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Cooking Up Knowledge: Materiality, Recipes, and Jane Barker's *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*

Abstract

The recipes included in Jane Barker's *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723) appear to be some of the most jarring and out-of-context inclusions in the narrative. This article explores the relationship between Barker's novel and the form of the recipe collection in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries on both a material and an epistemological level. The entanglements between recipes and the patchwork screen not only point to the processes of constructing and conveying knowledge, but also to the materiality of these processes as Galesia and the Lady build the patchwork screen. Her focus on the materiality of knowledge reinforces Jane Barker's deep engagement with natural philosophy, the natural world around her, as well as domestic practices when the characters sew literal pieces of paper with poems on cookery and natural philosophy into the patchwork screen. The material and structural influence of the recipe on Barker's narrative constitutes an additional layer underneath the reigning metaphor of the patchwork screen and textiles in more general. Considering the recipe and recipe collections as underlying metaphors in addition to the patchwork increases the generically experimental character of the *Patch-Work Screen*.

Keywords

Jane Barker, recipe, recipe collections, materialism

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While constructing the patchwork screen, the Lady in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1732) “bad [the Servant] go to her House-keeper, and tell her to get a Dish of the *Welsh* Flummery ready, which *Galesia* had taught her last [n]ight” (Barker 143). This short line establishes one of the novel’s central themes: that knowledge—in whichever form it might appear—is shared through both social networks as well as material objects. First, *Galesia*, the protagonist of the *Patch-Work Screen* and the larger “*Galesia Trilogy*,” takes on the role of instructor, sharing her knowledge with the members of the Lady’s household; secondly, recipes are important enough in the novel to interrupt the creation of the patchwork that underlies the entire text as the leading metaphor. As a theme dominating the narrative, domestic crafts such as needlework are readily apparent in the title; the underlying focus on both medical and culinary recipes in a domestic setting, however, manifests itself in the inclusion of culinary recipes in verse as well as in the poem praising *Galesia*’s medical expertise, “On the *Apothecaries*.”¹

Just as the eponymous patchwork screen provides a structural guide for *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, the recipe genre provides Barker’s narrative with a guide on two separate, but equally important, levels—the recipe itself and the recipe collection as a whole. The aesthetics of *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, the central narrative of the “*Galesia Trilogy*,” reveal the epistemological overlap between the recipe and the screen. Jane Barker places herself firmly within the framework of women’s domestic use of scientific tools and the domesticity of scientific inquiry in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (King, *Jane Barker* 69-72). The patchwork screen materializes networks of knowledge that span both the domestic sphere and the increasingly more institutionalized natural philosophy. Looking at the recipe collection as a possible structural guide for *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* thus offers a broader intellectual endeavor than relying only on the patchwork because the recipe collection straddles the divide between domestic labor and natural philosophy much more so than the needlework that is more overtly visible in the structure of the novel.

Jane Barker’s *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, as the middle part of the “*Galesia Trilogy*,” presents its main character, *Galesia*, as the focal point of the frame narrative in which a patchwork screen is created out of various pieces of paper—letters, poems, and recipes. The story itself—with the inclusion of *Galesia*’s writings—is, as Rivka Swenson writes, “a *de facto* record of *Galesia*’s post-betrayal life experience” (56). After she had been jilted in *Love Intrigues* (1713), the first installment of the “*Galesia Trilogy*,” by her lover *Bosvil*, *Galesia* moves into singlehood and what that might mean for her. Barker similarly moves

into unknown territory regarding the genre of her trilogy. While *Love Intrigues* appears generically most clearly connected to the romance tradition, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* and *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen* present “genre-cobbling and apparent incoherency of plot” as their structural markers (Swenson 57). The second and third installments of the trilogy portray a maturing Galesia who has sworn off romance and social expectations of her relationship status, but who still needs to determine who she actually is. Autobiographical and innovative, Barker’s “Galesia Trilogy” offers a process of conceptualization of the female self that does not fit into the social norms. The *Patch-Work Screen* as the middle part of the trilogy thus establishes Galesia’s knowledge and experiences as a young but somewhat jaded woman materialized in the screen, which she constructs with the Lady who has taken her in and invites her to finish it with her. Instead of focusing on finding love and marriage, Galesia in the *Patch-Work Screen* is now concerned with establishing herself as her own person. The Lady here acts as a sounding board and support for Galesia. She has the authority to tell Galesia that each piece of knowledge contained in her writings is worthwhile enough to be included in the final patchwork.

