

Wicked Traders, Deserving Peddlers, and Virtuous Smugglers: The Counter-Economy of Jane Barker's Jacobite Novel

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A manuscript-circulated coterie poetess, then a (long-forgotten) pioneer in the rise of the English novel, Jacobite author Jane Barker witnessed with distrust and distaste the rise of businessmen and tradespeople in early eighteenth-century British society. Standing at the crossroads between the two worlds and world-pictures of the Jacobite court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Hanoverian Britain, deeply concerned with, and personally affected by, the material difficulties of the daily survival of Jacobite partisans, she simultaneously expressed and fostered the uneasiness of the men and women of the landed gentry faced with the change from a status- to a class-based society in her later novels. To this end, she created a variety of sharply delineated, often contradictory “trading” figures vested with symbolic and political significance. Halfway between observation and allegorization, novelistic characterization provided Barker with a way to negotiate a difficult adaptation to the unsparing historical necessity—the dual political and economic revolution—which had upset both her status as a poet of the elite and the political and religious order to which she still adhered.

abstract

RETURNING FROM a fifteen-year-long voluntary exile in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Jacobite poet Jane Barker (1652–1732) must have beheld with dismay the changes in her native country that had followed the Revolution of 1688. Daughter, and eventually sole heiress to Thomas Barker, a former secretary to the Great Chancellor forced into rural retirement by the events of 1649, who carefully educated her in well-bred Arcadian simplicity, she had enjoyed a genteel independence, professing in manuscript-circulated poems her devotion to science (notably medicine), rural living, and a friendly coterie of Cambridge amateur poets, until 1689.¹ Having further authored two volumes of ardently

¹ See Kathryn King and Jeslyn Medoff, “Jane Barker and Her Life (1652–1732); the Documentary Record,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 21, no. 3 (1997): 16–34; and Kathryn King, *Jane Barker, Exile: A Literary Career 1675–1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). Originally written in French, this article has been a crucial episode in a long-term struggle with Jane Barker's *Galesia Trilogy*. I am

pro-Stuart manuscript verses in “fairly distinguished”² Saint-Germain circles, she returned to an increasingly hostile Britain in 1705. Struggling to manage her father’s estate under the manifold economic and political hardships that beset Jacobites and Catholics, the now impecunious author shifted from bucolic poetry to realistic printed narratives. In 1713, six years before Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, she published her first novel *Love Intrigues; Or, the Amours of Bosvil and Galesia*, an introspective, first-person account of life in the royalist landed gentry during the Restoration.³ In 1723 and 1726, Barker revived her heroine Galesia and her commitments to poetry, medicine, and “a Virgin Life” with *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* and *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen*.⁴ Departing from the monodic autobiographical straightforwardness of *Love Intrigues*, these two non-linear, odd miscellanies weave together prose and verse fragments, autobiographical recollections, satires, elegies, realistic inset narratives and allegorical tales in a daily account of the aging poetess’s existence. Though indebted to the traditional “framed-novelle,” or Boccaccian collection of novellas,⁵ these archaic-

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² King and Medoff, 22.

³ Jane Barker, *Love Intrigues; Or, the Amours of Bosvil and Galesia, as Related to Lucasia in Saint Germain’s Garden* (London: Edmund Curll, 1713). A revised and slightly altered version followed: *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs. Jane Barker*, 2 vols. (London: A. Bettsworth and E. Curll, 1719), reprinted in 1736 and 1743. Barker’s next two novels, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (London: E. Curll and T. Payne, 1723) and *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen* (London: A. Bettsworth, 1726), appeared prior to her return to Saint-Germain. All three fictions were at last re-edited by Carol Shiner Wilson in *The Galesia Trilogy and Selected Manuscripts Poems of Jane Barker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), then reissued as separate paperbacks by Kessinger Publishing.

⁴ Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723), in *The Galesia Trilogy*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson, 139. References are to this edition: *Love Intrigues* cited as *LI*, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* cited as *PWS*, and *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen* cited as *LPW*.

⁵ On the “framed-novelle” tradition and feminist innovations in the *Patch-work*

seeming “hybrid” narratives are also novelistic experiments in “self-conscious generic diversity,”⁶ which interpolate both formal and psychological realism in an anxious account of modernity, as Galesia relinquishes her beloved country-seat and painfully adjusts to the brutal and insecure London atmosphere. In this new, bewildering setting, still on the eve of the Revolution in the *Patch-Work*, then during the Walpolian era in *The Lining*, the City achieves a growing prominence, and merchants—tradespeople turned traders—surpass the rural gentry and aristocracy.

The aristocratic dedicatee of *Love Intrigues*—the countess of Exeter—is accordingly replaced in the allegorical forewords of the more democratic miscellanies by anonymous “readers,” a “Throng of People of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions ... rejoicing at a wonderful Piece of Patch-Work they had in Hand” (*PWS*, 53). Barker’s target audience thus extends from the leisured to the lower classes, substantiating the critical assumptions which in the wake of Ian Watt link the institutionalization of the novel to the ascent of an increasingly urban middle-class readership in the budding capitalism of the early eighteenth century. Barker’s (momentarily) “happy Undertakers” are engaged in a collective venture whose outcome remains metaphorical, and hence intangible—a “patch-work scheme” (*PWS*, 53) that Carol Shiner Wilson views as a reference to contemporary collective speculative enterprise. A wary observer of the South Sea Bubble, to which she refers with much distaste in the *Patch-work* fictions, Barker witnessed a time when traditional mercantilism verged into an exchange capitalism that blended financial and commercial agency.⁷ The spectacular increase in retail and goods consumption of the late Stuart era continued, but the swarming shops and overflowing supplies now paled before a weightless economy of paper-money, credit transactions, and stock-jobbing. Not only did the rich “gamble with surplus wealth rather than leaving it idle,” but also “bills of exchange passed into circulation from clients to shopkeepers, from retailers to wholesalers, from manufacturers to their raw-

novels, see Josephine Donovan, *Women and the Rise of the Novel, 1405–1726* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 55–57.

⁶ King, *Jane Barker, Exile*, 194.

⁷ The main source for socio-economic particulars here is Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1990), esp. chaps. 1, 2, 5, and 6. Further information was drawn from Linda Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), chaps. 2 and 4.

material suppliers. All forms of credit-worthy paper—even lottery tickets—tended to become negotiable and pass into circulation.”⁸ As a source of individual and national empowerment,⁹ credit-supported trade enjoyed a popularity that transcended class and party divides.

Galesia’s professed aversion to “the South Sea ... or any other Bubble” (*PWS*, 152) testifies to Barker’s uneasiness towards the new forms of capitalist investment and credit-based finance, the mechanisms and possibilities of which engrossed and fashioned her audience’s mind, begetting a “new breed of economic, literary and politic subject” whose appetite for fiction was partly met by the emerging novel, as Catherine Ingrassia concludes from a survey of scholarship on eighteenth-century finance and fictionality.¹⁰ An imaginative and commercial speculation—an investment in verisimilitude and a venture on a booming book market—the new-born genre shows the “inextricable link between the financial and the literary, and the symbolic and material marketplaces that inform culture and texts.”¹¹

Entrusting her works to the promiscuous commercial politics of the publisher Edmund Curll, Barker becomes an active participant in the literary market and a somewhat unwilling contributor to the culture of early capitalism.¹² This pragmatic response to economic changes and necessity was no endorsement

⁸ Porter, 202, 188. See also Colley, 66.

