Edinburgh Edition of the Works of

John Galt

# The Entail:

## or

# The Lairds of Grippy

Edited by

Mark Schoenfield and Clare A. Simmons

# The Entail

The Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt

General Editor: Angela Esterhammer

## The Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt



Published so far:

*Annals of the Parish*, edited by Robert P. Irvine
*Three Short Novels: Glenfell; Andrew of Padua, the Improvisatore; The Omen*, edited by Angela Esterhammer
*The Entail*, edited by Mark Schoenfield and Clare A. Simmons
*The Ayrshire Legatees*; *The Steam-Boat*; *The Gathering of the West*, edited by Mark Parker

In preparation:

*Sir Andrew Wylie, of that Ilk*, edited by Sharon Alker
*The Provost*, edited by Caroline McCracken-Flesher
*Lawrie Todd*, edited by Regina Hewitt
*Bogle Corbet*, edited by Katie Trumpener
*Scottish Tales*, edited by Anthony Jarrells
*Transatlantic Tales*, edited by Angela Esterhammer
*International Tales*, edited by Angela Esterhammer
*The Autobiography and The Literary Life*, edited by Gerard McKeever
*The Life of Lord Byron*, edited by Robert Morrison

JOHN GALT

# The Entail:
# or
# The Lairds of Grippy

Edited by Mark Schoenfield and Clare A. Simmons

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS

2022

Edinburgh University Press is one of the leading university presses in the UK. We publish academic books and journals in our selected subject areas across the humanities and social sciences, combining cutting-edge scholarship with high editorial and production values to produce academic works of lasting importance.
For more information visit our website: edinburghuniversitypress.com



Edinburgh University Press Ltd
The Tun – Holyrood Road
12 (2f) Jackson's Entry
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in Arno Pro at the University of Toronto
and printed and bound in Great Britain

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

978-1-4744-5726-2 (hardback)
978-1-4744-5727-9 (PDF)
978-1-4744-5728-6 (EPUB)

# CONTENTS

# PREFACE TO THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF THE WORKS OF JOHN GALT

John Galt was among the most popular and prolific Scottish writers of the nineteenth century. He wrote in a panoply of forms and genres about a great variety of topics and settings, drawing on his experiences of living, working, and travelling in Scotland and England, in Europe and the Mediterranean, and in North America. Yet only a fraction of his many works have been reprinted since their original publication. In 1841–43 Galt's most important publisher, Blackwood, reprinted seven of his novels in volumes 1, 2, 4, and 6 of the *Blackwood's Standard Novels* series. In 1895, the Blackwood firm republished these novels, with one change to the selection, as the eight-volume *Works of John Galt*; this collection was reissued in 1936, again with one additional novel. Modern annotated editions of some individual works have appeared since then. However, the *Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt* presents for the first time a much fuller range of Galt's fiction in authoritative texts, together with materials that add to an appreciation of his historical surroundings and his cultural heritage. Each volume includes an introduction that places Galt's work in the context of history, genre, and the print culture of the period; annotations that explain specialised vocabulary as well as historical, geographical, literary, cultural, and philosophical allusions; and other features such as a glossary of Scots words and expressions, maps, and excerpts that illuminate Galt's sources and his contemporary reception.

Galt wrote and published his work quickly, sending portions of manuscript to the printer to be set in type as soon as he finished them; he and his publisher would frequently correct proofs of part of a text while he continued writing the remainder. Although he was usually busy with several projects at once, his correspondence documents his involvement in all stages of the publication process and shows that he undertook proof-corrections himself, except in cases where he developed especially close working relationships with a publisher or fellow writer and allowed that person editorial control. However, with few exceptions, no manuscripts or proofs of Galt's published fiction have survived. For many of his works, only a single edition appeared during

his lifetime. Sometimes there were one or more further editions, lightly revised and corrected; in other cases, the text was originally published in a periodical and then revised for publication in book form. As a general editorial principle, subject to adaptation based on research by the editors and the particular publishing history of each text, the present edition adopts as the copy-text the latest version in which Galt is known to have had a hand. In the case of texts first published in periodicals and later revised by Galt to appear as a book, the book publication is preferred as the copy-text. Each volume of the present edition includes the editor's account of the composition and publication history of Galt's text, with reference to extant versions in the form of periodical publications, multiple book editions, and manuscript materials. All editorial emendations to the copy-text are recorded in a list of emendations at the end of the volume. The *Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt* presents Galt's fiction accurately as it appeared during his lifetime, reflecting his intentions to the extent that they can be ascertained.

Galt's work was thoroughly interwoven with the publishing practices and reading habits of his age. He wrote for currently popular publication venues such as monthly magazines and literary annuals; he acquiesced to the expected format of the three-volume novel, but also attempted to popularise alternative forms such as single-volume novels and shorter fiction. His works therefore present a revealing picture of the literary marketplace during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The *Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt* highlights these insights through the editors' contextualising notes on early-nineteenth-century print culture and through the presentation of Galt's texts on the page. With respect to page layout, font, punctuation, and many other details, this edition seeks to replicate the look of Galt's original editions while providing an enjoyable reading experience for modern readers. The editors hope that the results will make Galt's clever, insightful, multifaceted, often innovative fiction accessible to a wide range of readers and researchers, and reaffirm Galt's importance within literary history.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the many people and institutions who assisted us in completing this project.

First, many thanks to the Editorial Board of the *Edinburgh Edition of the Works of John Galt* for entrusting us with *The Entail* and for the help and guidance that they have provided. Angela Esterhammer, as the Series Editor, reviewed everything we drafted with a meticulous eye to detail, and provided supportive and valuable comments, as well as convening useful workshops for us all. Other editors working on volumes for the series have been generous as well. Robert Irvine's edition of *Annals of the Parish* provided an excellent model for us to follow, as did Angela's edition of *Three Short Novels*. Mark Parker graciously shared the introduction to his in-progress edition of *The Ayrshire Legatees*, *The Steam-Boat*, and *The Gathering of the West*. Gerard Carruthers, Regina Hewitt, Caroline McCracken-Flesher, Gerard L. McKeever, and Katie Trumpener all supplied hints for resolving difficult annotation questions.

The wonderfully efficient team of editorial assistants at the University of Toronto has provided invaluable aid in many aspects of format and production, so we thank Delaney Anderson, Morgan Beck, Finley Eliasmith, Eric Fishback, Colin Morley, Zoe Sebastien, Juliana Stacey, Mathea Treslan, and Amy Zhao. We thank Lucy Tang for the painstaking task of the original transcription. And we are deeply grateful to Jovana Pajovic, who showed ingenuity as well as precision in designing both the family trees and the timeline, as well as engaging the project in many other crucial ways.

Ian Duncan and Kristin Flieger Samuelian each took the time to read drafts of the Introduction and provided valuable commentary on both form and content. We also received informed feedback on an early version of one section of the Introduction at the British Association for Romantic Studies conference at the University of Nottingham in 2019. Laura George gave guidance on eighteenth-century fashion. Frances Simmons both reviewed sample notes and participated in a topographical tour of Glasgow, which Mark was sorry to miss.

Justin Hamilton designed and drafted the map of the Highland journeys. The map of eighteenth-century Glasgow appears by

permission of the City of Glasgow's Mitchell Library. The curators and staff of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at The Ohio State University gave us access to the Library's first edition of *The Entail* and kindly granted permission to reproduce its title-page in this volume. Our home English departments at Vanderbilt University and The Ohio State University, both as individual colleagues and as institutional cohorts, were supportive throughout.

Our spouses, Mark's wife Sarah and Clare's husband Henry, have shown remarkable patience during a process that has taken many long internet meetings, so we thank them and the rest of our respective families for their love and support. Finally, this edition is dedicated to Peter J. Manning, who directed both our dissertations at the University of Southern California and who remains our scholarly inspiration.

*Mark Schoenfield and Clare A. Simmons*

# CHRONOLOGY OF JOHN GALT

1779
John Galt is born (2 May) at Irvine, Scotland, as the oldest child of John Galt (1750–1817), a ship's captain involved in West Indian trade, and Jean Thomson (1746–1826).

1787–88
Attends the Old Grammar School in Irvine.

1789
Father becomes a ship-owner and moves the family to Greenock. Attends school in the Royal Close.

1795–1804
Clerk in Greenock Customs House, then in the mercantile office of James Miller & Co.

1797
Founds a literary and debating society with two former schoolfellows, William Spence and James Park.

1798
Death of brother James at Montego Bay (17 July).

1803
Publishes a memoir of Greenock poet John Wilson in John Leyden's *Scotish Descriptive Poems*. Extracts from "Battle of Largs, a Gothic Poem" appear in the *Scots Magazine* (April 1803 and January 1804).

1804
Invites James Hogg to a public dinner in Greenock and meets him there. Moves to London (May). Publishes *The Battle of Largs* in book form, then suppresses it.

1805
"Essay on Commercial Policy" in the *Philosophical Magazine*, edited by Alexander Tilloch (November). Enters into business with Hugh McLachlan, factor and broker.

1807
"Statistical Account of Upper Canada" in the *Philosophical Magazine* (October).

1808
Bankruptcy of the McLachlan-Galt business (April). Enters into business with brother Tom, who soon departs for Honduras.

1809
Admitted to Lincoln's Inn to study law (18 May), but after four months embarks on travels in the Mediterranean and Near East, at times in the company of Lord Byron. Visits Gibraltar, Sardinia, Malta, Sicily, Albania, Greece, and Turkey; journeys overland between Constantinople and Vidin for the sake of a mercantile scheme that proves unsuccessful.

1811
Returns to London (October); abandons the study of law.

1812
*Voyages and Travels in the Years 1809, 1810, 1811*; *The Tragedies of Maddalen, Agamemnon, Lady Macbeth, Antonia, and Clytemnestra*; *The Life and Administration of Cardinal Wolsey*, about which Galt receives a complimentary letter from Walter Scott. Briefly edits *Redhead Yorke's Weekly Political Review*. Travels to Gibraltar to open a branch office for Kirkman Finlay & Co. (June), but the business falls through.

1813
Returns to London to seek medical treatment. Marries Elizabeth Tilloch (20 April). Death of brother Tom in Honduras (2 August). *Letters from the Levant*; contributions to *Lives of the Admirals*. Last encounters with Byron.

1814
"On the Art of Rising in the World" and "On the Principles of the Fine Arts" in the *New Monthly Magazine*. Edits and contributes dramas to *The New British Theatre* (4 vols, 1814–15). Visits France, Belgium, and Holland on a potential business venture (May). Birth of son John (13 August).

1815
*The Majolo* (vol. 1). Birth of son Thomas (12 August). Becomes Secretary of the Royal Caledonian Asylum, a children's charity established by the Highland Society in London. Death of friend William Spence.

1816
*The Life and Studies of Benjamin West* (vol. 1); *The Majolo* (2 vols).

1817

Death of father (6 August). Birth of son Alexander (6 September). Death of friend James Park. Begins writing for Richard Phillips' *Monthly Magazine*.

1818

*The Appeal: A Tragedy, in Three Acts* performed at Edinburgh with prologue by J. G. Lockhart, epilogue by Walter Scott. Moves to Finnart near Greenock to work for Reid, Irving & Co., but the venture is aborted.

1819

"The Late Mr. William Spence" in the *Monthly Magazine* (May). Returns to London to lobby Parliament as agent for the Edinburgh & Glasgow Union Canal Company. Begins writing school textbooks under pseudonyms for publishers Phillips and Souter, as well as children's books including *The History of Gog and Magog*. Publishes occasional articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

1820

*Glenfell*; *Andrew of Padua, the Improvisatore*; *Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West* (2 vols); *The Wandering Jew*; *All the Voyages round the World*; *A Tour of Europe*; *A Tour of Asia*; *The Earthquake*; "The Atheniad, or The Rape of the Parthenon: An Epic Poem" in the *Monthly Magazine* (February); "The Ayrshire Legatees" in instalments in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (June 1820–February 1821). The Union Canal bill is successfully passed by Parliament. Appointed agent for claimants in Upper Canada (now Ontario) seeking compensation from the British government for losses sustained in the War of 1812.