The epistemological entanglements within the *Patch-Work Screen* between recipes and the screen, then, not only point to the processes of constructing and conveying knowledge, but also to the materiality of textile construction Galesia and the Lady actually engage in. Her focus on the materiality of knowledge reinforces Jane Barker’s deep engagement with natural philosophy, the natural world around her, as well as domestic practices when the characters sew literal pieces of paper with poems on cookery and natural philosophy into the screen. The genre of the recipe itself toes the line between being a material and an immaterial tool that works both as a recording device and as an instructional scientific tool which combines the knowledge it contains with its materiality as it is stored within a recipe collection. Exploration, acceptance, and transcendence of this unstable materiality of knowledge and the existence of one’s physical and material boundaries make up the central themes of *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*. Scholarship on women’s lived reality of the last few decades, on the one hand, reveals the importance of the material objects women interacted with and, on the other hand, points to a larger cultural connection between the emergence and consolidation of the new science at the turn of the century and the literary experimentation women writers engaged in.² As such, Barker’s narrative marks a contemporaneous response to the rapid changes in knowledge production at this time.

Because they often embraced a managerial role in the household, women both shaped and explored more practical aspects of scientific inquiry, especially

through recipes and recipe collections.³ Women's recipe collections prove to be one of the sources available to us to establish women's role in the production of knowledge in the household. The recipe's versatility—practical and literary—turn it into a tool that lends itself as a material influence on women's literary works as they stitch together knowledge. Its flexibility and call to long-established traditions, while contradictory at first glance, let the recipe as a genre mirror the experimental character of Jane Barker's *Patch-Work Screen* that plays with various formal qualities.⁴ The material and structural influence of the recipe on Barker's narrative constitutes an additional layer underneath the reigning metaphor of the patchwork screen.⁵ Even more so than the eponymous textiles, the recipe materially finding its way into the narrative itself, mirrors women's versatility in and engagement with different modes of knowledge production in their role as managers of the household.

More explicitly than patchwork, recipe collections produced and collected by women serve as a blend between feminine practices and scientific thought. Because the recipe takes on such an integral role in women's lives and managing the household in the eighteenth century, acknowledgment of its influence on women's creative works needs to become more explicit. Constantly being reconstituted, recipe collections incorporate various areas of knowledge production that also materialize in women's writing; both instructional and creative, the recipe leaves room for interpretation and experimentation as it is shared among friends and acquaintances. The knowledge transmitted through recipes was diverse and not confined to specific topics or areas of knowledge that were deemed feminine as “[r]ecipes, both medical and culinary, were the main medium for the recording and transmission of information and knowledge in pre-modern households” (Leong, “Collecting Knowledge for the Family” 83). This tradition from pre-modern households carries over into the eighteenth century, and the patchwork as a recipe collection becomes a material corpus of knowledge that takes up space in the Lady's parlor room. Blending creative output and scientific thought, Barker creates knowledge's material manifestation under the guise of feminine domestic arts.

The mixture of medical and culinary recipes both within manuscript recipe collections and *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* shines a light on the possibility of aesthetic repurposing of incomplete and infinite, but materially bounded, knowledge production and scientific inquiry in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The recipe demonstrates that “the cultural boundaries between the New Science and lay readers were also porous, which meant that writers who were not natural philosophers could pick up the ideas and discourse. As a result, natural philosophy appears in just about every genre available in the

seventeenth century and catalyzed the development of others” (Gevirtz, “Philosophy and/in Verse” 56, 78-79). The lack of generic and aesthetic boundaries in both the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and the mutual influence of all kinds of writing—literary, philosophical, scientific—are a testament to the ubiquity of natural philosophy (Chico 25-32). The generic overlap and imprecision found in recipe collections are also reflected in the inclusion of culinary recipes, the allusion to medical recipes, and the mixture of different literary genres into the patchwork screen.

