

ideas into actions. Although she does escape seduction and ruin, (the very real fate of many “young and beautiful” women who run away to a large city to earn their living), Laura’s goal to become an independent woman and an accomplished and successful artist proves to be of secondary importance: despite the fact that she encounters plenty of evidence to the contrary, she believes in and looks forward to the perfect marriage. However, while Laura Stanley’s story follows a conventional pattern, Frank Heywood’s story does not. Heywood, whose expression communicates “an indefinable something hard to interpret, yet felt by all who knew him,” is introduced early in the novel to play the role of Laura’s friend and protector. By the time he reveals his secret to Laura, it is obvious that he plays the role that Laura Stanley is meant to play in *Fettered For Life*.

The fairy tale conclusion to *Fettered For Life*, a convention of many nineteenth-century novels, is an unsatisfactory ending to a novel that is consistent in providing unsatisfactory endings to too many of the most significant episodes in the novel. Furthermore, considering the novel’s message, it is frustrating that the characters begin conversations concerning the “woman question” that are left unfinished or insufficiently explored, sacrificed to the demands of social calls, doorbells, or waiting carriages. These conversations, as well as many vignettes or separate stories that are intended to contribute to the main plot, lack closure and do not fit seamlessly into the novel.

Although *Fettered For Life* is finally disappointing, Grace Farrell’s afterword is not. Farrell’s excellent essay, complete with notes, discusses both *Fettered for Life* and the nineteenth-century culture in which it was written. Farrell presents a strong argument for why Lillie Devereux Blake’s “work is well worth remembering.” She encourages us to see Blake as a forerunner and *Fettered For Life* as “one of the important missing links of women’s literary tra-

dition.” According to Farrell, Blake anticipated Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, as well as twentieth-century feminist theories on gender differences. *Fettered For Life* “may well have helped pave the way” for Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*. The afterword makes it easier to understand why the Feminist Press chose to recover and publish *Fettered For Life*.

### **BARMAIDS: A HISTORY OF WOMENS WORK IN PUBS**

Diane Kirby. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

#### **BY SHERRILL CHEDA**

Niceness is out, and now that it is good for women to be bad, we will see more books about “bad” girls and women with titles such as *Bitch: In Praise of Difficult Women* by Elizabeth Wurzel (1998), and *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1889–1930* by Carolyn Strange (1995). We will also see more scholarly social and cultural research about women’s employment in unusual or less than socially sanctioned work environments. As Kirby states in the introduction to her book, *Barmaids*: “It is the story of how women’s work behind the bar has figured in wider public discussions, and of the way women workers have had to negotiate the cultural meaning attached to being a barmaid. It is a study of the dynamics of work and leisure, of sexual difference and sexuality in the work place, of pubs and drinking cultures and the creation of a gendered and radicalized national cultural identity.”

Ironically, in Australia, historically both women and Aboriginal people were forbidden by law to drink in pubs so women were working behind the bar, serving white men in an

environment where they were excluded as customers. So while women’s work in the pubs is a cultural activity as well as an economic activity, the cultural activity of socializing and drinking together as patrons was closed to women and non-whites until after the Second World War.

Kirkby, beginning in the nineteenth century, weaves the cultural history of Australian innkeeping with the history of Australia and women’s roles as innkeepers, hotel servants and barmaids, amply illustrated with superb archival photographs. Using primary documents and secondary sources, Kirkby documents women’s working conditions and health as well as the wider society’s concerns about their respectability. The strongest and most vocal opponents of women working as barmaids during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were the women-dominated temperance organizations.

As the twentieth century began, barmaids were beginning to organize themselves into unions to improve their wages and working conditions. Kirkby documents their plight through the decline in business of the 1930s depression era to the boom during the 1940s wartime, when women and men in the armed services drank together through to the more relaxed post-war pub culture where state laws prohibiting Aboriginal people from drinking were dismantled.

By 1968, barmaids had won the battle for equal pay and the 35 hour work week. In the last 30 years, as the rest of the culture changed, so did pubs and women’s work. Although *Barmaids* draws primarily on Australian historical material, the issues raised about workers, work, power, sexuality, and sexual difference have implications beyond the limitation of national boundaries. This is a social history of work mixed with the cultural history of one occupation and a study of the meanings embedded in both. As such, it should be valuable to researchers in this area and college and university libraries.