1821

*Annals of the Parish*; *Pictures, Historical and Biographical*; *The Ayrshire Legatees* (in book form); "The Steam-Boat" in instalments in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (February–December). Resides in Edinburgh during the latter part of the year while writing for Blackwood.

1822

*Sir Andrew Wylie, of that Ilk*; *The Provost*; *The Steam-Boat* (in book form); "The Gathering of the West" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (September); *The Entail*. Visits Scotland during the summer; in Edinburgh during the visit of George IV (August), then in Greenock; returns to London in December.

1823

*Ringan Gilhaize*; *The Spaewife*. Moves his family from London to Musselburgh near Edinburgh.

1824
*The Bachelor's Wife*; *Rothelan*. Forms the Canada Company to broker the sale of Crown lands and promote settlement in Upper Canada; appointed as its Secretary.

1825
Travels to York (now Toronto) via New York as one of five commissioners sent to Upper Canada on a fact-finding mission (January to June). Presented with the Freedom of the Burgh of Irvine. Death of father-in-law Alexander Tilloch. Travels to Scotland after his mother suffers a stroke (December).

1826
*The Omen*; *The Last of the Lairds*; "Bandana on Colonial Undertakings" and "Bandana on Emigration" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August–September). Death of mother (18 July). Appointed Superintendent of the Canada Company, which is granted a royal charter (19 August). Embarks for New York (October); reaches York in Upper Canada (12 December). Studies the operations of land companies in upper New York State.

1827
Visits Quebec for a month (February). Founds Guelph (23 April) and Goderich in Upper Canada. Visits the settlement of Galt (now part of Cambridge, Ontario) which William Dickson named in his honour.

1828
Sustains a lasting injury from a severe fall. His wife and sons join him in Canada; sons attend school in Lower Canada.

1829
Recalled from management of the Canada Company (2 January). Arrives in Liverpool (20 May) and proceeds to London. Committed to King's Bench Prison for debt (15 July – 10 November). Recurring spells of illness begin. "My Landlady and Her Lodgers" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August).

1830
*Lawrie Todd*; *Southennan*; *The Life of Lord Byron*. Wife and sons return from Canada (June). Briefly edits *The Courier*, a London evening newspaper. Begins contributing regularly to *Fraser's Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, and literary annuals.

1831
*Bogle Corbet*; *Lives of the Players*; short stories (including "The Fatal Whisper," "The Unguarded Hour," and "The Book of Life") in *The Club-book*, edited by

Andrew Picken. Forms and becomes Secretary of the British American Land Company for settlement of the Eastern Townships in Lower Canada.

1832
*Stanley Buxton*; *The Member*; *The Radical*; "Our Borough" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (October). Begins writing for *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (e.g., "The Howdie," September–October 1832). Suffers a stroke (October); illness becomes more disabling.

1833
*Eben Erskine*; *Poems*; *The Stolen Child*; *The Ouranologos*, a joint venture with painter John Martin; *Stories of the Study* (containing "The Dean of Guild," "The Jaunt," and "The Seamstress," among others); *The Autobiography of John Galt*. Resigns from the British American Land Company due to illness. Sons John and Thomas emigrate to Canada.

1834
*The Literary Life, and Miscellanies, of John Galt*; "The Mem, or Schoolmistress" in *Fraser's Magazine* (August). Son Alexander leaves for Canada to work for the British American Land Company. Moves to Greenock and settles with his wife at the home of his sister, Agnes Macfie. Death of William Blackwood.

1835
*Efforts of an Invalid* (poetry). Continues to write and publish short fiction, chiefly in *Fraser's Magazine* and *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (e.g., "Tribulations of the Rev. Cowal Kilmun," November 1835–January 1836).

1836
"A Rich Man" in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (June–August).

1838–39
Edits *Diary Illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth*.

1839
Dies at Greenock (11 April). *The Demon of Destiny and Other Poems* published posthumously. Elizabeth Tilloch Galt joins her sons in Canada.

# INTRODUCTION

MR NORTH

Henceforth I patronize prose.

MR TICKLER

So does Mr. Blackwood. Confound him, he is inundating the public. I wish to God Galt were dead!

MR BLACKWOOD

… Gracious me! Before he has finished the Lairds of Grippy?

MR TICKLER

Well, well, let him live till then, and then die.[1]

This teaser for John Galt's *The Entail*, couched in an exasperated professional jealousy by the fictive Mr Tickler, comes in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" instalment for September 1822 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. 1822, the year of George IV's visit to Edinburgh, had already been busy for Galt. In January he published his first three-volume novel, *Sir Andrew Wylie, of that Ilk*. Later came *The Provost*; *The Steam-Boat*, including an extensive description of George IV's coronation and reprinted with significant revision from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as a stand-alone volume; and "The Gathering of the West," also in *Blackwood's*. Amid this bustle establishing himself as one of *Blackwood's* foremost contributors, Galt completed and published *The Entail*, as "by the author of Annals of the Parish, Sir Andrew Wylie, &c," a merely technical anonymity as his authorship was widely known. William Blackwood paid him £525 for the copyright.[2] Although the novel's title-page is dated 1823, its dedication to the King is inscribed 3 December 1822, and in a letter from London of 11 December 1822, Galt describes the "great wrath" of the bookseller

[1] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (1822), p. 383.

[2] Galt to Blackwood, 31 August 1822, in George Spencer Beasley, "The Letters of John Galt from the Blackwood Papers in the National Library of Scotland" (Texas Technological College, 1951), p. 98.

J. M. Richardson at the early arrival of the book.[3] Galt soothes him, convincing him to take a hundred copies, by putting it on "next years account." The book appeared in time to be reviewed in the *Literary Gazette* for 21 December 1822 and in *Blackwood's* January 1823 issue. Already established as a chronicler of western Scotland, Galt was now venturing into the historical novel, something that he would continue in *Ringan Gilhaize* and *Rothelan*.

Although Walter Scott had popularised historical fictions, his works, such as *Waverley*, *Ivanhoe*, and his three novels of 1822—*The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and *Peveril of the Peak*—focus actions around a narrow time frame of a year or two, a representative sliver of a historical epoch. *The Entail*, by contrast, coordinates the tribulations of three generations of a family with nearly a century's expanse, making it, in Ian Duncan's words, a "vehicle for a critical argument with the genre of national historical romance practiced by Scott."[4] The Dedication to the King announces that the story "embraces a great part of the last century, the most prosperous period in the annals of Scotland" (3).[5] This claim is somewhat selective, if not suspect: eighteenth-century Scotland experienced two Jacobite risings that led to harsh repression;[6] the clearing of large areas of the Highlands leading to even more displacement of the poor; and economic disasters such as the failure of the Ayr Bank.

By the later eighteenth century, however, Glasgow was certainly flourishing, its economy and population growing rapidly, while its merchants, as Gerard McKeever puts it, "gorged themselves on the profits of colonial markets."[7] Galt's "theoretical history" shows how

---

[3] Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," p. 104.

[4] Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 235.

[5] When no further specification is given, numbers in parentheses refer to pages in the present volume.

[6] Alexander Dick explores, particularly regarding *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and James Hogg, how these clearances propelled Scottish prose pastoral as a literary genre; see "*Blackwood's* Pastoralism and the Highland Clearances," *Romantic Periodicals in the Twenty-First Century: Eleven Case Studies from* Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, ed. Nicholas Mason and Tom Mole (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 137–58. Galt interweaves such pastoral with his emphasis on urban development in constructing his own historical-literary mapping.

[7] Gerard Lee McKeever, *Dialectics of Improvement: Scottish Romanticism*,

this rise to prosperity and its attendant disparities in wealth, cultural access, and heritage affect one fictional family. While he argues that, strictly, *The Entail* is not a theoretical history and, among Galt's work, only *Annals of the Parish* is, Keith Costain offers a sustained analysis of the term as a form of conjectural history in which the lacunae of the historical record are supplied by logical conjecture, especially with regard to motivations. Costain argues Galt's use of the term derives from Scottish empiricism; Dugald Stewart, who coined the phrase, used Adam Smith's *Dissertation on the Origin of Languages* as an archetype.[8] In Galt's fictions, the materials to fill such gaps were sought, as Galt frames it in his *Autobiography*, in the "events of a circumscribed locality" (or two—the environs of Glasgow and the Highlands—for *The Entail*).[9] In *The Entail* the connective tissues that explain at once historical progress, its uneven development, and its indeterminate character are the peculiarity of individual historical agents, subject at once to the vagaries of human fragility and obsession. At the same time, these agents attached themselves to specific historical and legal phenomena. Katie Trumpener observes, regarding Galt's *Provost*, "On the most visible level, change appears as an incidental (even unintended) byproduct of the growing ambitions and insecurities of small-time operators." Once these operators (such as Claud in *The Entail*) have "set in motion the new social apparatus," however, change both "maintains and perpetuates itself" and "renders increasingly invisible the human agency that put it in place."[10] In *The Entail*, the unexpected consequences of property law provide a key mode of Galt's theoretical history. As Ian Duncan argues, noting the parallel to Trumpener's reasoning about *The Provost*, "The entail as plot principle of a fatal mystification of agency" presents "a negative, ironical realization of the demystified model … in which a rational agency or intention proceeds to mask its activity as impersonal

*1786–1831* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), p. 70.

[8] Keith M. Costain, "Theoretical History and the Novel: The Scottish Fiction of John Galt," *ELH* 43.3 (1976), pp. 342–65; here, pp. 363 and 348–9. See also Alan MacGillivray, "John Galt: *The Entail*," *Scottish Literature in English and Scots*, ed. Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan, and Alan MacGillivray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), pp. 266–87.

[9] *The Autobiography of John Galt*, 2 vols (London: Cochrane and McCrone, 1833), II, p. 220.

[10] Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 155.

historical process."[11] The Leddy's rewriting of personal history and her re-renderings of Claud as patriarch (often couched in legal, deterministic language) is a sustained example of the interplay between individual agency and historical transformation. Galt had also asserted, in the Dedication, that the period of the novel was "singularly glorious to the administration of your Majesty's Illustrious Family" (3), perhaps inadvertently alluding to George IV's own nineteenth-century difficulties, as both regent and king, in securing the people's affections, as well as downplaying his more popular father's political blunders; in doing so, he poses the question of monarchical agency in the face of historical change that serves as an undercurrent to the novel's localised focus.

## Origins of the Story

The original title, used in the quip from *Blackwood's* that we have chosen as an epigraph, was *The Lairds of Grippy*, ultimately selected as a subtitle. Even before the time that the "Noctes Ambrosianae" episode appeared, however, "The Entail" had been added to the title, as is evident from Galt's correspondence with William Blackwood and the list of "Works Preparing for Publication" in June 1822.[12] That same month, Galt, disclosing his competitive attitude toward Scott as well as his marketing canniness, noted that Scott

> has announced a new novel, the name of which I do not recollect—but it is something 'of the peak'—You may announce mine—The Entail or the Lairds of Grippy

[11] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, p. 239. Francis Hart also recognises the entail as a guiding concept, regarding its disruptiveness as a literary principle of the plot: he notices that, for A. R. Crockett, "the subtitle *The Lairds of Grippy* is descriptive of the book. For him, the story is a family chronicle, and the idea of the 'entail' imposes a false unity." In contrast, Hart argues, the "false unity of the entail is not Galt's artistic error, however, but rather his protagonist's tragic flaw. The book's unity derives from the emergent meaning of the ill-fated entail, and its very persistence renders 'Lairds of Grippy' a pathetically ironic label … the continuity [Claud] obsessively sought to impose is an outright, blasphemous denial of character" (*The Scottish Novel from Smollett to Spark* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978], p. 45).