Material stores of knowledge

The living document of the recipe simultaneously transmits and stores the knowledge that people produce. Recipes mediate information through their formal characteristics which, while somewhat loose throughout the Restoration and early eighteenth century, are recognizable to almost any literate member of the household. Because of their collective and collaborative use in the household, recipe collections must be accessible to a diverse group of people with varying levels of literacy. These collections provide women with access to a network of knowledge that circumvents their exclusion from more formal modes of higher education. The recipe epitomizes women’s knowledge acquisition and production regarding household management and scientific thinking. The networks of knowledge in general and the textile construction in the *Patch-Work Screen* “advance female independence. Women’s recipes allowed them to share knowledge about acquiring materials and ingredients, navigating through urban spaces, and negotiating with male shopkeepers” (Herbert 108). The community created by recipe collections promotes access to education and instruction with the goal of making its members more independent in a society which often relegated women to the kitchen and the parlor. Galesia and the Lady in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* pull the creation of knowledge into the space that is reserved for the women of the household. They relocate the storage of knowledge into spaces and materials generally designated as female as they construct the patchwork screen.

Galesia and the Lady arrange and combine different modes of knowledge production in their ostensibly textile work. They materialize a network of knowledge within the fabric of the screen. The recipes included in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* demonstrate a network of knowledge that is woven into the screen. The larger networks of knowledge emerge most clearly in the combination of culinary and medical recipes in these household collections: “[t]he knowledge behind household medicine was . . . not just passed from mother to daughter, but

rather was also purchased—from vernacular medical books and medical consultations” (Leong, “Making Medicines” 153). Jane Barker’s *Patch-Work Screen* transcends its own underlying metaphor of a piece of needlework to also highlight the recipe collection as a guiding metaphor through the inclusion of culinary and medical recipes. The knowledge that Barker gathers within her narrative is consolidated from many different sources into the sewn-together framework of the screen. The slips of paper Galesia and the Lady include in the screen come from many different sources to construct a web of knowledge that relies on exchange and collection of information.

While she freely shares the three culinary recipes mentioned in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* with the Lady and her servants, Galesia obscures her medical recipes with landscape descriptions and medical epithets for the flowers in these landscapes in “The Grove,” in which she decides to draw “a Landskip in Verse” (76). Additionally, she writes about medical recipes without providing them for the reader. Barker does this most clearly when she introduces the poem “On the Apothecaries Filing My Recipes amongst the Doctors,” Galesia tells the reader that she wrote her “Bills in Latin, with the same manner of Cyphers and Directions as Doctors do; which Bills and Recipes the Apothecaries fil’d amongst those of the Doctors” (116). While the recipe and its collection act as tools of mediation and storage of knowledge, Barker distinguishes between different levels of access to these stores through the modes of mediation. The culinary recipes in the *Patch-Work Screen* are shared first-hand in simple language, and, in their resemblance to nursery rhymes, they almost eschew their codification as they are more part of an oral tradition—a fact which is supported in Barker’s novel by the appearance of their manuscript forms only after Galesia has performed them. Galesia is always first asked to tell the Lady’s servants how to prepare the dishes and only then does the Lady request the recipe on paper for the inclusion in the patchwork screen. The medical recipes, on the other hand, are obscured or at least more difficult to access, only available to a select few who can read Latin and the shorthand of apothecaries.⁶ The loco-descriptive poetry and odes to apothecaries and herself that Galesia presents to the Lady and the reader make the knowledge less accessible and yet still present in the narrative.

