



**The Virtuous Marketplace: Women and Men,
Money and Politics in Paris, 1830--1870 (The Johns
Hopkins University Studies in Historical and
Political Science)**

Professor Victoria E. Thompson

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In late-eighteenth-century France, the "free market" was hailed as a powerful alternative to absolutism. But by the 1830s, social upheaval caused by repeated revolution and by industrialization led many to call this model into question. Associating freedom with licentiousness and individualism with selfishness, these French critics of the free market developed an alternative model, in which freedom was replaced with self-control and individualism with selflessness.

In *The Virtuous Marketplace* Victoria Thompson explores how this process developed, paying special attention to the changing roles of women in the markets of mid-nineteenth-century Paris. She shows how French women, whose dual economic role as producers and consumers had previously been taken as a matter of course, became the object of a growing fear of the market as a source of social unrest. At the same time, the image of the economically dependent woman became useful to those who demanded higher pay for male "breadwinners." Ultimately, the figure of the prostitute was used to characterize the dangers of the public market, providing the basis for its regulation and for the exclusion of women from it.

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