



**Forschungskolloquium Gender Studies HS 2019**

## **Talking Business** **Female Figures' Contributions to Victorian** **Economies**

**Projektpräsentation von Olivia Biber, Zürich**

**Mittwoch, 23.10.2019, 16:15–17:45**

**Asien-Orient-Institut, Raum RAA-E 12**

**Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich**

Alongside the growth of modern capitalism, economics emerges as a crucial form of knowledge production in the nineteenth century. However, because nineteenth-century society is organised in patriarchal structures, the term 'economic subject' essentially refers to male individuals excluding women from the discourse. In order to challenge such conceptions, orthodox economic theories need to be re-negotiated, with feminist economics taking a crucial role. In this regard, literature intersects productively with economics, because there are numerous examples of narrative fiction that feature women as economic subjects. Since literature plays an active role in shaping economic thought, it has the potential to challenge, critically engage with, work through and imagine differently a specific society's understanding of the economy. This is precisely what I will investigate in my presentation: How does Victorian narrative fiction contribute to economic thought at the time? Reconsidering and re-examining literary texts of that period through the lens of feminist economics will result in complicating the prevalent critical narrative.

Olivia Biber is a Research and Teaching Assistant at the English Department. In her PhD project, which is tentatively titled "Writing the Margin: Female Figures' Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Economic Theory", she investigates how narrative fiction not only contributes to but also challenges economic theory. Moreover, Biber is an Associate Member of the Inter-University Gender Studies Doctoral Program at the University of Zurich.