Within these networks of knowledge, recipe collections materialize the collaborative efforts of the new science which found their high point in the foundation of the Royal Society in 1660; institutionalizing and promoting the exchange and corroboration of information within the context of natural philosophy became key factors in the production of new knowledge. This collaborative effort of scientific thinking in Barker’s narrative has already been pointed out in Rachel Mann’s recent article focusing on the microscope and its

appearance as a foundation for the methodology of knowledge production in the *Patch-Work Screen*. While the connection between Barker's novel and natural philosophy has thus been pointed out before, the collaborative efforts of the new science are not merely limited to such overtly scientific tools as the microscope. The use of recipes in Barker's novel has been overlooked despite recipe collections of the early modern period repeatedly being presented as collaborative and material efforts to distribute and broaden scientific knowledge.

In her description of the patchwork screen as the underlying metaphor of her narrative, Barker writes about the variety of women who come together to construct the screen: "*To wit, Whigs and Tories, High-Church and Low-Church, Jacobites and Williamites, and many more Distinctions, which they divide and sub-divide, 'till at last they make this Dis-union meet in an harmonious Tea-Table Entertainment*" (52). While Barker overtly focuses on presenting political and religious differences amongst the women as they produce the "harmonious" piece of needlework, the following sentence links the idea of collaboration and instruction across social, economic, and political divides to natural philosophy. Barker uses atomism to describe the construction of knowledge within the screen: "[t]his puts me in mind of what I have heard some Philosophers assert, about the Clashing of Atoms, which at last united to compose this glorious Fabrick of the UNIVERSE" (52). By invoking natural philosophy in the preface to her narrative, she sets the stage for the importance of communal and collaborative production of knowledge. Barker references an increased interest in atomism in the seventeenth century as philosophers like René Descartes, Isaac Newton, and Robert Boyle increasingly engaged with this theory of the world. For Lucretius, everything is made up of small atoms which move through the void of the universe. Instead of merely falling in a straight line, these atoms swerve every now and then unexpectedly and without rhyme and reason. Connecting with other atoms, they thus form all objects in the universe. Just as Lucretius's atoms in *De Rerum Natura* (1st century BCE) constantly clash and come together to form new objects before dissolving again, the collection of recipes and slips of papers in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* materialize the knowledge.

Galesia embraces her own knowledge and the compilation of other characters' knowledge as valuable contributions to the piece of needlework throughout the entirety of the *Patch-Work Screen* when the Lady insists on using the pieces of paper from Galesia's trunk. Just as recipe collections act as the physical representations of collective knowledge, the patchwork screen in Barker's novel assumes the literal and metaphorical manifestation of Galesia's knowledge guided by the Lady. It centralizes both Galesia's role as a contributor of knowledge and the roles of knowledge networks. Rivka Swenson writes that Barker "chooses

genre-cobbling and apparent incoherency of plot as the appropriate venue for representing modern subjects” (57). This presentation of modern subjects goes hand in hand with the connection between literary exploration and scientific and philosophical thinking. Modern subjects are not merely one thing, but rather a collection of various parts cobbled together, so to speak. Recipe collections embody how women shared and produced knowledge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as these collections represent the networks in material ways: diverse styles of handwriting, separate pieces of paper, or even commentary on other recipes (Herbert 116). Collaboration and community are at the center of Barker’s *Patch-Work Screen* which blends the eponymous domestic and virtuous labor of needlework and recipe collecting with the natural philosophy forming the background to domestic healthcare at the turn of the century.

The recipe collection as patchwork

On the surface, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* uses the fabric of the patchwork as the guiding metaphor, while, on a deeper level, the recipe collection emerges as the actual material principle of the construction of the screen. As much as the final screen resembles a recipe collection, manuscript recipe collections of the Restoration and the early eighteenth century also resemble pieces of needlework resulting in a reciprocal relationship between the patchwork screen and the recipe collection. The mixture of medical and culinary recipes on the content level along with the mixture of tipped- and sewn-in recipes—recipes sent in letters, for example, were glued into the collections or literally sewn into the pages of the collections, with the needles sometimes left in the manuscript—on the physical level turns these manuscript collections into literal pieces of patchwork. Jane Barker combines the materiality of the patchwork and the recipe collection in her novel to create an experimental novelistic project which touches upon the overlap between literature, science, medicine, and household management.