⁹ Colley, 60.

¹⁰ Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

¹¹ Ingrassia, 15.

¹² According to Valerie Rumbold, Barker and Curll’s relationship is typical of “the paradoxical workings of the new commercial world of print, aligned in essentials with modernizing Whig commercialism, but in its quest for viable markets, prepared to procure and promote even the most reactionary doctrine where a demand could be established.” Rumbold, “Rank, Community and Audience: The Social Range of Women’s Poetry,” in *Women and Poetry 1600–1750*, ed. Sarah Prescott and David Shuttleton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 131. Curll’s actual political commitments are doubtful, since he always behaved “first of all like a bookseller, seeking to expand his business through the opportunities of the moment.” Paul Baines and Pat Rogers, *Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42. Curll unhesitatingly released any seditious texts that could attract popular notice, along with respectable publications—religious pamphlets, classics and edifying novels—designed for a largely, but not wholly, Tory elite. Perhaps dismayed by his scandalous *Venus in the Cloister* (1724), Barker entrusted *The Lining* (1726) to Bettesworth.

of a system that she silently repudiated by retiring to Saint-Germain from 1726 to her death in 1732. A “writer for pay” yet “a Jacobite novelist,”¹³ Barker also raises a potentially hostile voice, questioning the very models she depicts, availing herself of the literary trade in order to instil her distrust of dominant culture into her readers’ imaginations. Far from celebrating the economic changes that her novels mirror and partake in, Barker’s version of the emerging novel articulates the “acute anxiety” that conservative politicians and moralists expressed at “the challenges caused by commercial capitalist expansion to the political, social, and gender orders of landed society.”¹⁴ The uncertain life-adventures of Galesia and her interlocutors certainly substantiate Michael McKeon’s assessment of the novel as a genre crafted to articulate and explore “problems of categorial instability” that undermined traditional authority and upset the canons of seventeenth-century aristocratic romances.¹⁵ Yet ancient hierarchies retained part of their strength in romance-pervaded narratives, as in society where accession to legislature implicitly required either landed property or assimilation into the gentry through land-acquisition and intermarriage (notwithstanding the ever-increasing prestige of “trade” and finance).

Barker registered these changes and resistances by shifting from manuscript poetry to the more profitable commercial novel, while shunning the most popular types of fiction, which contemporary women novelists tended to favour. Despite formal similarities and a common political animus, her pessimistic anti-romances depart from Aphra Behn’s amatory tradition, as well as from the erotic fictions and sex-and-scandal allegories of Delarivier Manley and Eliza Haywood.¹⁶ A “lady” emphatically addressing other “ladies”

¹³ King, *Jane Barker, Exile* (147, 180).

¹⁴ Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640–1990* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 54.

¹⁵ Michael McKeon, *The Origins Of The English Novel 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 20.

¹⁶ Barker’s relationship to contemporary women writers—especially Tory novelists—is discussed in King, *Jane Barker, Exile*, 20–21, 149, 180–92, 196–200. Though Behn obviously provided the plots for several inset tales, Barker’s only explicit reference is in a rather unfavourable contrast with Katherine Philips, whom Galesia repeatedly claims as her poetic model. Barker does not mention Manley and Haywood whereas she darts several barbed comments at Defoe, whom she may have considered her chief competitor. Barker’s relations to Defoe were partially examined by King in *Jane Barker, Exile*, 196–98, but Margaret Cavendish’s possible (silent) influence still requires elucidation.

in her paratexts, she revisits instead Margaret Cavendish's legacy of formal freedom and self-observant authorship, with distinctively metaphysical, anti-materialistic overtones.¹⁷ Galesia's emphatic distrust of love and matrimony combines with her intellectual, religious, and aesthetic pursuits into a unique spiritual (auto) biography, to which her interlocutors' inset narratives bring a multi-subjective view of societal changes. Reaching beyond the scope of the "pious polemics" and moral didacticism sometimes ascribed to her,¹⁸ Barker constructs her solitary heroine as a representative of a displaced elite much shaken by economic as well as political revolutions—a "figure of the alienated Other."¹⁹ Tradespeople in these increasingly polyphonic and intricate narratives are likewise moral types fraught with social and political implications, rather than economic agents: they register the variations in form and perception of a "trading" spirit that is alien to the traditional order of the late Stuart monarchy.

Among the many commercial characters and business stories, three tales, whose heroes and plots achieve a quasi-archetypal status, bear witness to Barker's vexed relation to the new socio-economic order that forced itself upon her. The most obnoxious of a series of disingenuous, lecherous city men, Jack Mechant, an upstart footman and fund-holder, epitomizes the corruption of post-revolutionary commercial society. By contrast, the meek and pious Mrs Goodwife, a noble partisan who survives revolutionary depredations by gruel-peddling, typifies a trading virtue that reconciles business efficiency and Tory-Jacobite ideals. This somewhat Manichean depiction ends with an allegorical tale that reveals Barker's underlying ambivalence as a professional to the book trade and its paradoxical potentialities for empowerment and dispossession: turning trader too, former poetess Galesia dispatches "factors" on the London market to retail imported "moral virtues." The meditation on the ethics of trade that partly informs the three-novel cycle thus winds up in a self-reflective attempt to negotiate and define authorial status in a mercantile society.

¹⁷ *Love Intrigues* was likewise authored in the 1713 edition "by a young Lady."

¹⁸ John Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Pattern, 1700–1739* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 232. This view, together with Jane Spencer's concurring assessment of Barker's respectability in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), is challenged by King in *Jane Barker, Exile* as unfaithful to Barker's formal, as well as political and religious, audacity.

¹⁹ King and Medoff, 29.

Jack Mechant, or the "Quintessence" of Mercantile Perversion

An arch-deceiver, a seducer, and an unnatural father, Jack Mechant stands out as a Satanic figure in *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen*, where he appears in the narratives of, first, his wife Dorinda, then his little son, briefly materializing at last on his way to the gallows. Unattached to any definite trade, the man nonetheless emerges as a typical inhabitant of "the realm of fantasy, passion, and amour-propre"²⁰ of the new credit economy, one whose words, actions, and manipulations of others are steeped in the rhetorical and conceptual world of trade and finance. The erstwhile footman's career is a life-long speculation—first on his own sex-appeal and his imprudent mistress's fear of dishonour, when he traps giddy heiress Dorinda into a hasty marriage, then on the popularity and intricacies of credit investments, which provide credible pretexts for disposing of his wife's estate. His life is, as well, a series of ruthless transactions. Driven by greed and the "nonrational forces" that move J.G.A. Pocock's "new economic man," he liquidates Dorinda's property in order to fund his gambling and whoring habits, then sells her first-born together with his own bastard son to a slave trader.²¹ He ends up at Tyburn after murdering one of his concubines "because she ask'd him for money to maintain [their child]" (*LPW*, 251).

