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Economic Women

Lana L. Dalley, Jill Rappoport

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"The editors' ability to draw together such a wide and strong range of original scholarship is quite impressive. The essays together both support the argument and demonstrate the necessity of the editors' broad claims about the role of women and economics in nineteenth-century Britain."

—Claudia Klaver, Syracuse University



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"This collection highlights some of the most interesting current work in the dynamic field of economic criticism, functioning both as an introduction and as an intervention in that field by stressing the economic work of women. It offers a fresh, crucial, and very welcome perspective."

—Talia Schaffer, professor of English, Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Economic Women: Essays on Desire and Dispossession in Nineteenth-Century British Culture, edited by Lana L. Dalley and Jill Rappoport, showcases the wide-ranging economic activities and relationships of real and fictional women in nineteenth-century British culture. This volume's essays chronicle the triumphs and setbacks of women who developed, described, contested, and exploited new approaches to economic thought and action. In their various roles as domestic employees, activists fighting for free trade, theorists developing statistical models, and individuals considering the cost of marriage and its dissolution, the women discussed here were givers and takers, producers and consumers.

Bringing together leading and emerging voices in the field, this collection builds on the wealth of interdisciplinary economic criticism published in the last twenty years, but it also challenges traditional understandings of economic subjectivity by emphasizing both private and public records and refusing to identify a single female corollary to Economic Man. The scholars presented here recover game-changing stories of women's economic engagement from diaries, letters, ledgers, fiction, periodicals, and travel writing to reveal a nuanced portrait of Economic Women. Offering new readings of works by George Eliot, Bram Stoker, Willkie Collins, Charlotte Riddell, and Ellen Wood, and addressing political economy, consumerism, and business developments alongside family finances and the ethics of exchange, *Economic Women* tells a story of ambivalence as well as achievement, failure as well as forward motion.

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