The culinary recipes Jane Barker included in her novel are some of the strangest and seemingly out-of-place pieces included in the patchwork screen that Galesia and the Lady construct as they literally disrupt the process. The first recipe, “The *Czar’s Receipt* to make *Punch*,” is introduced “[a]s they [Galesia and the Lady] were about to proceed in their Discourse, and look for more *Patches* to carry on their Work” (140). Instead of being able to do so, they are interrupted as the butler enters the room, “saying, He was about to make a Bowl of Punch, and sent to the Stranger-Gentlewoman for her Receipt, which she was talking of the Night before; which *Galesia* readily rehears’d” (140). This moment interrupts the

construction of the screen and suggests a simple form of instruction: rote memorization. Dutifully, Galesia says,

Take Three Bottles from *Spain*, and one from *France*,
Two from the *Rhine*, and one from *Nance*:
No Water at all, but a little from *Roses*;
A red-nos'd Sea-Captain, to mingle the Doses;
Limons, *Nutmeg*, and *Sugar*, with a *Toast* to float on it;
And a Knot of good Fellows, that will not shrink from it.
(141)

Like a schoolteacher, Galesia communicates the recipe for the Czar's punch to the butler. The use of couplets and accentual verse turns the recipe poem into a nursery rhyme. Ending the recipe, Galesia adds a piece of advice that this punch should be shared among friends while acknowledging how powerful the punch is, pointing to this recipe's ultimate function: bring people together and heighten the entertainment. The instructional aspect of the poem thus does not only cover the recipe itself but also its actual performance in the narrative. Just as soon as the recipe is "rehears'd," the interruption is completed, and "[w]ith these Instructions, the Butler made his *Exit*" (141). This insertion of a seemingly unrelated—to the patchwork screen at least—episode is over just as soon as the poem is completed. On the one hand, this adds to the recipe's strangeness within the narrative; on the other hand, the short interruption it causes appears almost negligible to the reader.

Barker's recipe poem on Welsh flummery undergoes a significant transformation that manifests knowledge in an outwardly disorganized way. After the Lady orders the Welsh flummery to be made, she directs Galesia to "give [her] the Receipt, for it shall make a *Patch* in the SCREEN, as well as that of the *Punch*" (143). Just as in a recipe collection, the recipes in the screen are arranged in a deliberate and yet seemingly indiscriminate way. The two recipes the reader has encountered so far in the *Patch-Work Screen* now materialize into manuscript recipes and are physically sewn into the screen. With the inclusion of these patches, the screen itself turns into a recipe collection. The fragmentary nature of the narrative is reinforced through the recipe included in the patchwork; all three, screen, recipe collection, and narrative, are carefully arranged pieces which only appear to be haphazardly brought together by the author. Together these three provide the reader with a view into the use of the recipe as an instructional and scientific tool. The codification of the recipes in Barker's narrative into the patchwork screen place the immaterial recipe in the material world of the Lady's apartment.

In addition to the domestic and natural philosophical uses of the recipe which become visible in Barker's novel, the material on which knowledge is recorded and disseminated—paper—connects the *Patch-Work Screen* with the recipe collection most explicitly. The screen in Barker's narrative is made up of pieces of paper, and the way knowledge is circulated in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* is highly dependent on the ambiguity of the material on which it is recorded. Elaine Leong points out the significant role paper played in the early-modern household—for all modes of notetaking or as plaster for wound treatment, for example—as a sort of crossroads of knowledge production and application as “paper filtered, contained, and bound knowledge, objects, and the human body” (“Papering” 33). The application of the recipe as an epistemological as well as ontological tool in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* is in fact a major contribution to the novel's structure; paper is used as the material of choice for the screen. Jane Barker merges needlework and the creation and collection of medical and culinary recipes in the narrative so that the mixed structure and content of her novel embody the varied nature of knowledge production that women engaged in. Barker expertly weaves her ideas on needlework and recipes into the eponymous, made-of-paper patchwork screen that ultimately constitutes the novel. Acknowledging the influence of the uses of paper in the household on the aesthetics of Barker's novel situates Barker herself even more firmly within the discourse of natural philosophy during the Restoration and the early eighteenth century. Paper is the medium on which knowledge is shared, and Barker turns the screen into a document of knowledge for later generations.

