Sirpa Salenius's *An Abolitionist Abroad* examines the interconnection between gender, race, and citizenship through the cosmopolitan experiences of Sarah Parker Remond. Remond's position as a free, mixed-race African American woman who engaged in charitable and political activism reveals the divergent impact of racial constructs on conceptions of femininity and citizenship in the United States and Europe. This vantage point offers a thought-provoking perspective because it simultaneously supports and challenges the historical narrative on nineteenth-century women, highlighting the importance of intersectionality and individual experience in future scholarship.

Though Remond pursued the tenets of middle-class respectability—philanthropic activism, engagement in the public sphere, and education—the prevalence of racist stereotypes throughout the United States denied her equal access to leadership and participation in these institutions. These attitudes barred African American women from the same claim to domestic authority and respectability as white middle-class women. Interestingly enough, this prejudiced view had a silver lining: African American women's exclusion from ideological authority enabled them to challenge the traditional public/private divide by addressing mixed-race and mixed-sex audiences as anti-slavery lecturers. Consequently, Remond's oratory abilities provided her with the chance to reside in Britain and Italy where she obtained equal (or sometimes even superior) access to higher education, civil society, and professional opportunities.

Salenius argues that it was only through living among like-minded Europeans who opposed slavery, racism, political oppression, and sexism that Remond was able to execute her right to equal participation in the public sphere. During this time, Remond served as an executive committee member of the London Emancipation Society, studied the humanities at Bedford Ladies College and nursing at London University College and Maria Nuova School, and became a certified obstetrician and surgeon. These experiences advanced Remond's personal goals and promoted racial equality more generally by proving what African Americans could accomplish when granted equal opportunities with whites.

Though past works have studied the gendered nuances of civic activism through the lens of masculinity, Salenius's work reveals how these women sought to protect their own and others' claims to citizenship against forces of tyranny and oppression in the United States, the British Empire, and Italy. Remond's example proves that certain African American women were able to navigate tensions around racial and gendered power relationships by manipulating these assumptions.
Remond’s mixed-race status and personification of femininity and gentility legitimized her presence in a controversial role: public speaking. As a result, Remond’s life illustrates a gray area in conceptions of powerlessness; Remond was able to practice more autonomy than most white elite women while simultaneously facing racial discrimination, which challenged her right to be present in the very social circles where she could enact her rightful equality. The ambiguity of her racial status endowed her with a sense of allure and novelty, which made her audiences anxious to rectify any traces of impropriety in her speaking publicly by depicting her as a model of feminine virtue, intellect, and capability.

One of the strengths of Salenius’s work is her use of Remond’s life to reassess assumptions about race, gender, and activism in the nineteenth century. Parts of the book, however, would have benefited from a more nuanced analysis of these themes. Though Salenius suggests that many of Remond’s opportunities depended on her education, wealth, and near-white appearance, she does not thoroughly dissect the relationship between her race and experiences. Salenius and others convincingly argue that physical appearance was the criterion for nineteenth-century racial categorization, yet Salenius does not question how much Remond’s conformity to white cultural and moral standards affected her acceptance within European reform-minded circles by comparing her opportunities with the other African American women mentioned in this book.

Likewise, Salenius outlines Remond’s engagement in anti-slavery and Italian nationalism without placing her work within the wider context of the American Civil War and Italian Wars of Independence. Despite the fact that Salenius provides a detailed description of the various figures in Remond’s social and philanthropic circles, she neglects to clearly articulate Remond’s role within these transnational movements vis-à-vis her peers. For example, why was Remond one of the few anti-slavery lecturers who remained in England after the Civil War? What is the significance of the similarities between Remond’s and Giuseppe Mazzini’s experiences as foreigners rallying British public opinion to advance their national political agendas? And how do the divergent aspects of their experiences reveal insights about gender and race?

Overall, An Abolitionist Abroad is an intriguing example of how scholars can use one individual’s life to reanalyze ideas about power, race, gender, citizenship, transnationalism, and the separate spheres ideology. It is a beneficial read to anyone interested in transatlantic networks, philanthropy, women and the family, education, anti-slavery, race and class, and nationalism and citizenship in the nineteenth century. The book’s length and tone also make it particularly suitable for an undergraduate course on transnational women’s history or gender and race.
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