[12] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 11 (1822), p. 754.

> motto 'Let Glasgow flourish'—I am sure that these early announcements do good, the very fecundity becomes an advertising topic—and as the Glasgow folks are great gossips, the motto will make it be talked of in that quarter.[13]

As Ian Gordon observes, the summer months of work on *The Entail* were as much disrupted as encouraged by Blackwood's advice.[14] In a letter of 11 June 1822, Blackwood compliments an outline that has not survived "of the stories and the scenes in which the characters will figure," yet then urges Galt to write in the first person, this style of narration not only being "always your forte" but an arrangement in which "the Author himself never appears" and instead "the very being" tells "his story himself."[15] That this would manifestly fail given the generational scope of the novel may have led Galt to the interesting compromise in which the narrative is written from the perspective of a quietly aging lawyer in Glasgow whose occasional appearances serve a highlighting and often historicising function, but who cannot always account for his knowledge of other scenes (and sometimes teases the reader with obscure references to his acquisition of that knowledge—prompting, or at least making available, readerly speculation on his connections with the main family).

Quite possibly, the title change was Blackwood's suggestion to mobilise the text's affinity with the public fascination for legal subjects. Scottish entails were a topical subject in the 1820s. The lawyer Erskine Douglas Sandford published *A Treatise on the History and Law of Entails in Scotland* in 1822. An *Edinburgh Review* article by J. R. McCulloch published in 1824 remarks:

> The practice of placing land under the shackles of a strict and inviolable system of entail, has been carried to a greater extent in Scotland than in almost any other country. This system was first established on a solid foundation by an act

[13] Galt to Blackwood, 15 June 1822; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," pp. 93–4.
[14] Ian A. Gordon, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 53.
[15] Quoted in Gordon, *John Galt*, p. 55. Blackwood repeats this admonition to favour the first person in a letter of 22 June 1822. Galt chose to use a first-person narrator in his next novel, *Ringan Gilhaize* (1823), but the story of Ringan's grandfather, who lived in the sixteenth century during the Scottish Reformation, can only be told as a family tradition.

> of the Scots Parliament, passed in 1685, which reduced heirs of entail to the condition of mere *tenants for life*, and gave the entailer the power of regulating the *perpetual* destination of the property.[16]

In his 1826 *Considerations on the Inexpediency of the Law of Entail in Scotland*, Patrick Irvine noted the rapid growth in the number of entails after an attempt to regulate them failed in 1764.[17] While Galt had the idea that became *The Entail* before these works were published, his novel, like them, responds to a series of high-publicity cases about Scottish property still in dispute, including *Stewart and Drew against Agnew* and *Agnew against the Earl of Stair and Others*; this public discussion indicates that Scottish lawyers were aware of the legal situation regarding entails, which many blamed for driving up the prices for available property. The entail at issue in these cases, like Claud's, was first effectuated in 1774 upon the death of Robert Agnew, who had constructed a set of mutual entails with his somewhat estranged son-in-law John Vans, on condition of the new owners taking the Agnew name. When Claud and his father-in-law plan a mutual entail, the moment raises the spectre of the ongoing Vans Agnew case, which, while it had stretched across half a century, had come to a hearing in the early 1820s on two points. First, this echo raises the question of whether mutual entails are a form of contract binding both entailers to one another; thus, the entails that Plealands and Claud contemplate would reinforce one another. In the novel, this arrangement falters over what Claud sees as a whim on Plealands's part, and it is then echoed by the legal documents between Claud and his son Watty that entwine the inheritance of their properties. Second, while deeds of entail needed to be publicly recorded to be effectual, it was possible to keep one secret and yet bind heirs to the execution of it, according to Patrick Irvine. This issue of secrecy, alive in the public debate on entails for Galt's contemporary audience, runs through Claud's machinations, and, while his primary lawyer opines against it, others construct their legal strategies on it.

---

[16] "Considerations on the Law of Entail," *Edinburgh Review* 40 (July 1824), p. 359.

[17] Patrick Irvine, *Considerations on the Inexpediency of the Law of Entail in Scotland* (Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1826), p. 50. The *Edinburgh Review* applauded the pamphlet as "a very sensible book, upon a subject of the utmost importance to Scotland" (43 [February 1826], p. 442).

Natasha Tessone points out that, in *The Antiquary*, Walter Scott had imagined "the Scottish entail as the crucial legal device for achieving a necessary equilibrium between the nation's landed and mercantile interests."[18] Such a representation does not, to put it mildly, accord with the effects of entails that run through Galt's novel, which consistently counterpoises Scott's historical vision.[19] Through a localised lens on a single family, the novel's background charts the extensive development of Glasgow over a century from a town of 8,000 to a flourishing metropolis, powered by coal and finance, with a population of more than 100,000.[20]

Glasgow had as an informal motto which was famously inscribed on the bell of the Tron Church: "Lord, let Glasgow flourichse through the preaching of they Word and praising thy Name."[21] As Claud bargains with the tailor Cornelius Luke, who is also an elder of this church, their dialogue establishes a tension between financial secular concerns and religious ones. Galt weaves throughout the novel allusions to the shortened, more economically pointed version of the motto: "Let Glasgow Flourish," which appears with the city arms in

---

[18] Natasha Tessone, "Entailing the Nation: Inheritance and History in Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*," *Studies in Romanticism* 51.2 (2012), pp. 149–77; here, p. 151.

[19] In both *Marriage* (1818) and *The Inheritance* (1824), Susan Ferrier touches on the cultural attention and economic effects of Scottish entails; in the latter, as with *The Entail*, marriages and entails can either coordinate or destroy the unity of property. Penny Fielding examines the representation of entails and their relation to the improvement of property in Scottish novels of the 1820s in "'Earth and Stone': Improvement, Entailment and Geographical Futures in the Novel of the 1820s," *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707–1840*, ed. Alex Benchimol and Gerard Lee McKeever (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 152–69.

[20] David Turnock estimates that from 1755 (nine years into Claud and his Leddy's marriage) to 1821, just as Galt was writing the novel, the population shifted from around 33,000 to 162,000, causing Glasgow to surpass Edinburgh as Scotland's largest burgh (*The Historical Geography of Scotland since 1707: Geographical Aspects of Modernisation* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], p. 64).

[21] Ian Muirhead, "The Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 20 (1980), p. 1. Other sources have slight variations in spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation.

1699, and "become[s] by usage, the motto of the city."[22] As the word "flourish" recurs, beginning with the twinned observations that Provost Gorbals was "in flourishing circumstances" in chapter 1 and on his death in chapter 2 is "discovered to be less flourishing" (7, 11), Galt connects the financial fortunes of the Walkinshaws to the social, as well as economic, transformations of Glasgow.

Galt himself was aware that this was an ambitious plan. In the midst of composition, Galt explained to Blackwood that he believed *The Entail* "the most vigorous & lively work I have yet attempted," in part because "every character & incident [is] founded on realities," and in part because "it has taken full possession of my fancy." Noting it will have "a great deal of matter similar in impress" to earlier work, he distinguishes it as "being complete as a dramatic plot within itself."[23] Retrospectively, in his *Autobiography*, Galt explains:

> The Entail, which is supposed to be among the best of my novels, is founded on a family anecdote related by a friend; of course the characters are selected according to my own liking, but the tale is true, and except in incidental circumstances, deserves to be considered as a kind of history in private life.[24]

A reference to "Mr. R. G., of Whitehill, near Glasgow" and the further detail in Galt's *Literary Life* that the friend was in 1833–34 Lord Provost of Glasgow confirm that he is writing of Robert Grahame of Whitehill, one of the most important lawyers in Glasgow and a Whig Reformist.[25] Unless details have been lost over time, the story Galt learned from his friend was not quite as tragicomic as that of the novel. William Gilhagie[26] owned property in Easter Craigs (then grazing land to the east

---

[22] Andrew MacGeorge, *Old Glasgow: The Place and the People* (Glasgow, 1880), pp. 103–4. "Let Glasgow Flourish" became the official motto of the city in 1866, the debate around its adoption reflecting tensions about its possible meanings. See also MacGeorge, *Inquiry as to the Armorial Insignia of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1866).

[23] Galt to Blackwood, 23 June 1822; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," pp. 95–6.

[24] *Autobiography*, II, p. 238.

[25] *Autobiography*, II, p. 282; *The Literary Life, and Miscellanies, of John Galt*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1834), I, p. 246.

[26] "Gilhagie" may perhaps have inspired the name of Ringan Gilhaize; in *The Entail*, the Leddy mentions a cousin named "Ringan Gilhaise" (180).

of the city); his son John, who inherited in 1733, seems to have been involved in various forms of litigation with the city and neighbouring landowners, a possible inspiration for the representation of Plealands in *The Entail*. Around 1730, one of John's three sisters, Agnes Gilhagie, who was well provided for in her father's will, married Robert Grahame, a Glasgow businessman called, to distinguish him from other family members by the same name, Robert Grahame the Merchant. John Gilhagie raised the cash to pay the bonds their father had executed to buy the property and to provide for his daughters by selling land to his uncle William Anderson. Anderson afterwards sold the Whitehill portion of the land to Agnes and her husband. Soon after "*the Rebellion*" of 1745, as John Buchanan phrases it in his history of the Whitehill area,[27] Robert Grahame the Merchant, who had presumably fallen upon difficult times, sold the property to John Glassford, the wealthy and influential tobacco baron. Glassford built a mansion and expanded the property, but when he bought the Shawfield Mansion in 1759 he sold Whitehill to John Wallace. This Wallace claimed descent from the Scottish national hero William Wallace (1270–1305), who led the revolt against England for Scottish freedom and was executed for treason by Edward I. John Wallace acquired yet more of the surrounding land, and his family eventually sold it to the Gordon family. The Gordons in turn sold the Whitehill Mansion and thirty acres to the Writer to the Signet Robert Grahame, grandson of Robert Grahame the Merchant and called even in his own time Robert Grahame of Whitehill. Galt adjusts these many transfers of land, while sub-plots refer to a variety of other legal contests, but the reference to his friend Grahame remains. Although Kittlestonheugh as imagined by Galt seems to be further east of Glasgow, it is from Whitehill in the first decade of the 1700s, then open land but in Galt's time part of the city just below the future Necropolis, that Maudge first teaches Claud about his ancestral property and inspires his dynastic ambitions.

Galt's account of the novel's origins also explains the movement away from the Glasgow region in volume 3 of *The Entail*. His chronicle of the Walkinshaw family history, while comprising an even longer period than that of the Grahame family that apparently inspired it, does not seem to have been quite enough for a promised three-volume

[27] "Notes on Wester and Easter Craigs," *Glasghu Facies: A view of the city of Glasgow, or An account of its origin, rise, and progress … By John M'Ure … Comprising also every history hitherto published*, ed. J. F. S. Gordon (Glasgow: J. Tweed, 1872), pp. 757–62; here, p. 757.

novel. A substantial portion of the third volume is spent touring the Highlands, something that Galt, although he travelled extensively in Europe and later spent time in Canada, apparently did not do himself. He explains in his *Autobiography*:

> The sunny summer storm and shipwreck described, as consummating the fate of the last heir of entail, was introduced to allow of a description of the northern coast, which I received from Miss Sinclair, the daughter of the celebrated baronet. I never was, myself, near that part of the coast in which the scene is laid, but I have been frequently assured it is correctly given, as well as some other Highland circumstances alluded to in the book.[28]

The "celebrated baronet" is Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster (1754–1835), whose *Statistical Account of Scotland* introduced the word "statistics" into English, and to whom Galt's internal narrator at that point in the novel, "Donald Gunn, the worthy Dominie of Wick," refers by name (343).[29] Sinclair's statistics showed the craze for entails in Scotland and estimated a third of the valued rent of properties was entailed in 1811, a fraction that by the mid-1820s, Patrick Irvine assessed, had increased to nearly half. In his two marriages Sinclair had several daughters: the daughter who provided information to Galt is probably Catherine Sinclair (1800–64). She later authored popular children's books, and relates some of the same legends of the Sinclair family that appear in volume 3 in *Shetland and the Shetlanders; or, The Northern Circuit* (1840). Catherine is said to have served as her father's secretary from the age of fourteen, so although she would have been young in the 1820s she would certainly have had familiarity both with her father's work as a leading member of the Highland Society and with the family legends.[30] An earlier more romanticised Highland tale involving the same family (from the 1500s) ties the themes of marriage and chivalry

[28] *Autobiography*, II, p. 238.