The connection between recipe collections and needlework becomes readily apparent when looking at the construction of the screen. In Galesia's trunks, “they found nothing but Pieces of *Romances, Poems, Love-Letters*, and the like.” Instead of using fabric for the screen, they “resolved to have these [papers] ranged and mixed in due Order, and thereof compose a SCREEN” (74). The Lady does not hesitate at all to switch to the use of paper instead of fabric for the construction of the screen, and the discrepancy in material appears to be negligible in the narrative. One reason that the Lady and the readers might overlook the use of paper in this case is that paper was “so ubiquitous that it was often taken for granted, was enmeshed with social constructions of femininity and masculinity, similarly so pervasive as to be sometimes imperceptible” (Bittel et al. 2). The fact that Jane Barker constructs the patchwork screen out of paper—both literally and metaphorically—almost gets swept under the rug when reading her narrative. Yet, it is exactly because of this use of paper as the material of patchworks, recipes, and narrative that we most explicitly see the connection between *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* and recipe collections.

Paper's pervasiveness in people's lives ultimately leads to the repurposing of pieces of paper within household practices. Simon Werrett points out how flexible such a material as paper could be in the eighteenth-century household: "the open-endedness of domestic practices was matched by the material open-endedness of paper: it was a material that was flexible, adaptable, and valued for being so" (49). The *Patch-Work Screen* plays with ideas underlying the uses of paper in the process of knowledge production. By making Galesia and the Lady use Galesia's papers, Barker constructs the piece of needlework that finds its home in the parlor and as a mostly decorative item made out of paper. On the one hand, the paper patchwork forms the frame for the narrative itself for Barker, and, on the other hand, the screen grows into the literal manifestation of Galesia's knowledge and how it is produced. The centrality of the patchwork in the Lady's apartment—entirely "embellish'd with Furniture of her own making, which was PATCH-WORK" (74) and only the screen itself left unfinished—thus highlights the significance of Galesia's, and by extension Jane Barker's, knowledge within the narrative. The conscious choice to assemble the screen out of scraps of paper brings to the fore the methods and processes of knowledge production as they relate to both paper in general and recipe collections more specifically.

Manuscript recipe collections in particular reflect this construction of knowledge through paper brought together in the form of patchwork. Medical and culinary recipes are tipped and sewn into books directly. Manuscript recipe collections embody the character of patchwork on a physical level by consolidating recipes from various people, creating a new object in the process. On an epistemological level, manuscript recipe collections show the networks underlying the material manifestation of knowledge. Recipe collections and the study of paper reveal the "continuities between practices of making and doing and practices of reading and writing, offering a new lens through which to view the intersections between the study of production of material goods and the study of knowledge codification" (Leong, "Papering" 44). The materiality of both the recipe collection and the patchwork screen in Barker's novel lays bare the codification of Galesia's knowledge. In the end, the screen in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* provides the reader with the literal manifestation of collective knowledge as it is produced and assembled through paper by Galesia herself.

The use of paper in the novel also points to the unfinished nature of the produced knowledge. Simon Werrett argues that paper takes on an incomplete and infinite status: paper is constantly reworked through different knowledge and art practices during the early modern period and the Enlightenment. Consequently, the use of paper in both recipe collections and Barker's novel mirrors the notion of inductive reasoning that knowledge is never finite or absolute but can rather always be

improved upon (Werrett 48-51). Paper continually changes its meaning in the eighteenth century as it has different life cycles which build on it. Almost palimpsestic, the recipe collection and the *Patch-Work Screen* enrich themselves by using and reusing their own materiality. Manuscript recipe collections and recipes themselves are always incomplete by virtue of their existence as the starting point of the production of knowledge. Both literally and metaphorically, the recipe collection always leaves space for additions and changes and recipes can always be modified. Similarly, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* leaves the space at the end of the novel for the conclusion of the screen itself as Barker only completes the eponymous patchwork screen in the final installment of the trilogy. Paper and incompleteness in combination show that the recipe-collection-as-patchwork occupies a space that transcends and muddles boundaries between physical and epistemological spaces in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

