomes while underestimating literature's role as a catalyst for ideological conflict. There is insufficient interdisciplinary research that demonstrates how literary texts functioned simultaneously as cultural artifacts and political interventions in both regions.

This research employs a qualitative interdisciplinary methodology, combining approaches from literary studies and historiography. This methodological framework allows for a balanced examination of abolitionism as both a historical movement and a literary phenomenon.

In the Northern United States, abolitionism developed alongside industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of a free-labor economy. Northern abolitionists framed slavery as a moral abomination incompatible with Christian ethics and democratic ideals. Literature played a central role in disseminating these views, appealing to readers' emotions and moral conscience.

Abolitionist writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick Douglass employed sentimentalism, realism, and autobiographical authority to humanize enslaved individuals and expose the violence inherent in slavery. These texts sought not merely to inform but to persuade, mobilize, and morally unsettle their audiences. The widespread circulation of antislavery literature in newspapers, pamphlets, and novels amplified abolitionist influence far beyond formal political institutions.

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In contrast, the Southern states largely rejected abolitionism, constructing a counter-ideology that portrayed slavery as economically necessary, socially stabilizing, and divinely sanctioned. Southern political rhetoric and literature emphasized paternalism, racial hierarchy, and the supposed benevolence of the plantation system.

Pro-slavery novels, essays, and speeches often depicted enslaved people as dependent and content, while representing abolitionists as extremists intent on destroying Southern society. This literary tradition functioned as a defensive mechanism, reinforcing regional identity and legitimizing resistance to Northern moral pressure.

The divergence between Northern and Southern representations of slavery illustrates how literature became an ideological battleground. Texts did not merely reflect existing beliefs; they actively shaped public opinion and intensified sectional divisions. Through narrative, symbolism, and moral argumentation, literature contributed to the construction of mutually exclusive worldviews that ultimately made compromise increasingly impossible

Conclusion: Abolitionism in the United States was not a monolithic movement but a regionally inflected ideological struggle deeply embedded in literature and culture. The Northern states cultivated abolitionist discourse through moral persuasion and literary activism, while the Southern states developed counter-narratives to preserve their social and economic order. By examining these competing perspectives together, this article underscores the importance of literature as both a historical source and a transformative force in shaping national consciousness.

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