[29] Sinclair also wrote about the treacheries of sailing, recounting an 1807 journey from Wick, in an 1822 article: *Gentleman's Magazine* 92 (August 1822), pp. 117–20.

[30] Thomas Sinclair, writing some sixty years later, confirms that the informant was Catherine Sinclair in *The Gunns* (Wick: W. Rae, 1890) and *Caithness Events* (Wick: W. Rae, 1894). He also raises the possibility that Catherine herself invented some of the more lurid details.

together, as a marriage becomes the site of justified vengeance (volume 3, chapter 18). The stories of medieval Scotland that Galt gives to Donald Gunn (probably inspired by Donald Gunn the Sennachie, or family historian) were sufficiently compelling to develop their own afterlife, quoted as historical record in several books by the 1850s.

Galt found inspiration for other aspects of the story in his own writing. He first used the name Girzy in a farce called "Lingo's Wedding," featuring a Mr Ipsy Dixy as a vehicle for spouting legal jargon; he explains that he wrote it for "Moss, so famous in London as Lingo," but that in respect for his mother's feelings it was never performed. "The charm of the piece, however, is a Miss Girzy, a Scotch cousin of Dominie Felix, to whom Lingo and the lawyer are paying their addresses. Lady Grippy, in 'The Entail,' is a sound and sober personage compared to Miss Girzy."[31] He had written about legal subjects before, and in his *Literary Life* wrote that his play, *The Witness*, rewritten as *The Appeal*, "contains several interesting metaphysical descriptions and processes," and this interest in process persists in *The Entail* in both the Leddy's comic quasi-law and the narrator's own meditations on legal procedure.[32] He also alludes to others of his own works, playfully weaving the territory of Glasgow through references to other characters such as the Pringles of *The Ayrshire Legatees* and the Keelevin family.

## Historical Background

*The Entail* spans the entire eighteenth century (plus a final set of paragraphs that bring the story up to the time of publication). Its narrator is a lawyer whose occasional first-person intrusions indicate his personal familiarity with the time and scenes of the novel. He intermixes and distinguishes attitudes of heroism and commercial enterprise which, for Galt, characterise the historical impulses of the period. During this time, Glasgow established itself as a trading capital for tobacco, cotton, and other commodities. In the decades between Claud's return to Glasgow and his death, "Scotland's share of the British tobacco trade"

[31] *Literary Life*, I, pp. 22–3.

[32] *Literary Life*, I, p. 165. Galt expresses his pleasure in the *Literary Life* that reviews conjectured the play was by Samuel Taylor Coleridge; Walter Scott wrote the epilogue.

increased from ten per cent to "over 50 percent."[33] The narrator will occasionally intrude in his own voice comparisons with the current day; Plealands's funeral, for example, "far transcended" anything imaginable in "these economical days" (32).

The story opens in the reign of William and Mary after the ousting of the Roman Catholic James VII (James II of England). The Walkinshaw family, which owns the lands of Kittlestonheugh, is one of many in Scotland to lose everything in the ill-fated Darien Scheme, a plan to establish a Scottish colony in the Isthmus of Panama and thus control trade-routes between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The scheme was championed by William Paterson, a founder of the Banks of both England and Scotland, about whom Galt wrote a biographical sketch in 1832 for the *New Monthly Magazine*.[34] Despite the frenzy of investment in Scotland, estimated by *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* as "about half the circulating medium in the country," the English government and crown withheld support and ordered its colonies to do the same, a move widely seen as a catastrophic betrayal.[35] Claud Walkinshaw's father joins the venture as part of the second Darien expedition, leaving from the Clyde and reaching Darien in November 1699. The failure of the Darien Scheme not only causes the death of Claud's father but also precipitates the death of his mother and, since his grandfather has invested heavily in the venture, the loss of all the family property. Claud's quest to undo the damage to his family by recompiling its estate allows Galt to create a parallel to major historical events still so painful to Scottish memory that they are not necessarily stated explicitly.

The economic disaster of the Darien Scheme, which, Galt would write, "failed, by an act of singular perfidy on the part of the English

---

[33] Craig Lamont, *The Cultural Memory of Georgian Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), p. 88.

[34] "Biographical Sketch of William Paterson," *New Monthly Magazine* 35 (August 1832), pp. 168–76. For how speculation haunts *The Entail* as a "cautionary story about a self-made Scotsman," see Angela Esterhammer, "Galt the Speculator: *Sir Andrew Wylie*, *The Entail*, and *Lawrie Todd*," *The International Companion to John Galt*, ed. Gerard Carruthers and Colin Kidd (Glasgow: Scottish Association for Literary Studies, 2017), pp. 44–56; here, p. 48.

[35] "Scotch Caution," *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* 263 (1849), pp. 17–19; here, p. 18.

Government,"[36] was a contributory factor to Scotland agreeing to the Acts of Union of 1706–07, which combined the Parliaments of Scotland and England at Westminster. That agreement included a provision indemnifying investors in the expeditions as well as other terms to financially restabilise Scotland. Not all Scots concurred with the decision to unite: in the novel, for example, Girzy Hypel's maternal grandfather strongly opposed it and as a result lost his position as an Edinburgh judge. Some Scots may have hoped that after the death of Queen Anne, who had no surviving children, the succession might revert to James VII's son James, whose legitimacy the English Parliament had disputed. But the Westminster Parliament invited the Protestant Prince George of Hanover to take the throne in 1714, and the Jacobites (supporters of James) attempted to regain the kingdom in 1715. "Lord Mar's War," as this first Jacobite rising was known, however, did not gain much support in the Glasgow area, which was strongly Presbyterian; Girzy Hypel, later the Leddy Grippy, is born around the time of this event, while Claud is working as a peddler in the Border regions.

During the early years of the Hanoverian succession, Claud is able to establish himself as a merchant in the growing municipality of Glasgow. In the Jacobite rising of 1745–46, the Jacobite army under Prince James's son Charles Edward occupied Glasgow, making their encampment on Glasgow Green. Again, most Glasgow residents were disinclined to join them. *The Entail* at first seems to overlook this incident, but surely the original readers would know that if Claud was an infant around the time of the Darien Scheme and is forty-seven when he woos and wins his bride, he is deciding on marriage in 1746 around the time of Charles James Stuart's defeat at the Battle of Culloden, and heads for Plealands only months later.

The recovered wealth of the Walkinshaw family coincides with the development of Glasgow as a prosperous community, dependent on international trade and especially the riches of "tobacco barons" such as John Glassford and bankers like Robin Carrick, both mentioned in the novel. Even after the American colonies achieved their independence, Glasgow merchants had a strong relationship with Virginia, and although the Walkinshaw family regains its money through the cloth trade, the hints are that by the time that Claud's son George is running the business, the family is also trading in sugar and tobacco, and dealing in loans. The commodities on which the Walkinshaw

[36] Galt, "Biographical Sketch of William Paterson," p. 172.

business depends would largely be the product of slave labour (which would also be indirectly securing many of its loans), something that Claud's grandson James implies when he wishes to earn his living by another means. Where Claud has a prefatory career as a peddler on the English/Scottish border, his youngest son George first works in "the counting-house of one of the most eminent West Indian merchants," the significance of which the narrator highlights: the merchants at this time "began to arrogate to themselves that aristocratic superiority over the shopkeepers" (119) as an analogy, at the social-economic level, to George's familial pretentions to superiority.

Specific mentions are made in the novel of both the end of the American wars and the opportunity given attainted Jacobites to reclaim their estates in the 1780s; as James Walkinshaw comes to know the Frazers, more reference is made to the effects of the suppression of Jacobitism in the Scottish Highlands. The main story ends in the summer of 1793, when Britain is at war with France, presenting the opportunity to win glory not through commercial enterprise but through military action.

## Language

Language differences play a crucial role in Galt's representation of characters and their life-experiences in *The Entail*. Galt told Blackwood that, although already embarked on the novel, he hoped to spend several months in Scotland "where I may be enabled to add to my vernacular vocabulary."[37] In this edition, Scots words are listed in the glossary whereas phrases that may be unfamiliar to the twenty-first-century reader are explained in the notes. This seems straightforward, but Galt's rich use of language presents some difficulties in determining which words are genuine parts of local speech and which he invented (or adjusted spelling to reflect individual pronunciation), especially since at least one Scots dictionary, the 1911 *Chambers's Scots Dictionary* compiled by Alexander Warrack, was heavily indebted to Galt's writings. Galt may, for instance, have coined "jocosity" and "sosherie," and the editors of the online *Dictionaries of the Scots Language* (*DSL*) note "playrifety" is "only in Galt and his imitators." The glossary provided in the present edition does not contain malapropisms, explained in the notes where necessary, nor every instance of Galt's phonetic choices

[37] Galt to Blackwood, 23 June 1822; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," p. 96.

to represent the Scots pronunciation of English words: for example, "condumacity," "diffeequalty," and "gradawa."

Galt's characters give voice to forms of "Braid Scots" that by his time were under attack from attempts to standardise the English language. A number of vocabulary items in *The Entail* are listed in the *DSL* as most current before 1700, the starting-point of the novel: for instance, "moitie," "propreeator," "ranting," and "gratulation." During the Middle Ages Lowland Scots had diverged from the forms of English spoken in southern England and developed its own strong literary tradition, to the extent that many linguists consider it a Western Germanic language in its own right. After the Act of Union, however, pro-Unionist Scots played a significant part in the emergence of the concept of "standard English": the Edinburgh-based educator William Perry, for example, published *The Royal Standard Dictionary* (1775) and writers such as David Hume and Adam Smith pointedly avoided Scots language, a practice that Jane Hodson highlights when she remarks that "the Romantic period coincided with the latter part of the codification process of English," including "the codification of pronunciation."[38]

The concept of a "standard" English with approved grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation classified regional variations as "dialect," and over the course of the eighteenth century regional speech became increasingly associated with a lack of formal education. For example, one of the poets best known to characters in *The Entail* is Allan Ramsay, who in the 1720s advertised the Leddy's favourite reading matter *The Gentle Shepherd* as a "Scots pastoral" and argued in the Preface to his poems that his "native Dialect" had "no Defects."[39] A few decades later, his fellow Scot Hugh Blair asserted in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* that "it is a great Disadvantage to this beautiful Poem, that it is written in the old rustic dialect of Scotland, which, in a short time, will probably be entirely obsolete, and not intelligible."[40] By Galt's time, Ramsay's works were sometimes published with translations and a glossary.

---

[38] Jane Hodson, "Literary Uses of Dialect," *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism*, ed. David Duff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 513–28; here, p. 516.

[39] Allan Ramsay, *Poems by Allan Ramsay*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1728), I, pp. vi–vii.

[40] Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (London: Strahan, 1785), III, p. 136.