It is not merely the content of the recipe collections that thus implies the domain of natural philosophy within the domestic sphere but rather also the form and material of recipes and recipe collections themselves. Jane Barker blends the processes of continual work and infinite knowledge production and acquisition in her metaphorical screen. The form of *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* mirrors incomplete knowledge that always guides Barker's instructional project. Each poem and narrative contained within Barker's novel serves to illustrate some point about either Galesia's character or her medical knowledge and how she acquired and used that knowledge in her life. The recipe collection acts as a physical album in which to collect a multitude of types of knowledge which can be useful to her as head of the household. Ultimately, it is this usefulness of knowledge that is at the heart of Barker's narrative and the genre of the recipe collection, especially in the cases of women collecting recipes. Barker uses the combination of content and form to present her knowledge grounded both in natural philosophy and needlework while simultaneously passing on this knowledge and teaching her readers.

Aesthetic repurposing of material modes of knowledge production is thus at the heart of Barker's novel. Barker's use of the recipe collection's aesthetics is a continuation of the creative work women already engaged in in their domestic natural philosophy. The patchwork-like structure of recipe collections emerged as "some female authors created conversations in their recipe books by inscribing and excerpting personal correspondence directly into their collections" (Herbert 114). Editing correspondence and knowledge within recipe collections, women created an entirely new document whose purpose was multifaceted: introduce structured information to be recalled at a later date; demonstrate networks of

knowledge; evince the collector's knowledge and creative abilities; and create a collection whose aesthetic reflects the genre. The form of the recipe collection therefore carries its own meaning alongside the natural philosophical meaning that can be ascribed to its contents in almost all cases. Collecting recipes in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries thus is the first step in the cycle of repurposed aesthetics.

In *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, Jane Barker then takes the next step in repurposing the aesthetics of scientific inquiry and embeds it within the narrative itself. Recognizing the aesthetic qualities of recipe collections that can also be found within patchwork, Barker uses them to guide the construction of her novel. Barker's "notion that knowledge is derived through a process of accretion" becomes even more apparent when contextualizing the narrative within the tradition of recipe collections (Mann 67). Because of their unfinished status, recipe collections provide the foundation for the constant "process of accretion" even more so than the screen itself. There is always room to add more knowledge in a recipe collection—using every last bit of space on the page to leave room at the end of the book to be filled by following generations and tipping and sewing in recipes are just two ways in which knowledge can be added later on—and if every possible space has been used, the collection of knowledge proceeds in the next book. Barker repurposes the same process in the *Patch-Work Screen*, and ends the novel with the screen unfinished. The *Patch-Work Screen* reveals the aesthetics that guide natural philosophical thinking, recipe collections, and needlework and are employed in the production of knowledge and the process of using that knowledge in an instructional mode.

Barker combines her creative projects in the *Patch-Work Screen* with the manuscript culture of recipes and coterie poetry, some of which she herself had composed and published in *Poetical Recreations* (1687). The inclusion of culinary poetry in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* expands the underlying structural guide of the patchwork screen to include the manuscript recipe collection. Thus, both the screen and the collection highlight the domestic labor involved in the production of knowledge. Ultimately, looking at manuscript recipe collections as another source material for both the form and content of Barker's novel explains the actual inclusion of culinary recipes in addition to offering a framework for the novel's form. The non-linearity of the novel relies on both the textile and material nature of patchwork and paper which come together in *Patch-Work Screen*.