A paroxysmal yet typical instance of a hydra-like post-revolutionary wickedness, Jack Mechant stands at the centre of a constellation of deceitful city men who avail themselves of the rising prestige of the trading class and the complexities of credit economy in order to ruin guileless women. The first of these, in the *Patch-Work Screen*, is merely a goldsmith, a prosperous London craftsman and shop-owner who waylays innocent country wenches during morning prayers; he is replaced in the post-revolutionary tales of the *Lining* by amphibious creatures, self-styled gentlemen-traders drifting from commodity to bond market. Spurning the landed gentry's property and the traditional merchants' tangible goods alike, yet claiming both bourgeois respectability and aristocratic eminence, these low-born impostors masquerade as new moneyed elite, clothing their conjugal frauds in fictitious commercial ventures and

²⁰ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 466.

²¹ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 462.

stock investments, such as the “great Business, Projects and Undertakings,” “the Banks and the Funds” (*LPW*, 246) flaunted by Mechant, or the “great Business at the Exchange, Custom-House, and Post-Office” of the “great *London* Merchant, Son to a Country Gentleman of an Estate” (*LPW*, 263, 264), who seduces Malhurissa, another misguided Jacobite heiress, into a sham marriage and out of her money. Coupling sexual offence with business imposture, replacing real tradespeople by sham traders, Barker makes no secret of her distrust of the new forms of capitalistic transactions. Trade, a self-interested pursuit in Barker’s world view, seems to be from the first fraught with dangers of corruption and dishonour which find ample scope among the infinite possibilities for deception of the sophisticated weightless economy. Akin to stock-jobbing in its dependence on credit and exchanges of “fictitious tokens,”²² Barker warns that modern trade can easily turn into swindle.

Strangers to the harmonious agrarian patriarchy of *Love Intrigues*, merchants and businessmen distinctly belong to the citified universe of the post-revolutionary era, a foretaste of which Galesia gets when she settles in late-Restoration London after her father’s death in *A Patch-Work Screen*. The spectre of mercantile power and wickedness lurks in the capital, where Barker’s Cassandra-like heroine fearfully watches the embers, soon to be rekindled, of the “Wicked spirit” that caused former political upheavals. Surveying the city from her lodgings, Galesia compares the Civil War to a criminal speculation on “the Ruins of the Church and State” and soon shifts from the past to a gnomic present, incriminating a timeless “Covetousness” and “Avarice” “for [which] we often sell our Friends, King, Country, Laws, and even our eternal Happiness” (*PWS*, 125–26). Unmitigated by the Restoration, these (wild) appetites flare up again in *The Lining* as the ruling passions of the Hanoverian age, typified by Jack Mechant’s “Quintessence of Wickedness” (*LPW*, 252). Set in a context of nostalgia for lost rural independence and innocence, this blaming of political and spiritual transgressions on mercenary greed—a selling away of one’s soul and country in hope of dubious riches—is the preamble to a neo-Harringtonian indictment of the connivance of politicians and traders in a credit-based state economy. Selling away Dorinda’s property to

²² Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays On Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 445.

put in “the Banks and Funds” at the time when public credit, the national debt, and the Bank of England were instituted, Mechant is the “new economic man,” “replacing the authority and identity of landed wealth with the anonymity of paper credit” to “increase [his] wealth without any discernible work”;²³ but he is also “entering into a contractual relationship with the State,” ostensibly supporting post-revolutionary economic policy “during a period when investment expectations and profit-taking were redesigning the order of social life.”²⁴ Dorinda’s account of her reluctant yielding points at “the subversion of real by mobile property”²⁵ in state-endorsed financial capitalism: “At this Juncture he pretended it was extremely advisable to sell my other Lordship, to which at first I was very averse; but he alledging how great the Taxes on Land were, and like to continue, and that the Banks and Funds made a much better Return; which he pretended to know by Experience, as if he had put the Money of that other Lordship there ... I consented; thinking that his Pretences, of the Funds, and Bank might be in some degree true” (*LPW*, 246). When Malhurissa’s sham merchant pretends state control and credit economy (“the Exchange, Custom-House, and Post-Office”), the official countenancing of trade and speculation again proves responsible for the loss of honour, independence, and virtue.

Readers could scarcely ignore the political undertones of these financial deceptions in a frame narrative interspersed with allusions to the South Sea Bubble and similar instances of politico-economic collusion under Whig leadership. Contemporary imaginations, moreover, were well stocked with representations, positive and negative, of the interdependence of state and trade mechanisms in paper-money economy, such as Joseph Addison’s 1711 allegory of “Credit” in the *Spectator* as “a beautiful virgin, seated on a throne of gold” in a room hung with “many Acts of Parliament written in golden letters,” to wit, “the Magna Carta,” “the Act of Uniformity,” “The Act of Toleration,” “the Act of Settlement” and “such Acts of Parliament as had been made for the establishment of public funds.”²⁶ Yet Addison’s Royal Exchange is not “a

²³ Ingrassia, 23.

²⁴ Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 6, 8.

²⁵ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 451.

²⁶ Joseph Addison, *Spectator* no. 3 (3 March 1711), 8 vols. (London: Tonson and Draper, 1747), 1:19–20.

place of dealing in stocks and funds,” but “a concourse of solid merchants, exchanging real commodities through the medium of money”;²⁷ credit, incorporated into trade, is a patriotic process essential to British power and political stability.

Antithetic to Addison’s virginal credit and virtuous merchants, Barker’s sham businessmen are lecherous swindlers distracted by greed. Akin to Pocock’s hyper-sexual stock-jobbing “effeminate male,” they prompt ethical and political reprobation alike. Jack Mechant, who demonstrates his inability “to fulfill the appropriate manly civic role”²⁸ by spurning both a military career and land ownership, also impersonates usurped authority as a treacherous husband and unnatural father: like Addison, but for highly subversive purposes, Barker harks back to 1688 and its Hanoverian sequels in her domestic figurations of the new capitalistic bourgeois regime.

Barker’s stigmatization of capitalistic pseudo-traders, as emblematic of the threats and frauds of post-revolutionary economic policy, is further politicized by recurring sham-marriage plots that subvert the traditional allegory of monarchy as a “marriage” between the monarch and the people.²⁹ Purported love-matches to traders prove not only ruinous and unhappy, but also polygamous or left-handed, fraught with “the possibilities of rape’s violence and degradation” that haunt opposition writers—Jacobite propagandists and Tory novelists prior to 1760.³⁰ Dorinda’s agonized yielding of her person and property originates in the knowledge that “[her] Honour (as to outward appearances) was lost” (*LPW*,

²⁷ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 456.

²⁸ See E.J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10. The opposition between Addison’s “Virgin” and Barker’s traders exemplifies Clery’s distinction between the Whig, or progressivist, celebration of feminization and “redemptive femininity” and the negative concept of effeminacy or effeminization in conservative rhetorics—“a complex of derogatory ideas also gendered ‘feminine,’ including corruption, weakness, cowardice, luxury, immorality, and the unbridled play of passions.”

²⁹ Carol Barash, *English Women’s Poetry, 1649–1714, Politics, Community, and Linguistic Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 210.