Yet even though "dialect" had become associated with a lack of sophistication, it appealed to the Romantic interest in the regional. Writers such as Maria Edgeworth, Robert Burns, and Walter Scott attempted to capture the pronunciation and vocabulary of Irish and Scots people of varying backgrounds. Using regional vocabulary and phonetic spelling to represent how different characters talk was therefore well established by the time that Galt wrote *The Entail*. While, however, Scott had helped create conventions for notating eastern Lowland speech, Galt largely had to devise his own means for representing the language of Glasgow and the rural communities around it.

In *The Entail* Galt goes farther than in his previous works in using language as a marker of identity. Ian Gordon describes the novel as "a linguistic *tour-de-force*" where "characters and social levels are differentiated with great precision."[41] In his study of non-standard language in literature, N. F. Blake takes as his subject "the contrast between one form of language and another." He notes, with justification, that non-standard language is often "a marker of class and of comedy."[42] *The Entail* certainly uses language to comic effect but complicates the relationship between "standard" and "non-standard" by presenting multiple versions of Scots speech, and by deploying non-standard language for critique and pathos, as well as humour.

The narrator, a lawyer, uses "standard English" grammar but slips in examples of Scots vocabulary, such as "pawkily" and "yett." In some instances, the narrator's use of Scots words can be attributed to indirect discourse representing characters' speech-patterns: it is clearly Mrs Gorbals who describes Christiana Heritage as "near-be-gawn," and Maudge who wishes that as Claud becomes successful he would "whiles" think of her. Yet the narrator is making his own judgement when he characterises Claud's manner of speech as "couthy" and the tailor Cornelius Luke as "douce."

The most extensive use of Scots language is that of Claud himself, his Leddy, and their son Walter or Watty. Watty, whose lack of intellectual capacity is apparent when he is still very young, never changes registers, and uses childish-sounding words like "chucky-stanes" and "sweeties." Claud, who had he been raised a laird might have had his local speech patterns educated out of him, speaks in Braid Scots. In

[41] Gordon, *John Galt*, p. 59.

[42] N. F. Blake, *Non-Standard Language in English Literature* (London: André Deutsch, 1981), pp. 12–13.

childhood his guardian Maudge addresses him by the familiar "thou," and he persists in addressing close family members and those he regards as social inferiors as "t'ou" even though the rest of his family, with the occasional exception of the Leddy, uses "ye" or "you" without social distinction.[43] Claud is capable of throwing in more religious phraseology when speaking with those who might appreciate it, such as the zealous Presbyterian Cornelius Luke or the fire-and-brimstone preacher Mr Kilfuddy, to whom he compares Watty unfavourably with Charles: "It's an unco pity, Mr Kilfuddy, that it had na pleased the Lord to mak Watty like him" (40). Despite the fact that her mother does not, Claud's Leddy speaks always in Scots, with the addition of comical malapropisms, such as her complaint of her daughter's "'conomical throughgality" (289) or her desire for her grandson to hear "the observes of her phlosification" (327). She too, though, is capable of code-switching, exhibiting a range of sociolects Mikhail Bakhtin associated with the novel form;[44] she switches between the languages of church, law, poetry, and daily household chores. When she addresses her granddaughter Robina, for example, she draws on literature, comparing her to the girl who marries to please her parents in "Auld Robin Gray" or even to "Clarissy Harlot." In her tour-de-force conversation with Beenie (as she calls Robina) in volume 3, chapter 3, she shows herself a champion of her idiosyncratic version of the Scots vernacular when she accuses her granddaughter of attempting to mislead and asks her to reveal the "because" (that is, cause):

> I maun put you to the straights o' a question. Ye'll no tell me, lassie, that ye hae na flung stoor in your father's een, after the converse that we had thegither by oursels the other day; therefore and accordingly, I requeesht to know, what's at the bottom o' this black art and glamour that ye hae been guilty o'?—whatna scamp or hempy is't that the cutty has been gallanting wi', that she's trying to cast the glaiks in a' our een for?—Wha is't?—I insist to know—for ye'll ne'er gar me believe that there's no a because for your jookery pawkrie. (284)

---

[43] For a more detailed textual tracing of these pronouns, as well as an analysis of other linguistic features, including sound, see J. D. McClure, "The Language of *The Entail*," *Scottish Literary Journal* 8.1 (May 1981), pp. 30–51.

[44] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 290–1.

Some of the words (requeesht for request, and thegither for together, for example) capture the Leddy's pronunciation. The phrase here, however, that seems most like a malapropism, "jookery pawkrie," is found in a similar form in Scott's Waverley Novels, and, like the English "jiggery pokery," suggests deceitful behaviour. Additionally, by calling her granddaughter a "cutty" (which can be simply a little girl, but often suggests promiscuity) and suggesting that she has been bewitching people, the Leddy hints at a connection with the girl witch dressed in a "cutty sark" (short chemise) in Robert Burns's "Tam o' Shanter," a reference probably wasted on the rest of her non-reading family. In the same encounter she shows her contempt for both standard English and Gaelic when she upbraids Robina for having been taught English by a governess from Manchester who arrived "speaking in sic high English, that the Babel babble o' Mull and Moydart [Gaelic] was a perfection o' sense when compar't wi't" (286). "Babel babble" might indicate that the Leddy regards Gaelic as the more patriarchal language, but certainly, in her opinion, both "high English" and Gaelic are no match for her own forms of speech.

When speaking with men, and especially lawyers, in contrast, the Leddy is more inclined to bring in a mangled form of legal language. Neither Claud nor his Leddy is quite sure of the legal terminology surrounding Watty's mental competence; Claud tries to believe that Watty is "concos mancos" (66) and by the end of the story the Leddy is referring to the court proceedings that conclude that Watty is *non compos mentis* as his "concos mentos sederunt" (383). Apologising for the entail to James, she says,

> anent the disinheritance, there was ay something I could na weel understand; for, although I had got an inkling o' the law frae my father, who was a deacon at a plea—as a' the Lords in Embro' could testificate, still there was a because in that act of sederunt and session, the whilk, in my opinion, required an interlocutor frae the Lord Ordinary to expiscate and expone, and, no doubt, had your grandfather been spare't, there would hae been a rectification. (314)

"Interlocutor frae the Lord Ordinary," or legal decision from the judge, makes some sense, but the use of "testificate" as a verb seems to be a malapropism of Galt's own invention (it also appears in *Sir Andrew Wylie*). For the Leddy, a "because" is usually a reason or cause, but here it functions more in the sense of "legal clause." The terms "expiscate

and expone" were largely obsolete by the late eighteenth century, and in context the Leddy is using "act of sederunt and session"—both "sederunt" and "session" meaning law courts—in a muddled attempt to describe the succession prescribed in the entail. The *British Critic* praises the Leddy's speech on the grounds that "we are overwhelmed by a flood of hereditary legal knowledge, equal to her proficiency in the varieties of the vulgar tongue."[45]

Eventually, the Leddy tries her own hand at what she calls "rectification." After Robina and Walky succeed to the property, she attempts to sue them for a thousand pounds to create a new annuity for James's mother, and when the lawyer Pitwinnoch suggests arbitration, she retorts in twisted legal diction, "Na, na—I hae mair sense than to virdict my case wi' any sic pannelling as arbitration" (360). Nevertheless, when she asks Pilledge "Is there ony prospect o' the Lord Ordinary coming to a decision on the pursuer's petition?" (367) her use of legal language has the desired effect of making the shady lawyer admit the true terms of Claud's entail and leads her to conclude that Robina and Walky have taken the property in a "wrongous manner" (370).

With the exception of Watty, Claud's children and grandchildren, whose increasingly privileged social position has given them more educational opportunities than their parents, speak a less broad Scots, or move between standard English and Scots phraseology. In Charles's first major speech, the declaration to his father that he will never give up Isabella (volume 1, chapter 14), Charles's romance-novel diction contrasts with his father's Braid Scots when he insists:

> No, sir; I feel that Isabella and I are one; Heaven has made us so, and no human interposition can separate minds which God and Nature have so truly united. The very reason that you urge against the continuance of my attachment, is the strongest argument to make me cherish it with greater devotion than ever. (48)

Speaking with his grandmother after he has married Isabella, however, he reverts to Scots to express his fear of his father's disapproval: "'I'm sure,' was his reply, 'that I hae done no ill, and dinna ken why I should be frightened in thinking on what every bodie that can feel and reflect will approve'" (54). By the time that Charles's son James reaches adulthood, there is just a trace of Scots in his expression, such as when

[45] "Article IX," *British Critic* 19 (April 1823), pp. 428–39; here, pp. 435–6.

he describes the sword that he hopes his grandmother will finance as "the true bride o' a soldier" (315).

Other characters show similar though less extravagant ranges of sociolects. The minister Denholm selects for his biblical references those amenable to financial interpretation to chastise or console Claud:

> when ye behold nothing in your goods and gear but trash and splendid dirt, then may ye be sure that ye hae gotten better than silver or gold—when ye see in your herds and flocks but fodder for a carnal creature like the beasts that perish, then shall ye eat of the heavenly manna. (167)

Robina imitates her father's language of commerce, wondering out loud whether she is being treated as a "bale bargained for" (265). Despite not reading, she has absorbed the clichés of the sentimental novel, and deploys both in the contemplation of marriage, with comical results when her grandmother, probably intentionally, misinterprets Robina's overly dramatic "Heaven protect me! I am ruined and undone!" (285). The narrator, also, exhibits a range of literary registers; beginning volume 1, chapter 29 with "Never did Nature show herself" and continuing "it was a calm and beautiful evening" and "the sun … appeared to be resting on the flaky amber" (106–7), he melds Wordsworthian tropes of nature with the legalistic realism of Watty's wedding. Elsewhere, he adapts the tropes of his profession, and shows his fluency not only in his local dialect but also in mock-heroic diction.

When James travels to Aberdeen, he has doubts whether the local people speak "any Christian language" (336). The speech of Highlanders in the story, however, is written as standard English, perhaps marking their status as landed gentry, the rank that Claud Walkinshaw has lost at the story's opening. The mystical ramblings of the second-sighted Mrs Eadie attempt to capture the Highland spirit not through spelling and diction but through a more poetic turn of phrase. Addressing George in the churchyard, for instance, she reminds him of her "hallowed and oracular inheritance" from her ancestors, and that "there is no deceit in death and the grave" (294). She asks James's mother whether she recalls her warning "that there would be a death before the good to come by Glengael, to you or yours, would be gathered? Mrs Walkinshaw of Kittlestonheugh is doomed to die soon; when this event comes to pass, let us watch the issues and births of

Time" (310). Galt, or at least his narrator, seems unsure whether he is being facetious when describing Mrs Eadie's "occasional gleams of the sybiline pretentions" (281), especially since George's wife has been described as ailing for years. The narrative proposes two contrasting forms of second sight: Mrs Eadie's transcendent prophecy and the Leddy Grippy's Presbyterian prudent and pragmatic predictions. Ultimately, though, this is a story that brings Highlanders and Glaswegians together, even, perhaps, at the expense of the Scots tongue of Claud Walkinshaw and his never-speechless Leddy.