Ultimately, Jane Barker places herself aesthetically at the junction of apothecary, physician, and housewife while occupying not even one of these roles. As a Catholic, unmarried woman, Barker simply cannot be any of these things in the

early eighteenth century, so she does so through her literary prowess and the character of Galesia. Barker is, however, aware enough of these different roles and has been educated well enough by both her mother regarding domestic roles and her brother regarding natural philosophy and medicine. She uses the *Patch-Work Screen* to further the one role she can occupy and turns instruction into the major project of the *New Science* through the materiality driving the narrative. Teaching her readers and characters, Barker can simultaneously indulge in her own membership in an elite group based on knowledge and express her faith and her virtues. The combination of domestic virtues and natural philosophy emerges most clearly when considering the screen to be an iteration of a recipe collection.

The recipes in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* thus tell a tale of how women writers in particular are influenced by material practices and use the underlying scientific methods and processes of natural philosophical instruments to instruct both their readers and members of their community in these methods as well as in cookery, economy, and morality. Recipe collections have a long tradition as sources of knowledge used in the household as well as in the laboratory, and Jane Barker makes use of this tradition. The most striking parts of her narrative are the concrete recipes she includes and her claims to her medical profession which encompasses the production of medical recipes. Galesia follows the call of her Muse to “Write *Recipes*, as OVID *Law*, in Verse” (118; original emphases), and her culinary and medical expertise teaches the reader and the person viewing the final patchwork screen through the combination of poetry and structural guidelines of the recipe. The codified representation of recipes within the narrative is a testament to the managerial roles in the household that included the instruction of other members of the household and which women often took on. Women were able to both shape and explore more practical aspects of scientific inquiry, especially when it came to such practical tools as the recipe. The practical application of scientific findings or even making new discoveries through experimentation in the household shows the influence women had on scientific practices and how they went about teaching these methods to family, friends, and acquaintances. Jane Barker’s inclusion of recipes in *A Patch-Work Screen* stops the reader in his or her tracks but also instructs them in how to be a virtuous person who manages a household.

¹ The study of recipes and recipe collections has been very fruitful in the study of the history of science. The most prolific author on recipes in the early modern period is Elaine Leong. The largest collections of manuscript recipes can be found in broader connections with natural philosophy and science. For example, the Wellcome Library has a large collection of manuscript recipes. However, there are also smaller collections of recipes, such as in the Lewis Walpole Library, which is not focused on the collection of manuscript recipes. Additionally, there are

several digital projects that engage with manuscript recipes from the early modern period throughout the nineteenth century, such as *The Recipes Project*, which acts as a blog about recipes and their historical status. It also functions as a collective that works on digitizing manuscript recipes. Recipes themselves are incredibly varied in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they usually present a narrative—a step-by-step guide—of the recipe itself. I don't think there is one representative recipe, but a reader would still recognize such a manuscript recipe as such.

² For a discussion of the lived reality of women in the eighteenth century, see Wigston Smith in *Women, Work, and Clothes*. Smith furthermore argues for a bigger focus on the actual material objects that women work with and that shape their lives instead of focusing largely on women leaving these objects behind in “Gender and the Material Turn.” For another overview of women and their engagement with the material world around them, see Batchelor and Kaplan. For a more global perspective which spans a larger timeframe, see Goggin and Tobin.

³ Elaine Leong discusses the recipe's role within the household and natural philosophy in the early modern period *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge* and “Collecting Knowledge for the Family.” On the role of recipe books in the early modern period, see Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell's collection. For a more general discussion about women and natural philosophy at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, see Karen Bloom Gevirtz's *Women, the Novel, and Natural Philosophy, 1660–1727* as well as the edited collection by Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton, *Women, Science and Medicine 1500–1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society*.

⁴ For discussions of the experimental character of *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies*, see, for example, Spacks, Patuleanu, Joule, and McGrath.

⁵ For further discussions of the patchwork screen and textiles as major influences on Barker's novel see Cahill. The connection between needlework and writing in literary criticism of women's writing is established in King, “Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work,” and Anderson. For the connection between textiles and patchwork in Barker's novel, see also Smith, *Women, Work, and Clothes*, 70-8.

⁶ For a discussion of the guild practices of apothecaries throughout the eighteenth century, see Simmons, “Trade, Knowledge and Networks.”

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