³⁰ See Howard Erskine-Hill, “Literature and the Jacobite Cause,” in *Modern Language Studies* 9, no. 3 (1979): 15–28. See also Toni Bowers, “Representing Resistance: British Seduction Stories, 1660–1800,” in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel and Culture*, ed. Paula Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 140. Bowers sees female “collusive resistance”—epitomized, for instance, by Richardsonian heroines—as a symbolic negotiation of Tory identity and survival.

244), and Malhurissa's reluctant surrender of her virginity, in her lover's emotional blackmail. Yet Barker, unlike Tory writers, does not aim at delineating a "Protestant resistance practice carefully located between disrespectful rebellion and unquestioning submission," but at venting and fostering socio-political disaffection. Conflating the corrupt *homo economicus* of neo-Harringtonian denunciations with the seducer of the Tory-Jacobite narratives of "coercive heterosexual relations,"³¹ Dorinda and Malhurissa's docile, but disastrous relinquishing of their estates questions the model of the bourgeois marriage based upon "the willing deference of power from wife to husband" which had provided "a symbol for both the legitimacy of William [III]'s rule and the people's support of him" after Mary's waiving of her inherited rights and powers to her husband.³² Within this critique of the ideal of subservient domestic femininity, Barker presents as fundamentally despoiled the wider reconfiguration of socio-political authority, which was based upon the pre-eminence of gender over birth and status and had been somehow accessory to the Catholic Stuarts' exclusion. Dismissing the bourgeois husband and his purported credit transactions as fakes, Barker challenges the economic soundness and the legitimacy of a regime that flaunted prosperity and a bourgeois-like stability against the Jacobite threat.

Reminiscent of the "Tory feminism" of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Barker's female victimization tales mirror the dismay of the landed and aristocratic women at the growing disempowerment of their sex and caste.³³ Yet feminist concerns come second to a wider status anxiety in her denunciation of not exclusively male "opportunistic upstarts."³⁴ Unlike the upper-class seducers in Tory narratives, most of Barker's villains are scheming plebeians who bespeak the rise of an obscure social force despite a deceptive bourgeois respectability.³⁵ They include

³¹ Bowers, 140.

³² Barash, 213.

³³ See Catherine Gallagher, "Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England," *Genders* 1 (1988): 25–39. On the emergence of a feminist standpoint and (upper-class) female resistance to the capitalistic reconfiguration of the marriage market, see Donovan, 13–27.

³⁴ McKeon, 218.

³⁵ According to Bowers, the seducer is usually "of a higher social station, sexually more experienced" (140) than his victim, whereas Barker's status anxiety and

females such as the “false Dalilah” (*PWS*, 138), wife to a bankrupt tradesman of the City, who boasts of her “Birth and vertuous Education” while she harries her well-born lover Lysander out of his estate and into suicide; Mrs Vileman, the “vile governante” (*LPW*, 267) who betrays Malhurissa to her seducer; and Mrs Wheedle, “the comely genteel woman” (*LPW*, 283) who lures into prostitution Mrs Cast-off, a squire’s daughter. Barker’s animosity focuses on post-revolutionary commercialism as conducive to a general debasement and a commodification of relationships that culminates in a near-institutionalized sex trade. Unlike Defoe’s enterprising whores, Barker’s deceived female figures—either seduced or sold by upstart tradesmen—emblemize a betrayed nation, prey to mercenary greed and usurpation.

Halfway between the “effeminate” speculator and the French upstart valet, or “Laquais financier,”³⁶ Barker’s vile city men undermine Defoe’s Manichean depictions of aristocratic vice and merchant virtue. Fraught with accusations of lust, greed, and perjury, her tales of mercantile seduction confute the typically “progressive” plot of virtuous upward socio-economic mobility which Defoe’s eulogies of moneyed men endowed with a distinctive Whig flavour in the 1720s. Cross-class marriages, the recurring “assimilationist” conclusion to the rise of diligent commoners in progressive narratives from Thomas Deloney to Samuel Richardson, are accordingly dismissed as dangerous illusions ending in carnivalesque swindles: far from regenerating a decaying nobility, Barker’s would-be capitalist upstarts drag their miserable dupes into disaster.

Barker’s almost lurid tales articulate, more sharply than Henry Fielding’s later satires of upward mobility, the anxiety of landed elites weakened by revolutionary ordeals and anti-Jacobite repression, as they beheld the trading bourgeoisie’s appetite for power, spurred by Defoe’s egalitarian rejection of inherited nobility. Echoing Defoe’s aggressive praise of the men of the “better sorts of trade” and the “true-bred merchant” as “superior to most gentlemen”³⁷ in wealth, morals and abilities, Barker’s “rich and haughty Dames” of the city claim at the end of *The Lining* “a

class bias lead her into a near-exculpation of the patrician rakes and coquettes of the Restoration, who either repent, or fall prey to venal bourgeois.

³⁶ Daniel Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au grand siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

³⁷ Daniel Defoe, *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (1724), ed. David Blewett (London: Penguin, 1982), 210.

right to be fantastical, and setters-up of new Modes" (*LPW*, 281) instead of "giving your Ladies place everywhere, by following their Fashions at all times." Shifting from servile imitation to open competition—from a meekly "assimilationist" to an aggressively "supersessionist"³⁸ stance—they point out credit economy as a motive for questioning and displacing aristocratic leadership in their final attack against the Ladies, arguing that "they often run into our Debt, for their gaudy trappings, and their Husbands borrow of ours, to support their Equipage on the credit of their Acres" (*LPW*, 281).

Galesia's subsequent retreat to the country, though symbolic of a disillusioned waiving of pre-eminence, is far from desperate: her "inexpressible Joy" (*LPW*, 290) at the completion of a cycle that brings her back to an Arcadian existence leaves no doubt as to her faith in the vitality of the bucolic ideal that suffuses the conservative Augustan "poetics of nostalgia."³⁹ Vested with the dignity of neo-classical civic humanism in *Love Intrigues*, Galesia's recollections of country labour and entertainments in *Love Intrigues* provide from the first a powerful neo-Harringtonian counterpoint to the post-revolutionary corrupt commercial ethos. Playing upon the civic humanist "cult of customary antiquity,"⁴⁰ she aggregates the Jacobite "imaginary bucolic past"⁴¹ with the wider agrarianism of the country party: "The Farmer, according to the Utility of his Occupation, deserves to hold the first Rank amongst Mankind: That one may justly reflect with Veneration on those Times, when Kings and Princes thought it no Derogation to their Dignities. The Nobles, in ancient Times, did not leave their Country-seats to become the Habitation of Jack-daws, and the Manufactory of Spiders" (*LI*, 35).

Pitted against the cult of trade and traders, Galesia's country experience is played off against the sophistications of post-revolutionary exchange and consumption. Overseas mercantilism is rejected as detrimental to "the great Manufacture of the Nation" as well as to public morals, whereas landholding and use-value production, epitomized by "a Country Life, and its plentiful Way of Living, amongst our Corn, Dairies, and Poultry"

³⁸ See McKeon, 218–27, 255–65.

³⁹ Ingrassia, 8.

⁴⁰ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 341.