## Names

After Mr Keelevin tries to dissuade Claud from signing the entail, Claud rebukes him, saying, "Ye're, as I would say, but the pen in this matter, and the right or the wrong o't's a' my ain" (81). Claud is here punning on the lawyer's name, which plays on "keelie-vine," a writing implement invoked in "Noctes Ambrosianae" a few months before *The Entail* appeared, possibly as a foreshadowing; Tickler, complaining of the mania for libel suits, notes what a soft-skinned creature is an Edinburgh Whig: "More than once I have put him to flight with my keelie-vine."[46]

Many others of the names in *The Entail* are made-up and funny: for example, Plealands, Bodle, Milrookit, and so on. Walkinshaw, however, is the name of a historical Glasgow-area family, although the narrative never directly acknowledges this. The Walkinshaws were unusual among Glasgow merchant families in being committed Jacobites. John Walkinshaw of Barrowfield's father escaped from custody after the 1715 rising through the assistance of his wife; the younger John was married to Katherine Paterson, also from a Jacobite family. The Walkinshaws had ten daughters, of whom the youngest, Clementina, was to become the mistress of the real but frequently romanticised Charles Edward Stuart, or "Bonnie Prince Charlie." Claud's courtship and marriage are specifically said to take place when he is forty-seven, which would be only a few months after the Prince's occupation of Glasgow and what is believed to be his first meeting with Clementina Walkinshaw at the Shawfield Mansion.[47] Although the house itself is

[46] "Noctes Ambrosianae, No. II," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 11 (1822), p. 434.

[47] See "A Glasgow Jacobite: John Walkinshaw of Barrowfield," chapter 15

in the novel—Watty, less able to self-edit than the rest of the Walkinshaws, mentions "Bailie Glasford's house" and Claud's one venture into horsemanship would have taken him right past the house—the historical events of Christmas 1745 and early 1746 are left unstated. The exception is the narrator's brief aside about the expenses to the city when Charles's army was billeted (upwards of £12,000 demanded in cash and supplies) for which, after considerable efforts by the Provost Andrew Cochrane, the British Parliament agreed to indemnify with £10,000 paid out in 1749.[48]

Clementina Walkinshaw, who had died in 1802, was not an entirely forgotten figure in Scotland: the *New Monthly Magazine*'s 1827 survey of *The Stuart Papers* prefaces the excerpt of three of her letters to Charles by noting that the "name of Miss Walkinshaw has never reflected much honour on his memory," though presuming its readers' familiarity with her story.[49] In Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) Charles's supporters discuss his relationship with an unnamed mistress suspected of being a British government spy; Scott's Preface to the 1832 *Magnum Opus* edition of *Redgauntlet* identifies her as a Miss Walkinshaw, adding that she had a sister in the Hanoverian Princess of Wales's household and that she was accused of sharing secret correspondence. The "real" Walkinshaw family, who were still living in the Glasgow area when Galt was a boy—Clementina's mother Katherine Paterson Walkinshaw is believed to have died in 1780—may be alluded to in an unusual narrative move in the first pages of the novel. When Claud is a penniless orphan boy, his nurse Maudge takes him to visit a family connection named as Miss Christiana Heritage in the mistaken hope that she will provide for him. The narrator now jumps in and recalls his own visit to Christiana fifty years ago (that is the 1770s), when Christiana, then an old lady, was still adorned with items

---

of George Eyre-Todd, *History of Glasgow: Volume Three, From the Revolution to the Passing of the Reform Acts 1832–3* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie, and Co., 1934), pp. 121–8.

[48] Eyre-Todd, *History of Glasgow*, III, pp. 213–14. Charles had originally requested £15,000 as well as "whatever arms can be found in your city." The request was followed by the following nicety: "The terms offered you are very reasonable, and what I promise to make good. I choose to make these demands, but if not complied with I shall take other measures, and you must be answerable for the consequences" (III, p. 204).

[49] "The Stuart Papers, No. II," *New Monthly Magazine* 20 (July 1827), pp. 335–44; here, p. 341.

worn by her mother at the time of the Act of Union in 1707. Claud's visit to Christiana would be around 1710; thus Christiana provides a link between the national past and the reader's present, and perhaps with Galt's memory of the historical Walkinshaws.

From the narrator's perspective, Christiana's Gothic-Pictish home Windywalls and her antiquated dress make her something of a historical relic herself, a position reemphasised when, in a later scene, the narrator himself is "copying a codicil which Miss Christiana Heritage, then in her ninety-second year, was adding to her will, for the purpose of devising, as heir-looms, the bedstead and blankets in which Prince Charles Edward slept, when he passed the night in her house" (35). Such items, and their treatment as heirlooms, further link Christiana Heritage with the historic Walkinshaws; and although she would be substantially older than Clementina Walkinshaw it is possible that Galt considered naming her Walkinshaw and then, deciding against it, made her a relative, thus connecting the fictional Walkinshaws with the historical branch. The younger Christiana of the main narrative, however, whose father's property was entailed to a male family member, leaving her dependent on his charity, is apparently unimpressed by the rightful heir of Grippy. She gives her kinsman just half-a-crown, a small start to his life in trade that requires supplementation by the community to supply his pack.

Walkinshaw is also a pun on "walking sure," ironic since both Claud's first name and his wife's maiden name suggest impediments to walking, Claud meaning "limp," and Hypel being close to "hypal," to limp. Mrs Walkinshaw, or the Leddy as the book usually terms her, is often called "Girzy," which is also ironic. She gives her birth-name as Girzel, a form of Griselda. Since medieval times Griselda was associated with wifely patience and obedience—qualities in short supply for Girzy Hypel Walkinshaw. Their eldest son, Charles, is presumably conceived before Prince Charles Edward Stuart, otherwise known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie" or the "young Chevalier," had departed from Scottish territories; his mother draws the connection when she, probably anachronistically, says that "Charlie" was always his father's "darling chevalier." She likes this joke so much that she makes it in chapters 19, 20, and, less jokingly as a warning to Watty about his father's favouritism, 22 of the first volume.[50] Charles represents a romantic approach to life that leads him to a rash marriage with Isabella Fatherlans after

[50] The song "Charlie is my Darling" did not appear in print until the 1790s, but Galt might be deliberate in suggesting it is available earlier to the Leddy.

her father has lost his "father-lands" in a bank crash. (The actual crash of the Ayr Bank was in 1772, but for the novel's chronology to work the bank collapse that ruins Isabella's father must be around 1770, the only point in which the novel's time maps imprecisely onto historic events.)

If Charles and later his son James are associated with the romanticism of Jacobitism, Charles's youngest brother George's name connects him to the pragmatic Hanoverian succession. George, called Geordie by his mother, is the main beneficiary of the mess that Claud makes of the entail. After Walter is declared mentally incompetent, George takes over the property: thus, to quote the Jacobite songs to which the Leddy has alluded, "Geordie sits in Charlie's chair."[51] Many of the earlier Jacobite songs portray George I or "Geordie Whelp" ("Whelp" is a scornful adaptation of "Guelph") as leaving his cabbage-patch in Hanover not through lust for power, nor even to secure the Protestant succession, but for sheer greed. For example, "Geordie Whelp's Testament" starts: "Wae worth the time that I came here, / To lay my fangs on Jamie's gear."[52] Given the overt thematic significance of Charles's and George's names, the second son's name, Walter or Watty, compels attention; Walter Scott was the most famous living Scots writer of the time, and it might have suited Galt's humour to give the Christian name of the editor of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* to a character whose intellectual functioning is frequently questioned, including legally, and even satirised. Against the interweaving of significant and odd names, Galt develops an underlining thread of the usual with a string of distinct Jennys, ranging from servants to relatives. Finally, variations on "Kittlestonheugh" appear. The title of the Walkinshaw ancestral property suggests "tickle (or ticklish) stone cliff." ("Heugh" can also mean a pit, but whether cliff or pit, the name seems inauspicious.) When used of legal matters, "ticklish" might be the best equivalent: for example, Claud, describing the entail to Mr Kilfuddy, confesses that the line of inheritance is "the mair kittle" (41); while the Leddy insists that her father "kent the kittle points" of law beyond Claud's understanding (113). Even George, who rarely uses Scots vocabulary, can only describe the matter of Watty's competency as "a kittle point of law" (183). "Kittle" can also mean "give birth to kittens" or more generally "have offspring," as when Plealands expresses

[51] James Hogg, ed., *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1819), II, pp. 202–3.

[52] Hogg, ed., *Jacobite Relics*, I, p. 116.

the desire that the Hypels will "kittle again" through his daughter's son (26), and various puns on it recur through the novel.

## Comedy and Tragedy

The central idea of *The Entail* is inscribed in the title itself: Claud Walkinshaw's obsession with reclaiming the lands of his ancestors and ensuring the continuation of the Walkinshaw name and property; and its effects on his family. Some critics have characterised Claud's obsession as a tragic flaw that causes his downfall, similar to a protagonist in tragedy as defined by Aristotle.[53] The novel, however, is not simply the story of Claud but of the consequences of his choices and how they affect his family. In the thinking of Galt's day obsession with a single idea was starting to be termed monomania.[54] Other characters in the novel—or more specifically, and significantly, other fathers—have similar all-consuming preoccupations that affect their families. Claud's father-in-law Plealands's recourse to lawsuits (being attentive only to his wins while ignoring both his losses and costs) echoes Maria Edgeworth's Sir Kit, of *Castle Rackrent* (1800), a multigenerational novel set in Ireland of a family trying vainly to manage its lands and ending with an unresolved legal question about the status of a document. Claud's mother-in-law's unhappy marriage is the consequence of her father's obsessive desire for financial security, a critical precursor to the interplay of marriage and wealth-consolidation that drives both Claud and his third son, George. Betty Bodle's father's weird system of classifying snuff is a comic version of the obsessive need to order the world that reflects the rise of various Scottish enlightenment scientific projects of the sort *Blackwood's* both embraced and parodied. Focused on a crucial economic nexus of trade, slavery, and progress, the novel registers the multiple affective valences of the "general spirit of improvement" which was "diffusing itself over the face of the west country" (224). Saddest of all is poor Walter's desire for his Betty Bodles; as he says

[53] See, for example, Keith M. Costain, "Mind-Forged Manacles: John Galt's *The Entail* as Romantic Tragi-Comedy," *John Galt 1779–1979*, ed. Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsey Head Press, 1979), pp. 164–94.

[54] The *Medico-Chirurgical Review* 3 (March 1823) notes that that French researchers have defined monomania as when the sufferer is "insane upon a single topic, and sane on other points" (p. 702). An article on phrenology in the same volume also discusses monomania (p. 903).

to Claud: "I'm a father noo; it would be an awfu' thing for a decent grey-headed man like you, father, to strike the head o' a motherless family" (127).

These obsessions are consistently built around an aesthetic of story-telling. Just as Claud learns through the repeated narratives of Maudge the values of property, his son Charles imbibes the "romantic lessons" of "Love" which his grandmother, the wife of Plealands, has derived from her own unhappy narrative of loveless marriage (46). Yet even though, as Claud comes to realise, his obsession has tragic consequences, Galt does not present even Claud as an entirely tragic figure. Claud's courtship of Girzy Hypel is a striking example. Based on evidence in the story, Claud's courtship begins in the summer of 1746, all the more ironic if imagined against a backdrop of the defeat of Scottish nationalist hopes at Culloden and the suppression of the Highlands.

