

**Title of Paper: "A Return and Re-reading of Domestic Fiction (Ab)Normalcy: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's Literary Dwellings"**

**Abstract (300-400 words):**

Nineteenth-century literature written by women has traditionally been associated to the domestic space, as the labels that have applied to it perfectly demonstrate. Among them, "domestic fiction" has stood out, as Nina Baym has demonstrated in her research works. In the same way as in the pandemic we have been forced to seclude ourselves in the supposedly safer realm of the house, Victorian women were seemingly confined to the limits of their domestic spaces. Nowadays, apparently, we are in the process of going back to normalcy and, thus, recovering previous outdoor activities. And it is in this same context of relieving ourselves of those home constrictions, that this proposal invites to open the gates of our sometimes too hermetic interpretations of the role that the domestic realm has played in the lives and literary works of nineteenth-century women writers.

The aim of this essay is to return to the alleged domestic normalcy that is automatically associated to the lives and works of those female writers with the intention of analysing not only the limitations (which have very frequently been highlighted by feminist criticism) but also the real value and power that the home space has also offered them. Thus, parting from Caroline Hellman's assumption that domestic habitation is usually a private act and writing a potentially public one, this essay will also portray how the domestic realm has sometimes been used as a catapult to spread, precisely, reforming ideas and "abnormal" (literal and metaphorical) spatial options for Victorian women. Besides, it will demonstrate how the domestic realm has not always been the only setting chosen by nineteenth-century women writers for their literary works.

As these intentions are too ambitious, for this study, I will particularly focus on and revise the valuable contributions of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1844-1911). She has not received the attention that she deserves even if she was a pioneer in the search for a new model of womanhood (which I have called "the New True Woman") whose main exploit was to show her contemporary women possible ways out of their houses (if that was their vocation) in search of new "normalcies", as if the end of their patriarchal "pandemic" was also possible or at sight.