⁴¹ Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 186.

(*PWS*, 107–8), are praised as conditions for virtue and sanity: “The constant Incumbrance which attended this Station, left no Space for Love to agitate my Interiour: The Labour of the Day was recompens’d with sound Sleep at Night; those silent Hours being pass’d in Sleep’s Restorative, the Day provided new Business for my waking Thoughts, whilst Health and wholsom Food repaid this my Industry. Thus, in a Country Life, we roll on in a Circle, like the heavenly Bodies, our Happiness being seldom eclips’d” (*LI*, 35–36). Fusing rural frugality with virtuous social intercourse in a terse parallel, Barker makes a quasi-self-sufficient landed economy the foundation for collective as well as private morality, reflected in this account of her Cambridge friends’ visits: “we search’d not Air, Earth, and Water to gratify our Palates with Dainties, nor ravag’d Spain, France, and the Indies, for Diversity of Liquors: Our own Product, in a cleanly wholsome manner, contented our Appetites; such as serv’d the Conveniency of Life, not superfluous Luxury. Our Correspondence was of the same Piece, vertuous and innocent: No Flear or Grimace tending to Lewdness, or cunning Artifice, out of the Way of Rural Simplicity: But pure and candid, such as might be amongst the Celestial Inhabitants” (*LI*, 95).

Fuelled by social anxiety and political discontent, Barker’s agrarian resistance to a bourgeois capitalistic ideology centred on trade and credit marks her as an adherent to “civic humanist values which virtually defined rentier and entrepreneur as corrupt.”⁴² Fraught with Jacobite nostalgia and pessimistic forebodings, Barker’s anti-mercantilist georgics diverge from the wistful Tory pastorals by turning programmatic in the last pages, when Galesia’s joyful departure for the country, with confident expectations of “better success” (*LPW*, 290), revives the “possibility of a previous system” after “a series of retrograde disenchantments.”⁴³ Hailing the coming of spring, a much-cherished Jacobite symbol for restoration, Barker suddenly reveals what seemed hitherto but a retrospect musing on an idealized past as a distinctive socio-economic agenda, conducive to virtue and prosperity; hence Rivka Swenson’s claim that Galesia’s story, set in the wider transcendent narrative of collective history and humane destiny, “is far from over.”⁴⁴ Dorinda and Malhurissa, too, however

⁴² Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 461.

⁴³ McKeon, 231.

⁴⁴ Rivka Swenson, “Representing Modernity in Jane Barker’s Galesia Trilogy:

abased by mercantile perversion, may still hope for rescue from Jacobite quarters: the one by marrying a loyal partisan, her former suitor and friend to Galesia, and farming her remaining lands; the other by returning to her compassionate uncle, an elderly officer of King James, in Saint-Germain. Salvation lies within reach, in a reunion with a lost lover or a merciful patriarch—two emblematic figures for the monarch in Jacobite imagery.

Mrs Goodwife's Gruel-Peddling: Collusive Resistance to the Economics of Loyalty

Symbolic restorations—spring-time and familial unity—remain far-away prospects, alternative to radical disenfranchisement. Like Galesia's final departure, which elicits conflicting interpretations, ranging from bitter disappointment to optimistic forebodings,⁴⁵ Dorinda's and Malhurissa's retreats can be construed into acceptances of exile and effacement. Such readings, however, may underestimate the unpredictable possibilities of these "open endings" that vacillate between the rising antagonisms and impending doom of a fallen world and the green world of romance.⁴⁶ Removing her heroines from London, Barker eschews the immediate, if dramatic, resolution of socio-political tensions foreshadowed by the apocalyptic mobs and "conflagrations" of the capital. Barker's last hopes in the *Patch-works*, after the Atterbury disaster, rest in long-term persuasion and the action of Providence, as evident in her numerous prayers for unity and her conversion tales. Meanwhile, what was to become of those who experienced dispossession and downward mobility, such as Dorinda or Malhurissa, but had no remaining properties or friendly network to support them in genteel isolationism until better days arrived? Addressing contemporary reality, could Barker preach complete eschewal of participation in the new economic and social structures?

However hostile to traders, Barker's narratives betray a conviction that certain changes, such as the decay of traditional landed and aristocratic authorities, might prove partly irremediable. Even if divine retribution and a wish-fulfilling poetical

Jacobite Allegory and the Patch-Work Aesthetic," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005): 55–81.

⁴⁵ See Carol Shiner Wilson, "Jane Barker (1652–1732): From Galesia to Mrs Goodwife," in *Women and Poetry 1600–1750*, 40–49.

⁴⁶ Swenson, 72.

justice scourge commercial villains, their victims never recover their initial innocence and prosperity in Barker's novels; instead they join the many characters whom this supreme disaster, the loss or alienation of family estates, drives to destitution, prostitution, brigandage, or even suicide. Such is the fate that threatens too the Goodwives, a family of noble Irish partisans, stranded in London, moneyless and friendless, on their flight to Saint-Germain:

In the late Troubles of Ireland, said [Mrs Goodwife], my Husband betaking himself to King James's Party, we were stript of all we had, our Estate was forfeited, our House plunder'd, even to our wearing Cloaths; so that we were reduced to the utmost Exigence; Being thus distressed, ... we came to *London*, thinking to get away to *France*; but when we came hither, we heard that the King had a greater Burthen of poor Followers than he knew well how to sustain. We staid here some time, considering what to do, or which way to direct our Course, endeavouring to get some Place or Business for my Husband, or my self, till we had spent all we had in the World, and all that we could borrow of any Friend or Acquaintance; insomuch that we were forced to go often supperless to Bed. In the Morning, when our poor Babes wak'd, one cry'd, Mamma, me want Breakfast, me is hungry; the other cry'd, Pappa, me want a Bit of Bread, me is hungry.

These poor Infants thus pealing in our Ears, my Husband one Morning leap'd out of Bed, saying, he had lived long enough, since he heard his Children cry for Bread, and he had none to give 'em. (*LPW*, 218–19)

But the tale of woe is converted into a story of restored prosperity when Mrs Goodwife starts grappling with economic reality. Selling bowls of gruel to servants, she rises from near-beggar to pedlar, then launches into the traffic of discarded garments, sets up a shop, and eventually achieves respectability as a city merchant. Barker's originally pessimistic realism ends in a tale of pragmatic adaptation.