In this striking historical lacuna, Galt's narrator emphasises the simultaneity of Claud's taking legal possession of Grippy, the first step in consolidating his ancestral lands, and his courtship of Girzy Hypel.[55] Thus, just around the moment of the young chevalier's defeat, Claud for the first time mounts a horse to ride to Plealands. The courtship begins with the Laird of Plealands's association of Claud's recent financial success with Glasgow being "on the thrive": he suggests Claud marry his daughter, using the exclamation "snuffs o' tobacco"—a substance that was to make Glasgow wealthy—to emphasise their kinship (16). The first step is for Claud to "lay your leg, my man, o'er a side o' horse flesh, and come your ways," and Claud resolves to borrow a horse to do so. Emphasising that he has never before ridden a horse distances him from the historical military action that is, in the Highlands, ongoing after the defeat at Culloden. Galt chooses to render the moment in a comic mode by linking the ride not to those heroic actions of Scottish relics, but to William Cowper's mock-heroic "Diverting History of John Gilpin." One of the most popular stand-alone English ballads of the latter eighteenth century, "John Gilpin" was incorporated into *The Task*, and was frequently illustrated and alluded to throughout the early nineteenth century. Both heroes, Claud and Gilpin, successful in

[55] Alyson Bardsley notes that Grippy, the first ancestral land Claud reacquires, is "marginal land, so unproductive as to be barely worth cultivating," yet the joy of receiving it echoes a fantasy of his father, as a mariner, returning home ("Novel and Nation Come to Grief: The Dead's Part in Galt's *The Entail*," *Modern Philology* 99 [2002], pp. 540–63; here, p. 547).

the cloth industries of, respectively, Glasgow and London, are stingy and try to make a good impression on the cheap. Both set upon marital journeys, Gilpin to celebrate a twentieth anniversary, Claud to court his bride—although they would be roughly the same age. Both must borrow their steeds, and both awkwardly mount them. Although Gilpin's ride is longer and more harrowing, both riders find themselves jolted by the horse's trotting gait, and then terrified as the horses speed up. Both are chased by dogs and gaped at as spectacle. Attempting to "crack his whip in a gallant style," Claud instead cuts his own leg, and when the horse accelerates unbidden, the narrator declares: "The horse, at the same moment, started forward into that pleasant speed at which the pilgrims of yore were wont to pass from London to the shrine of St Thomas a Becket at Canterbury, (which, for brevity, is in vulgar parlance called, in consequence, a canter;)" (19–20); while Galt's etymology is correct, the word "pleasant" is particularly ironic in light of Claud's terror at the moment, the gothicism of the scene (he is dragging behind him a dog, strangled accidentally by his whip), and the allusion to Becket's martyrdom. That martyrdom, however, and the associated religious altercation serve as an example of the corrective powers of history. Cowper's poem ends with Gilpin back where he began, and the diegetic declaration

> Now let us sing, Long live the King!
> And Gilpin, long live he![56]

In associating Claud with Gilpin's commercialism, Galt scripts an alternative anti-romantic history for Scotland. The restoration of his estates—and, later in the novel, those of attainted Jacobites—is through the process of law, supported by money earned through commerce.

Although the fates of her husband and sons might seem the stuff of tragedy, the great comic creation of the novel is Girzy Hypel, later Mrs Claud Walkinshaw and generally referred to as the Leddy Grippy—and grippy or grasping she certainly is. A mixture of stupidity and shrewdness, greed and kindness, the Leddy is obsessed with the details of her personal wealth but also tries to do her best for family. She is the only character in the book who appears to have read extensively. Other family members seem to know their Bibles—Claud,

[56] "Diverting History of John Gilpin" (1782), *Minor Poems of William Cowper of the Inner Temple* (London: Sharpe, 1818), p. 97.

for example, recognises the parallels between the Genesis story of Esau and Jacob and his own actions—but the Leddy also quotes Presbyterian theology, ballads, and other literary works; there are hints in the last volume that she has read Robert Burns's poetry. Early in the story she mentions "calf-love," and later, keeping up with the times, she observes, regarding the potential courtship between Robina and James, that "tender passion" is "the novelle name for calf-love" (251) and that she and Claud were never "like your novelle turtle-doves" such as "your Clarissy Harlots" (243).

The Leddy's literary knowledge spices her conversation, but her use of legal jargon, which Galt alternately makes comically misguided and a clear and authoritative defence of her rights, is, despite its malapropisms and procedural confusions, a source of real power in a masculinist world. Ultimately, her discovery of the true terms of the entail reverses Claud's tragic choices and enables the story to end as an uneasy comedy. When William Maginn resurrects her and she is introduced into the Ambrose's Tavern of "Noctes Ambrosianae" as "rather oldish" (she would be about 120), she has clearly kept both her personality and her habits of reading. She rebuffs Odoherty's "animal eagerness, as Mr Peveril the author ca's 't," quoting Scott's *Peveril of the Peak*, which appeared within weeks of *The Entail*. Her Scots legalism is first directed against Francis Jeffrey in his double role as her lawyer and reviewer. She next indicts Christopher North as Jeffrey's co-conspirator in an impromptu trial—spreading both mirth and terror among the men. She disperses them to bring the scene to a close, as they exit "*in the greatest panic and consternation*."[57] It is surely part of Galt's comic vision, acknowledged by its parodic replication in *Blackwood's*, that the restorer of patriarchy should be a woman.

## Entails: Law and Literature

Although her daughters think her remark foolish and attempt to correct her, Mrs Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, gets it exactly right for both her novel and *The Entail*, and indeed for the public perception of

[57] "Noctes Ambrosianae, No. IX," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 13 (June 1823), pp. 721–3. Mark Parker has demonstrated that the "repurposing" of Galt's Leddy in *Blackwood's* is in part an attack on Jeffrey and his *Edinburgh Review* ("Repurposing and the Literary Magazine," *Studies in Romanticism* 56 [Winter 2017], pp. 479–97; here, pp. 488–9).

several high-profile cases, when she complains to Mr Collins, "There is no knowing how estates will go when once they come to be entailed."[58] As the title of the 1818 pamphlet published by Constable—*Remarks on Scotch Entails and the New Notions; or, Roups, Rackrents, and Ruin* by a "Country Gentleman"—suggests, the condition of Scottish entails was particularly vexing. The Country Gentleman defends the old ways that Claud embraces against "*new notions*" because the "agricultural prosperity and morality of the country" are clearly connected with entails; he equates his defence to that of a volunteer turning out to defend the nation with "a rusty sword, a pitchfork, or even a flail" against the "landing of Bonaparte himself in the Firth."[59]

Despite the singular case of the novel's title, no fewer than four entails are directly implicated in the plot, and a wide variety of other property relations and transmission form a texture to the narrative. When the lawyer Mr Keelevin complains that Claud's plan to disinherit his eldest son is unnatural, the protagonist's retort draws on the Humean clichés of culture: "No, no, Mr Keelevin, we're no now in a state o' nature but in a state o' law, and it would be an unco [strange] thing if we did na make the best o't" (65). Such a claim the litigious son George as well as the twice-legally victorious Leddy would not dispute. McKeever speculates that Adam Smith's view of the entail as anachronistic may have provided inspiration for the novel; Smith opined that entails "are founded upon the most absurd of all suppositions … that the poverty of the present generation should be regulated and restrained" by desires and speculations from centuries prior.[60] Even without Smith as an immediate source, Galt would certainly have encountered—and expected his audience's familiarity with—a range of debates about the dangers of entails.

While English common law recognised entails, Scottish entails in the eighteenth century were, according to Lord Meadowbank, "mere creatures of" the Statute of 1685, which, he argued, meant that not only should an entail be interpreted by the strictest standard, but each component of it, called a "fetter," should be equally scrutinised and—in contrast to wills and contracts generally—one fetter could

[58] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 3 vols (London: T. Egerton, 1813), I, p. 146.
[59] "A Country Gentleman" [Charles D. Gray], *Remarks on Scotch Entails and the New Notions; or, Roups, Rackrents, and Ruin* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1818), pp. vi–vii.
[60] McKeever, *Dialectics of Improvement*, pp. 170–1.

not make up for the deficiency of another.[61] Thus, as judicial hostility toward entails increased because of their perceived incumbrance on economic and financial growth, older entails were challenged in courts and found ineffectual even as the device was still being used to secure property and compensate for the weakening of clans, such as the estate that the Frazers regain with Mrs Eadie's support. Even a single erasure of an insignificant word, improperly accounted for, could render a fetter (such as the irritant or resolutive clauses) void and annul the force of the entire document.

Entails rely on a certain fantasy of the dynastic structure of a patrilineal family, the more ironic since multiple fathers in the novel have only daughters. By the nature of an entail, it produced long arcs of legal disputes. Auchinleck, the estate of the Boswells, was entailed in 1776, despite the reservations of James Boswell, Johnson's biographer, and was the subject of generational litigation. The entail was finally ruled invalid due to an erasure and reinscription of a word, "irredeemably," deemed to be essential to the prohibitive clause, that, failing, collapsed the entire entail in 1852. One of the last cases Francis Jeffrey litigated, David Dickson and Others v. Cuninghame and Lord Medwyn in 1831, was rooted in an entail of 1733. The currency of the issue of Scottish entails, which continued to increase as English ones faded, is evident in a report by Patrick Irvine, an attorney specialising in property and settlements, who estimated that the number of entails "in the twenty years, between 1805 and 1825" was greater than "any antecedent period of twenty years."[62] Yet, even as early as 1749, a campaign had begun among Edinburgh lawyers to abolish perpetuities such as entails, which climaxed in a failed attempt brought before the Faculty of Advocates by Lord Mansfield in 1764, and unleashed a series of duelling pamphlets arguing for abolishing, preserving, and revising the law. John Swinton argued to the Scottish middle and upper classes that "We owe it to ourselves, to our families, to commerce, and to public liberty" to abolish entails, while John Dalrymple set out a number of arguments in their favour, the first being perhaps most relevant to this novel:

---

[61] Meadowbank's position is reiterated in Agnew v. Sheuchan and MacDowal v. Hamilton (1815); see "On the Law of Real Property in Scotland," *The Law Magazine or Quarterly Review of Jurisprudence* n.s. 6 (1847), pp. 243–80; here, p. 261.

[62] "Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee," *Report from the Select Committee on Scotch Entails* (1828), p. 8.

> It may be very foolish in individuals to think of making their names and families perpetual, when Providence has determined that all names and families shall have an end; but, if individuals are happy in that imagination, the State may very well allow them to enjoy their folly so long as it hurts not the State.[63]

Regina Poertner unearths "glimpses proving women could, and did, play an active part" in the "creation and management of entails," but also notes their disproportionately disadvantageous effect on women's standard of living.[64]

Scottish entails were effectuated by a deed of tailzie which derives from the French word "tailler," to cut, as in cloth. When Claud settles in Glasgow after accumulating a stake as a peddler, it is as a cloth-merchant, which, along with tobacco, was a thriving enterprise in Glasgow. The profession links thematically to the series of entails that comprise the novel's warp and weft. Attention to the making of clothing runs throughout the novel, from the cutting of a remnant to make Claud's courtship coat (that begins the process of entailment) to Girzy's difficulties having her mourning dress made and Isabella's disastrous stint as assistant to a dressmaker (punningly named Mally Trimmings), in which an exploding negligee thematically corresponds to the strained property arrangements that will propel the family's collapse. Through the novel, dress and law entwine, as when, in the trial regarding Watty, the Edinburgh advocate Threeper opens with a "speech" that is "replete with eloquence" and "metaphysical refinement" but in which "nothing" could be "less applicable to the coarse and daily tear and wear of human concerns" than his "definition" of intellectual competency (204). When a juror asks the decisive question about Watty, the emphasis shifts from a general conception of lunacy to a competency regarding the management of the estate, thus mooting Watty's largely successful parrying of the lawyer's questions

[63] John Swinton, *A Free Disquisition Concerning the Law of Entails in Scotland, Occasioned by Some Late Proposals for Amending the Law* (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1765), p. 101; John Dalrymple, *Considerations upon the Policy of Entails in Great Britain* (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1764), pp. 11–12.

[64] Regina Poertner, "Family Fortunes: Marriage, Inheritance and Economic Challenges in Scotland *c.* 1660–1800," in Carol Beardmore et al., eds., *Family Life in Britain, 1650–1910* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 23–46; here, p. 36.

by responding with literal exactness; it is a practical refutation of the agency of the entail to foresee and manage the future.

