Trapped in Bluebeard's Chamber: Rose Terry Cooke and Nineteenth-Century "Desperate Housewives."

Bridget Renee Garland, East Tennessee State University

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Committee Chair or Co-Chairs
Mark Holland

Committee Members
Ronald K. Giles, Robert Sawyer

Abstract
Often overlooked in the study of nineteenth-century American literature, the New England writer Rose Terry Cooke elicited great popular appeal during the peak of her career. The admiration Cooke received from her readers and fellow writers compels one to question Cooke's present-day obscurity. Cooke's fiction and poetry seem inconsistent with the attitudes she expresses in her non-fiction, particularly concerning religion and women's suffrage. She portrays women in miserable marriages, desperately looking for an escape. These "brides of Bluebeard" find different ways to cope with their predicament. While most never truly escape, many use (1) religious devotion, (2) masochism, and (3) homosocial relations as "coping mechanisms" in their plight. I identify each of these reactions to Bluebeard figures in Cooke's writing in order to understand the contradictions in her works, for, like Cooke, these brides were products of their culture, torn between duty to self and duty to others.

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COOKE, Mrs. Rose Terry, author, born on a farm near Hartford, Conn., 17th February, 1827. Her father was Henry Wadsworth Terry, and her mother's maiden name was Anne Wright Hurlbut, and she was a daughter of John Hurlbut, of Wethersfield, Conn., who was the first New England shipmaster who sailed around the earth. When Rose Terry was six years old, her parents moved into Hartford. Her father educated her in out-door lore, and she was familiar with birds, bees, flowers and sunshine. She was carefully

Comments about Rose Terry Cooke.
There is no comment submitted by members..
Poem Hunter 

Arachne
I watch her in the corner there,
As, restless, bold, and unafraid,
She slips and floats along the air
Till all her subtile house is made.
Her home, her bed, her daily food
All from that hidden store she draws;
She fashions it and knows it good,
By instinct's strong and sacred laws.

Then, worn with toil, and tired of life,
In vain her shining traps are set.
Her frost hath hushed the insect
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