As she takes off her gloves to "deliver her merchandize," Mrs Goodwife symbolically renounces her aristocratic status and political commitment to engage in post-revolutionary capitalism. Far from capitulating to radical discouragement, she evolves a strategy of "collusive" economic resistance that allows for immediate survival, while preserving a commitment to traditional order. Acting as a retailer and a broker of second-hand goods for her clients, she turns to account the post-revolutionary exchange ethos, yet refrains from wide-scale speculative operations, which political loyalty and ethical concerns, as well as urgent need

for immediate relief and sheer lack of capital, indeed preclude. Shunning the “bubbles” and government-supported ventures against which Galesia warns her hostess in *A Patch-Work Screen*, she forbears political cooperation with the new regime: hers are the shop and tangible wares, which traditionally distinguish the highly-respected city merchant from the suspicious stockjobber in the collective imagination.⁴⁷

To Stuart partisans, exhausted by revolutionary losses and political reprisals, Mrs Goodwife demonstrates both the possibility and the legitimacy of commercial agency. After a fifteen-year struggle in unfriendly England, Barker must have fully sensed the necessity of offering a pragmatic alternative to those who were debarred from or hostile to the state-supported financial capitalism, yet could no longer cling to the fading prospect of a Stuart restoration nor join the exiled communities abroad. Restoring disempowered elites, if not to supremacy, at least to greater agency and initiative, Barker's virtuous “trade” eventually allows for a resilience of former leaderships, thereby fending off the complete monopolizing of economic and social power by upstart bourgeois elites and mercenary politicians. Mrs Goodwife's small-scale trade of cheap necessities, moreover, is still close to the “natural economy of a primitive age in which each man's wants are supplied by each man's labor,”⁴⁸ as experienced in the country by youthful Galesia. Based on short-term consumption, this anti-Mandevillian agency entails a continual reinvestment of liquidity into basic commodities, avoiding idleness and unbalanced consumption, which are the main dangers of credit-based transactions. Her small-scale liberalism ensures an immediate satisfaction of fundamental needs by constant personal exertions, both in the producing and proffering of goods. Mrs Goodwife's shop in the city is the very proof that the interpersonal relationships and divinely sanctioned “natural” order of the pre-revolutionary system may still be revived by “loyal” business ethics despite the rise of individualism, bourgeois capitalism, and class antagonism.

Although Mrs Goodwife “embraces the new world of commerce,” it might be excessive to claim, with Wilson, that she “does not dwell on regret for a world of genteel privilege.”⁴⁹ Sharply

⁴⁷ See Ingrassia, 23.

⁴⁸ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 444.

⁴⁹ Wilson, “Jane Barker (1652–1732): From Galesia to Mrs Goodwife,” 44.

aware of her departure from traditional aristocratic honour, Barker's virtuous tradeswoman still considers "Merchandising" a much-valued means of upward social mobility in progressivist discourses, to be a mortifying if serviceable palliative of material distress. Recounting her economic rise, she evinces a paradoxical sense of "fall":

I must confess, I had Confusion to knock at Doors, and ask if they wanted a Bowl of Wheat; and what was an additional Mortification, when I took off my Gloves to deliver my Merchandize, my Hands discover'd that I was not brought up to such Business; ... for nothing made this humble Task sit more easie, than the Belief, that nobody knew me ...

By degrees, frequenting those Houses, I got acquainted with the Maids, so that they trusted me to sell old things for them, paying me so much in the Shilling, as I could get for them. Thus I fell into a little way of Merchandize, selling at one House what I got at another. The Cook maid at one House wanted this thing, the House-maid that; the Chamber maid this thing to sell here, the Nurse had that thing to buy there; so that by degrees I fell into a pretty Trade of this kind of buying and selling old Cloaths and grew so skill'd in it, that we took a Shop. (*LPW*, 220–21)

One of the "middling sort" henceforward, Mrs Goodwife knows her place: when invited to join the ladies at lunch, she excuses herself. Such humility may seem more consistent with a pre-revolutionary hierarchy than with the self-celebrating rhetoric of the trading interest, but this meek and conciliatory stance also implements a powerful strategy against anti-aristocratic and anti-Jacobite Whiggish discourses. A "gentlewoman" (*LPW*, 218) still, Barker's ragged heroine retains her innate worth despite status inconsistency. Inherited nobility, which Defoe brands with "vicious living, luxury and extravagancy,"⁵⁰ here combines with a supposedly plebeian capacity for faith, humility, and industry. Barker's stoic tradeswoman counters the progressivist attacks on aristocratic honour and the supersessionist calls to replace a degenerate ruling class by a "Christian Hero," who "came not from the upper echelons of life, but from the urban artisan class."⁵¹ Her self-confessed abasement and obvious lack of ambition provide, even more than would a vindication of the

⁵⁰ Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), ed. Angus Ross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 28.

⁵¹ Andrew P. Williams, *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature: Viewing the Male* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1999), 151.

morals of traditional elites, a reassuring testimony of resignation: humbled by displacement, gentlefolk would not vie with or retaliate against bourgeois forces, even if a restoration were to reinstate them to their traditional eminence.

Presented as a subdued, insular, and urban figure of passive resistance, with highly commendable activities, the depiction of Mrs Goodwife further counterbalances more “jarring” partisan and catholic features, in keeping with a process that Tonya Moutray McArthur traces to the 1719 emendations of *Love Intrigues*. Mrs Goodwife, the virtuous tradeswoman, provides a more congenial image of “the socially separated Jacobite community”⁵² than Galesia’s militant, ruralist, Saint-Germain-oriented figure. A commercial version of the biblical Good Woman, who “like the merchants’ ships ... bringeth her food from afar ... and giveth meat to her household,”⁵³ Mrs Goodwife ascribes her success to a divinely sanctioned economic voluntarism, with a sound Protestant emphasis on unmediated access to the Lord: “*When my Father and Mother forsook me, the Lord cared for me*” (LPW, 218) is her alpha, and “*Something doing, something coming*” (LPW, 221) is her omega. Barker’s disenfranchised partisan evolves a (seemingly) Protestant work ethic, which prosperity, a token of divine election, makes unimpeachable.

Antithetical to the Whig advocacy of refinement and “politeness,” yet restorative of affluence and harmony, Mrs Goodwife’s “loyal” trade belies the powerful “economics of loyalty” that successfully propagated a dread of socio-economic disruptions and catholic tyranny against pro-Stuart attempts throughout the century.⁵⁴ Free from the hazards of speculative and colonial ventures, Barker’s small-scale entrepreneurship offers a safer, more domestic alternative to the 1720s financial capitalism. Responding with a pre-revolutionary ethos to post-revolutionary transformations, Mrs Goodwife hints at the nature of the Stuarts’ policy in case of a second restoration: while her judicious handling of

⁵² Tonya Moutray McArthur, “Jane Barker and the Politics of Catholic Celibacy,” *Studies in English Literature* 47, no. 3 (2007): 595–618. To McArthur, the 1719 conclusion deliberately obscures the “Catholic emphasis” of the 1713 version (11) into a more neutral didacticism, to avert a hostile reception after *The Fifteen*. Barker’s Catholic Jacobite counterculture still informs, however, many tales of exile and convent in the *Patch-Works*.

⁵³ Proverbs 31:14–15.

⁵⁴ Colley, *Britons*, 2; “Jacobitism and the Economics of Loyalty,” 71–85.

immediate needs and supplies suggests prudent management and inner development, she reverts, in her dedication to founding and consolidating local commercial networks, to the former dynasty's promotion of national trade and industry, dismissing both the seemingly frivolous consumerism of the Restoration and the stock-jobbing craze of the Walpole era.⁵⁵ Making the post-revolutionary enthusiasm for trade the basis for a hypothetical refounding of former hierarchies, Barker quietly subverts economic patriotism in the service of Jacobite interests.