It is the law, in part, that adumbrates the rivalry between Edinburgh and Glasgow that Ian Duncan has noted.[65] When Galt described the novel to Blackwood, vowing to "devote myself exclusively" to it for the summer of 1822, he explained its geographic impulse: "Edinburgh will come in, but the chief business lies in Glasgow"[66] (this may suggest he had not yet worked out the significance of the Highlands for either plot or imagery). This rivalry between the "royal city" of Glasgow and the "intellectual" city of Edinburgh culminates in the Edinburgh lawyer, Mr Pilledge, being bested by the now late Mr Keelevin's assistant in the final confrontation about the entail of Kittlestonheugh and Grippy. Edinburgh may be the seat of law, but Glasgow is the home of enterprise.

## Reception

Of all the contemporary reviews, the *Literary Chronicle*, which considers *The Entail* "the very best work" Galt "has yet produced," attends most thoroughly to the conclusion of the entail plot, and asserts it is a meditation on "a wicked system of endeavours to divert the course of succession from its natural line;—a great moral exemplification of the evils and disappointments it is possible to entail on a family."[67] In this declaration, the reviewer aligns the novel with the contemporary debates on entails, even lamenting the omission of certain legal nuances from the novel. Given the topical nature of his theme, Galt was optimistic about sales of *The Entail*. Writing Blackwood from London on 1 January 1823, he noted those visitors of his who "have seen the book or have heard of it, speak favourably indeed, and I have little fear as the town fills the sale will go on to your satisfaction."[68] Longman, he continued, has sold 135 of the 150 copies he had. This fervour may be counterbalancing Blackwood's continual anxiety

[65] Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, p. 38.

[66] Galt to Blackwood, 8 June 1822; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," pp. 91–2. In this letter, he also expressed the intention that the novel "will extend to three volumes," an idea with which Blackwood concurred.

[67] *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* 3.191 (11 January 1823), pp. 19–23; 3.192 (18 January 1823), pp. 39–44; here, pp. 19, 44.

[68] Galt to Blackwood, 1 January 1823; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," p. 108.

about the sales of his literary property.

Galt had told Blackwood, as he was completing *The Entail*, that "the best of all criticism [is] to let an author know wherein he best succeeds,"[69] and the immediate reviews did just that, although balanced and sometimes overpowered by declarations of where he had failed. While the title page only identified him as the author of prior works, this information was clearly definitive, as every early review of *The Entail* (except *The Examiner*'s) identified its author without particular remark. In ways, the reviews imitate the novel in playing the line between a declarative tone and the hyperbole of caricature. Well-advertised by Blackwood, *The Entail* received immediate notice in five journals, and over the next century, when Galt's work was reviewed, almost invariably some attention was paid to *The Entail*. His obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* pronounced *The Entail* "one of his best novels."[70] A retrospective in June 1896 *Blackwood's Magazine*, prompted by D. S. Meldrum's edition of *Works by John Galt*, declares that "the 'Entail' which might have been his greatest book, is spoiled" by "extreme self-consciousness" and "subject consciousness,"[71] while the prior year, the August issue of the *New Review* declared it "by far the greatest of his works, with the possible exception of *The Provost*."[72] The reviews are typical of the period in quoting liberally, usually at least half their allotted pages, and focusing on relaying the plot, describing the characters, and evaluating the style.

Just as Galt was considering a hatchet piece about its editor, William Jerdan, *The Literary Gazette* published a review balanced between admiration for his characters and perplexity at their distastefulness; the reviewer quips that if Galt's characters reflect the people of Glasgow, its motto should be not let the city "flourish," but "perish." The reviewer is perceptive about Galt's blending of precise "observations of life" and their "caricature," and complains about the novel's "provincialism" even while acknowledging that the Leddy is "most entertaining."[73] This reviewer finds the plot complex enough to make several errors in summarising it—that task, focused on the first

---

[69] Galt to Blackwood, 15 June 1822; Beasley, "Letters of John Galt," p. 94.

[70] "John Galt, Esq.," *Gentleman's Magazine* n.s. 12 (July 1839), pp. 92–4; here, p. 93.

[71] "The Novels of John Galt," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 159 (1896), pp. 871–82; here, p. 879.

[72] J. H. Millar, "The Novels of John Galt," *The New Review* 13.75 (August 1895), pp. 207–14; here, p. 213.

[73] *The Literary Gazette* 309 (21 December 1822), pp. 800–2; here, pp. 800 and 802.

two volumes, occupying the bulk of the review. The review in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, although negative, recognises, without valuing, the alienating work language performs in the novel. It insists the novel's "tolerable portion of nature and verisimilitude" depends on its Scottish; "translated into English, the most determined reader could not wade through half a volume."[74] In typical Hunt fashion, the review ends by analysing the dedication to the king and suggesting its peculiar blend of obsequiousness and subversion, albeit attributing only the former to the author's intention.

The *British Critic* declared *The Entail* Galt's best novel to date, and justified its admonishments for an excess of detail about the Glasgow magistrates and "their lime punch, their turtle, and their indigestions" because the work is "destined, as we may pretty confidently predict, to rank as an English classic." In summarising the novel at length with frequent quotation, it joined in with the linguistic play of caricature and realism, noting, for example, that "After an exquisitely comic courtship of the matter-of-fact kind, Claud marries this mature damsel." Like other reviews, this one strives to delineate the balance of genres in the work, claiming it consists "of a farce tacked in to a tragedy," and focusing on Claud, the Leddy, and Watty as characters that could "figure in the Waverley novels" without injuring "their well established fame."[75] But, like *The Literary Gazette*, the conclusion ponders how Glasgow citizens react to their representation in the novel.

John Wilson's review in *Blackwood's* opens by noting Galt's command of the public—"lugging along the Public" like a man with "the right sow by the ear"—and recounts the plot of the first two volumes in Maga's spritely way. Wilson declares that the "chief interest lies not in the incidents, but in the delineation of character, and in pictures of passion." Like the *British Critic*, Wilson asserts both Claud and Watty would not mar pages of the Waverley Novels and calls this novel the "best thing" Galt has written.[76] The *Literary Chronicle* concurs, offering the de rigueur comparison to the Waverley Novels, and like the *Examiner*, notes the oddity of the dedication to the king and its work in erasing the historical fissures of 1715 and 1745. The *Literary Chronicle*'s reviewer summarises Galt's artistic excellence in "his saying just

[74] Q., *The Examiner* 781 (12 January 1823), pp. 29–30; here, p. 30.

[75] "Article IX," *British Critic* 19 (April 1823), pp. 428–39; here, pp. 428, 439, 429, 433.

[76] John Wilson, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 13 (1823), pp. 77–86; here, pp. 77, 80, 85.

what is sufficient to strike and interest; in leaving much untold, but suggesting every thing to the imagination of the reader," and concludes by looking forward to what he regards as promised sequels to the work.[77] All the reviews quote at length from the novel, alternately selecting moments of comedy and pathos.

In his *Literary Life*, Galt reported with satisfaction that both Walter Scott and Lord Byron had read *The Entail* three times, and this became a kind of calling card for the novel in subsequent editions and revival reviews. In a thirty-five-page overview of "Secondary Scottish Novels" in the *Edinburgh Review* of October 1823, Francis Jeffrey reviews seven novels of John Galt in a list of twelve. Despite having an excerpt of *The Provost* that runs for five uninterrupted pages, Jeffrey concludes the one paragraph he devotes to *The Entail* declaring, "We can afford to make no extracts." Nonetheless, he asserts the novel "contains many strong pictures, much sarcastic observation, and a great deal of native and effective humour," and ranks it "of a far higher order" than Galt's previous publication, *The Steam-Boat*.[78] Jeffrey's relative inattention, however, points to the middling but still significant position the novel would continue to hold. Alexander Hislop's *Proverbs of Scotland* (1868) references *The Entail* twelve times, and Scottish dictionaries often cite it, sometimes as the only written use of a term, signaling its currency in the nineteenth century. Blackwood's having kept the novel visible with editions throughout the century, discussions of Galt tended to consider his works as an undifferentiated sequence or a series of highlighted characters. In a thoughtful appreciation of Galt that touches on a range of his novels, J. H. Millar promises a particularly pleasurable perspective for a specific reader: "Finally, the lawyer may from the page of Galt drink his fill of destinations, entails, heirs-male, heirs-general, conquest, excambions, brieves of idiotry, augmentations of stipend, and all manner of law-pleas" in which the author "is rarely, if ever, to be caught in a blunder."[79] Against the blurring of his writings into a single nostalgic record, a World's Classics edition appeared in 1913, with a brief introduction in which John Ayscough lamented its obscurity and designated it "Galt's masterpiece."[80]

---

[77] *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* 3.192 (18 January 1823), p. 44.

[78] "Secondary Scottish Novels," *Edinburgh Review* 39.77 (October 1823), pp. 158–96; here, p. 178.

[79] Millar, "Novels of John Galt," p. 209.

[80] John Ayscough, "Introduction," *The Entail or The Lairds of Grippy* (Oxford: World's Classics, 1913), pp. v–xiii; here, p. vii.

Although not to the level of the Waverley Novels, *The Entail* continued to be read in the Victorian period. Blackwood's issued new editions in the 1850s, and another Blackwood's author, using the pen-name George Eliot, would seem to have read the novel carefully. *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) not only makes a similar use of non-standard speech to mark the difference in what his father calls "eddication" between Tom and Maggie Tulliver and their parents' generation, but also has significant plot parallels. After his father loses the family business as the result of a failed lawsuit, Tom Tulliver, like Claud Walkinshaw, makes it his life-work to regain it. He does not work as a peddler himself, but his life-long friend Bob Jakin, just like Claud, starts out as a peddler, then finds opportunities to enrich both Tom and himself in international trade. An early unsigned review of *The Mill on the Floss* in *The Guardian* draws attention to the parallels in the two novels' "social machinery" and use of "idiomatic dialect":

> The same class furnishes the characters: the Lairds of Grippy, with their cares divided, and their ideas moulded, as well by the counters and warehouses of Glasgow as by the still more congenial ancestral fields, are the Scotch representatives of the Tullivers and Dodsons, the Gleggs and Pullets and Deanes, the respectable and self-respecting farmer families, who appear as millers and small squires in the neighbourhood of the mercantile Lincolnshire town of St. Ogg's; or as traders, retired or active ones, from its wharves and shops.[81]

The similarities are such that *The Entail* may well have provided Eliot with a model as she developed her own "theoretical histories" representing families in specific social and historical contexts.

## A Real-Life Entail Story

Maginn's fictive extension in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of the Leddy protesting the announcement of her own death may not have been the novel's only afterlife. The first edition of *The Entail* in The

[81] Unsigned review of *The Mill on the Floss*, *The Guardian* (25 April 1860), pp. 377–8. Reprinted in *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), pp. 127–8.

Ohio State University's Rare Books collection bears the book-plate of Paul Beilby Thompson. The book-plate's owner was born Paul Beilby Lawley in 1784; he presumably bought the book on its first publication in 1823 since he only used the name as it appears on the book-plate between 1820, when he was required to take the name Thompson to succeed to his wife's father's large property at Escrick, Yorkshire, and 1839, when he was created first Baron Wenlock. Claud Walkinshaw wrecks his family's hopes by refusing to allow his eldest son to take the Hypel name; this heir prudently assumed the name Thompson for nineteen years, then changed his name to Paul Beilby Lawley Thompson and the family name back to Lawley by royal licence. After Paul's death in 1852, he was succeeded by his son Beilby Lawley: each of Beilby's four sons in turn inherited their father's titles but died without surviving male issue. On the death of the youngest son in 1932, the Wenlock title became extinct—but Lawley Thompson had been careful not to entail his Escrick property away from the female line; it eventually passed to the daughter of Paul's grandson (the third Baron), in whose family it remains. Is it possible that Paul and his son Beilby had learned lessons from reading *The Entail*?

# THE ENTAIL:

OR

# THE LAIRDS OF GRIPPY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

ANNALS OF THE PARISH, SIR ANDREW WYLIE, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:

AND T. CADELL, LONDON.

MDCCCXXIII.