Mrs Goodwife's economic resilience, therefore, testifies to Barker's literary dynamism as well as to her socio-political awareness. Revisiting the popular "progressive plot-model of the career open to talents,"⁵⁶ Barker devises a class-transcending Jacobite image, whose consensual moral economics appealed to potentially every reader, notwithstanding castes, creeds, and ideologies. With a wistful attachment to pre-Revolutionary days, but none of the "bitterness" and "dark regret" of some of her manuscript poems, she offers distressed partisans a pattern of "collusive" economic resistance that repudiates rebellion.⁵⁷ Outward resignation is a powerful vindication, not a termination, of Barker's Jacobite advocacy. The virtuous tradeswoman mitigates patriotic hostility to a Stuart restoration by reassessing the loyal party's dedication to public order and prosperity. She is a counterpoint to Merchant-like embodiments of post-revolutionary (dis)order; she authorizes the enduring nostalgia of the sentimental Jacobitism, which rivalled economic pride in the paradoxical psyche of the long eighteenth century.

*Smuggling Virtues on the London Market:
Print, Politics, and the Literary Trade*

Writing for pay may have been as much of a necessity to Barker as gruel-selling to Mrs Goodwife, when lawsuits and double taxation heightened the difficulties of managing single-

⁵⁵ See Linda Levy Peck's authoritative study of domestic industry, luxury production, and consumption under the Stuarts, in *Consuming Splendour: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. chaps. 2 (73–112) and 8 (346–60).

⁵⁶ McKeon, 219.

⁵⁷ Toni Bowers, "Jacobite Difference and the Poetry of Jane Barker," *ELH* 64, no. 4 (1997): 857–62.

handedly the remains of her paternal estate.⁵⁸ Forsaking Orinda's prestigious tradition of genteel independence for Astraea's dubious professionalism might be mortifying indeed to one who had dismissed the "fawning Muse" of popular commercial literature as a "Prostitute," and claimed "with a blunt Indignation" that Philips and Behn "ought not to be nam'd together" (*PWS*, 127, 109). Reiterating these youthful professions, the older Galesia also deprecates them as "unthinking unmannerly" speeches, conducive to an "uncouth Kind of Solitude" (*PWS*, 109, 133). Back in England, Barker could no longer rely on the scribal networks of her earlier Cambridge coterie and of the Saint-Germain community. To a Jacobite propagandist, with a public cause to advertise, the far-reaching medium of print and commercial prose meant not only economic survival, but also political agency. Yet, far from disowning her early commitment to coterie authorship, Barker gives her heroine genteel conversational backgrounds, reviving the tradition of aristocratic patronage and "sociable texts" in fictions of Orinda-like female friendship and literary offerings. Galesia's independence and dedication to selective communication are preserved by "printed texts that embody manuscript culture"⁵⁹ in fanciful combinations of story-telling and manuscript-reading—professional novels posing as semi-private variations on amateur poetry, prompted by social rather than commercial motives. But their self-conscious prologues testify to Barker's ambivalence over her literary status. On the one hand, she playfully beseeches her anonymous readers' "favourable reception" on behalf of her "bookseller," with a conversational flirtatiousness not unmixed with commercial overtones (*LPW*, 179). On the other, she asserts her own difference from currently "Fashionable" "Histories at Large" such as Defoe's, whose "*Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*" she uncharitably matches with the coarsest brands of popular fiction—rogue biographies and whore confessions, such as Sally Salisbury's (*PWS*, 51).

Having established herself, Pope-wise, as a censor of rather than a competitor with Grub Street writers, Barker launches, with Mechant and Mrs Goodwife, into a dialectical examination of

⁵⁸ See King and Medoff, "Jane Barker and Her Life (1652–1732): The Documentary Record," 16–38.

⁵⁹ Leigh Eicke, "Jane Barker's Jacobite Writings," in *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550–1880*, ed. G. Justice and N. Tinker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137.

commercial agency, which is capped with a clearly metafictional and self-referential conclusion by her persona Galesia's attempt at trade. The unworthy trader and the worthy tradeswoman emerge as successive moves in a sharply negotiated self-authorization as a participant in a capitalistic book-market.

Galesia's merchandizing venture comes after an oneiric excursion on Parnassus, where she witnesses Orinda's annual coronation, and the Fairy Queen gives her ten guineas. Back among ordinary mortals, the heroine lays out her small "fairy treasure" in a lot of precious virtues (imported from India by a seafaring friend of hers), which she then commissions "factors" to peddle through the diverse strata of London society. Whereas the court ladies and merchant wives respectively turn down "Sincerity and Humility" (*LPW* 279, 281), the prostitutes in Drury Lane eagerly purchase "Piety and Repentance" (*LPW* 282–89)—though unable to afford "Chastity" (*LPW* 280), they make pathetic confessions and embrace the factor's advice that they should read *The Imitation of Jesus Christ* (*LPW* 289). Galesia nonetheless gives up on the Londoners and turns to a country audience in hope of "better success" (*LPW*, 290).

But not even the patronage of Spenser and Shakespeare's Fairy Queen can allay Barker's dread of mercantile corruption: her self-referential parable of commercial authorship is framed by the "*Story of Malhurissa*," the unfortunate Jacobite heiress seduced by a self-alleged "London Merchant," and the prostitutes' dismal accounts of a sordid sex-trade. Embedded in anti-mercantilist censures, Galesia's unprofitable venture evinces a disgruntlement that has induced critics to regard the episode—and Barker's desisting from authorship—as "a deliberate withdrawal from print publication," in an overwhelming "nostalgia for manuscript circulation" and unconquerable dislike of commercial literature.⁶⁰ Even so, Galesia's endeavours admittedly prove "somewhat successful" in Drury Lane, and her jaunty departure prompts Wilson to proclaim Barker "liberated from poetic anxiety by print culture."⁶¹ But Barker's liberation is from the anxiety of print through a poetics of trade: by reconciling commerce and

⁶⁰ Eicke, 152–53. Jane Spencer, "Creating the Woman Writer: the Autobiographical Works of Jane Barker," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* (Fall 1983): 178. See also King, *Jane Barker, Exile*, 217.

⁶¹ Swenson, 72. Wilson, "Jane Barker (1652–1732): From Galesia to Mrs Goodwife," 44.

virtuous independence, Mrs Goodwife authorizes Galesia's free-lance metafictional venture as consistent with her lifelong quest for autonomy and unflagging efforts to redress the most blatant evils of modernity as a disinterested poet, lay physician, and Christian moralist.

Galesia, subject to no necessity, can greet partial failure with equanimity, and cling to the foregone ideals embodied in outdated "moral" wares and "spectre"-like agents.⁶² Blending poetic and commercial agency in subservience to an underlying royalist ideology, her unprofitable post-Parnassian adventure metaphorically redeems Barker's career: sponsored by the Fairy Queen, a dual symbol for British absolutism and lyrical inspiration, the novelist stands on the book market as the non-mercenary advocate of a (Jacobite) moral restoration. By substituting regal patronage and a literary vocation for the public taste and editorial command, Barker recovers her former gentility in revived patterns of regal authority and loyalty; for Galesia, deputy to poetic monarchs, is given subordinates to discharge the less rewarding aspects of business. Whether the "factors" refer to Barker's books or to her booksellers, these are made accessory to the novelist's political and ethical project. Barker's disclosure of her political mission removes the "stigma of print" and commercial abjection as her unrealistic conclusion reveals the "overarching pattern of Jacobite allegory" and "politicized gesture" central to her non-mercenary narratives.⁶³

Debarred from the world of romance and courtly poetry, Barker uses the most democratic media of a post-revolutionary market-driven society—print and the novel—for her royalist purposes: Galesia's regal patron herself commands her back to reality and to her fellow mortals, in symbolic preclusion of escapist aristocratic fantasy. To the poetess, leaving Parnassus and Orinda's vicinity means the end of a dream. Purified by her Jacobite mission, Barker retains the difficult task of addressing yet resisting the coarseness of a greed-ridden society. Galesia's symbolic disenfranchisement is revealed in a carnivalesque satire of commercial dominance when the "rich and haughty Dames" of the City declare her virtuous merchandise not only outdated but also unlawful: "Away, reply'd they, you know, *Indian Goods*

⁶² Swenson, 70.

⁶³ Eicke, 147. Swenson, 65, 72.

are prohibited; had you brought some from *France* or *Spain*, from the Battel of *Bleinheim*, or from *Madrid*, when King *Philip* fled from thence; nay, if it had been but *English Humility* from *Preston*; it had been something like: But to come into the City with your prohibited Ware, is Insolence in a high degree; Therefore be gone, before my Lord Mayor's Officers catch you, and punish you according to your Deserts" (*LPW*, 281–82). Morality, outlawed by political and economic leadership, marks alienation, if not rebellion, as a duty and a necessity for Barker's readers. Resisting general corruption, the virtuous subject unknowingly becomes a partisan, like *Galesia*, caught unawares smuggling—a typical Jacobite offence.⁶⁴

A deeply subversive indictment of public (im)morality, Barker's commercial parable aims to turn the reader's unconscious commitment into conscious disaffection by contrasting the prostitutes' sordid accounts of gross Hanoverian perversity to an idyllic vision of past virtue and harmony. With prominent Cavalier and Restoration "bards" such as Cowley and Lovelace for actors, and the Fairy Queen for a sponsor, Orinda's coronation couples absolutism and non-commercial literature in an idealized reminder of the Stuarts' patronage of the arts.

Galesia's unsuccessful foray into the commercial world accordingly exonerates Jacobitism, not only from alleged illegitimacy, but also from imputed rusticity and regressiveness. Exchanging (momentarily) her ruralist civic humanism for a more fashionably dematerialized "trade" than Mrs Goodwife's, Barker's heroine demonstrates a social goodwill and adaptability that contradicts the Whiggish caricatures of backwoods Tory-Jacobites, such as Addison's amiably obtuse Sir Roger de Coverley. Her ultimate eschewal of post-revolutionary dominance derives from a painstakingly acquired knowledge of the world, past and present, that she gained by being a shrewd observer of change. Thus ends the three-volume-long strategy of conciliation and rejection embodied in Jack Mechant and Mrs Goodwife; this relentless contrasting of the displacing and displaced regimes encourages readers to sympathize with the estranged Jacobite subject. Breaking away from verisimilitude, *Galesia*'s extravagant attempt at moralizing the new order is marked straightaway as an impossible dream ending in withdrawal and silence.

⁶⁴ Murray Pittock, *Jacobitism* (Basingstoke: 1998, Macmillan), 64–65.

Ostensible defeatism is in tune with non-violent ideological activism in Barker's tales: the ambivalence of retreat, an expression of either uncompromising Stuart loyalty or disgruntled resignation, could reconcile her partisan and non-partisan readers. Galesia's failure with the new elites, therefore, is balanced by her success in the lower spheres and by her confidence in a rural audience, which indeed mirrors a historical concurrence between the "country Tory gentlemen" and "Jacobite Crowds" drawn to Tory radicalism and Jacobite display by discontent.⁶⁵ Shifting from the elite genres of manuscript poetry and heroic romance, Barker avails herself of the socially "hybrid" novel to consolidate this paradoxical alliance between wellborn and plebeian counter-publics and instil kindred views into the wider fiction-reading public. But the very subversiveness, which freed Barker from the taint of trade, could be traded upon: advertising her as "a lady" with Saint-Germain connections, Curll gambled on her appeal to a by-no-means negligible readership with Jacobite leanings. Barker's ultimate silence enables her to "step away with clean hands"⁶⁶ from a deceitful book market where she had pursued less her own, than her country's interest: the pursuit of salvation must now fall on the reader.

Well might Mrs Goodwife delineate a possibility for loyal entrepreneurship, and hence for the survival of disaffected elites in a world of mercantile perversity. Large-scale trade and economic leadership, in Barker's novels, remain the province of unscrupulous Merchant-like upstarts, whose rise partakes of a nation-wide usurpation. But Mrs Goodwife's undeniable force lies in a symbolic rather than economic potency: upholding the Stuarts' claim to morality and legitimacy, her dual aura of commercial respectability and non-belligerent loyalism hints at the possibility of an alternative socio-economic policy. "Making a virtue of necessity" according to Galesia's distinctive motto, Barker's patiently subversive fictionalization of trade is as much a concession to contemporary reality as an attempt to reconfigure reality through representations that could spur change. Dismissing open rebellion, Galesia's metaphoric smuggling of virtues marks long-term ideological agency as the last means

⁶⁵ Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 219, 164.

⁶⁶ See Swenson, 65, for a similar discussion of the "Ode to Nativity" in *A Patch-Work Screen*.

for a “restoration of virtue”—a doubtful outcome, as suggested by her disillusioned retreat in the hasty, inconclusive ending. Could modern wickedness be converted to virtuous ends? Might not a truly accurate, highly realistic depiction of contemporary corruption prove more destructive of the reader’s and the author’s morals, than corrective of public morals? Such is the gist of Galesia’s conclusion to Jack Mechant’s story:

Amongst the Old Romances, said (Galesia) to herself, we find strange and improbable Performances, very surprising Turns and Rencounters; yet still all tended to vertuous Ends, and the Abhorrence of Vice; But here is the Quintessence of Wickedness design’d and practiced, in a special manner, in the story of *Jack Mechant* ... Those honourable Romances of old Arcadia, Cleopatra, Cassandra, &c. discover a Genius of Vertue and Honour, which reign’d in the time of those Heroes, and Heroines, as well as in the Authors that report them; but the Stories of our Times are so black, that the Authors, can hardly escape being smutted, or defil’d in touching such Pitch. (*LPW*, 252)

Embodied in a Janus-faced trader, Barker’s vexed relationship to capitalistic culture reflects on her understanding of the literary trade, leading to a self-referential examination of authorship and authority that culminates in the final allegory. Drifting away from novelistic verisimilitude in utter scepticism of its moral and epistemological validity, Barker drew from her idiosyncratic ideological commitments a sensibility to the ironies of authorship that anticipates later eighteenth-century metafictional experiments: an elaborate staging of retreat, ending in eloquent but no less challenging silence, her ultimate parable proves indeed the way to authorial independence.



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