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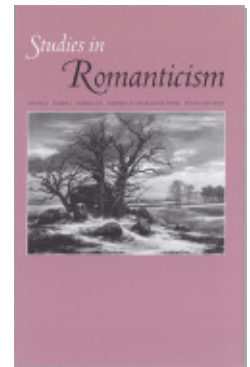
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Entailing the Nation: Inheritance and History in Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*

TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF *THE ANTIQUARY* (1816), WALTER SCOTT'S THIRD Waverley novel, two neighbors and friends meet to discuss "money matters."¹ Sir Arthur Wardour, an impoverished baronet, has come to ask the titular antiquary, Jonathan Oldbuck, for an advance of "one hundred pounds or thereabouts" to fund a speculative scheme that will bring him a vast treasure in the form of "the precious metals—, gold and silver" (222). But before he even allows Sir Arthur to voice his plea, Oldbuck, to whom the baronet is already heavily indebted, interjects, "Why, Sir Arthur, if it relates to money, I am very sorry but . . . in the present state of the money-market—and stock's being so low—" (221). Even Sir Arthur's promise to repay Oldbuck in "bullion" fails to seduce the skeptical antiquary, who sarcastically replies: "Bullion! I suppose you mean lead. . . . But what can I do with a thousand pounds worth, and upwards, of lead?" (222).

This comic, and, for the proud baronet, extremely embarrassing encounter points to a complex political and economical context that informs *The Antiquary*. Oldbuck's concern about the falling stock markets would certainly have resonated with the novel's readers during the post-Napoleonic era (the time of its publication), a period of great social and political crisis for Britain, with the skyrocketing national debt looming large over a nation struggling to stave off inevitable economic depression. More specifically, the antiquary's disbelief in Sir Arthur's bullion simultaneously addresses two seemingly separate issues: on a local level, it alludes to what Matthew Rowlinson has called "Scotland's chronic lack of coin" (a direct consequence of the abolition of the Scottish parliament in 1707) and, as a result of it, the kingdom's "national preference for paper money."² On a

1. Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. Nicola J. Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 222. Subsequent quotations from the novel are cited in the text by page number.

2. Matthew Rowlinson, "'The Scotch Hate Gold': Nation, Identity, and Paper Money," in *Nation-States and Money: The Past, Present and Future of National Currencies*, eds. Emily

broader level, it hints at the so-called “bullionist” crisis, during which the government and the Bank of England decided to suspend specie payments in response to the diminished gold reserves occasioned by Britain’s costly war with France.³

This grim analysis of Britain’s economic situation, whereby both forms of money—paper and coin—are portrayed as equally unstable, challenges the eighteenth-century consensus that upheld the so-called gold standard, which tied the value of the flighty paper to that of a precious metal (despite the scarcity of gold and silver).⁴ Even Adam Smith, who celebrated the advent of banks and their crucial role in a nation’s commercial development, found it necessary to endorse this hierarchy:

The commerce and industry of the country . . . it must be acknowledged, though they may be somewhat augmented, cannot be altogether so secure when they are . . . as it were, suspended on the Daedalian wings of paper money as when they travel about upon the solid ground of gold and silver.⁵

For Oldbuck, however, Smith’s “highway” and “wagon-way through the air,” telling metaphors for metal and paper, respectively,⁶ are both rendered

Gilbert and Eric Helleiner (London: Routledge, 1999), 59, 48. As Rowlinson explains, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in Scotland, “paper formed a larger fraction of the total money supply than anywhere else in Europe” (59).

3. See Rowlinson, “Scotch Hate Gold,” 62–63; see also Murray Rothbard, “The Myth of Free Banking System in Scotland” *The Review of Austrian Economics* 2 (1988): 229–45.

4. Although the Bank of England did suspend cash payments from 1797 until 1821, the English, unlike their northern neighbors, were notoriously suspicious of paper money. As Kevin Barry notes, “In 1825 the £1 was again abolished. . . . The Bank of England, for its part, so strong was the English antipathy to a paper currency, would not again issue a pound note until 1928.” “‘The Aesthetics of Paper Money’: National Differences during the Period of Enlightenment and Romanticism,” in *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, eds. David Duff and Catherine Jones (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 56. As Barry also notes, eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century English authors—from Swift and Pope to Shelley and Peacock—had a shared sense of mistrust toward paper money. See “Aesthetics of Paper Money,” 55–57. See also Patrick Brantlinger, *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694–1995* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 63–64.

5. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations: Books 1–3* (London: Penguin, 1999), 2:420. As late as 1826, in an answer to Scott’s *Letters of Malachi Malagrowth*, a passionate opposition to England’s attempt to suspend £1 notes in Scotland as well as in England, John Wilson Croker recurred to the idea of gold’s solidity: “We, in England . . . are anxious to exchange for the *solidity* of a metallic foundation, the airy and precarious pinnacles which a paper currency had enabled us to raise our commercial fabric. I confess that I cannot see any real, or essential difference between England and Scotland on this point” (quoted in Barry, “Aesthetics of Paper Money,” 57).

6. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 2:420.

insubstantial by the current economic practices in Scotland and England, the first being reduced to lead, while the second remains “the commodity . . . so scarce” (221). The question arises: what then grounds the nation when even its “solid” metals seem to assume the spurious character of treasure imported, as Oldbuck ironically notes, from some mythical Eldorado (222)?

For a romancer of property, as Alexander Welsh might have dubbed Scott,⁷ the answer to this question should, of course, be: the land. Scott, however, was keenly aware of the troubling fact that property and inheritance are fundamentally volatile, as, indeed, Sir Arthur’s encumbered estates in the novel, endangered even further by the baronet’s speculative pursuits of the elusive gold, all too clearly testify. Far from serving as ballast to this ancestral property (in whose preservation every character in the novel is passionately invested), one that would ground it as the nation’s “fund of a more stable and permanent nature,”⁸ all money does in the novel is drive “this ancient family . . . fast to the ground” (126). In this essay, I examine Scott’s treatment of Scotland’s law of entail, a statute that sought to resist alienation of property (and thus the inroads of commerce) by “arresting fleeting property . . . in an endless succession,” as one of Scotland’s legendary legal minds, Lord Kames, poetically described it.⁹ In *The Antiquary*, Scott imagines the Scottish entail as the crucial legal device for achieving a necessary equilibrium between the nation’s landed and mercantile interests—and, ultimately, for reforming both moneyed and landed sectors as well as practices and attitudes associated with them. In the end, however, Scott allows that the balance promoted by *The Antiquary* is ultimately unsustainable and that his ideological position must fail the stringent test of fiction: the novel’s denouement—which confirms Scott’s sense of history as a contested legacy—reveals political and economic energies that cannot be contained by the triumph of entail.

This effort by Scott to harmonize the feudal and commercial outlooks toward landed property through a statute that, paradoxically, highlighted the very incompatibility between the two ideological positions, reflects what Kathryn Sutherland has recognized as his “lifelong purpose to reconcile his own mixed bourgeois and aristocratic heritage.”¹⁰ But Scott’s idio-

7. According to Welsh, the *Waverley Novels* are “dictated by . . . the romance of property, [where] the myth that property (real happiness) automatically devolves upon those who respect the existing arrangement of things.” *The Hero of the Waverley Novels* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 102.

8. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations: Books 4–5* (London: Penguin, 1999), 5:411.

9. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Historical Law Tracts*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, and W. Creech, 1792), 155.

10. Kathryn Sutherland, “Fictional Economies: Adam Smith, Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century Novel,” *ELH* 54 (Spring 1987): 99.

syncratic treatment of the Scottish entail—as well as his privileging of responsible uses of paper currency over gold—also raises the question of Scotland’s participation within the larger British union: how to preserve a distinct cultural and national legacy and still remain a part of the larger nation that imagines itself as an “entailed inheritance,” as Burke famously described England in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.¹¹ And just as entail itself involved a vision of futurity dictated by the past, Scott’s attempt to imagine “possible Scotlands”¹² through entail necessitated engagements with the nation’s recent past—a past that raised the specter of sovereignty, rebellion, and loss.

Scotland’s Entail Act of 1685 was chiefly designed to create perpetuities through ownership of property. Through entails, original owners who drew the deed could determine the future line of inheritors and dictate for generations to come the manner in which their property should be run. As a nineteenth-century Scottish opponent of the act, Patrick Irvine, indignantly observed, by thus “assuming a right of management for their successors, they seem to continue their possession after death.”¹³ But particularly bothersome for Irvine, as well as for many other Scottish and English opponents of the law before him, was the fact that a huge portion of the territorial property in Scotland “was excluded from the market as a subject of commerce” (75). This, in turn, secured the entailed lands against creditors thus making the whole system, as Irvine concluded, “unfavourable to the progressive improvement of the country” (77).¹⁴

11. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Francis Canavan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), 121. The growing possibility of parliamentary reform—which Scott adamantly opposed—further highlighted this question. The Scots were a felt minority in the British Parliament, and, as Alyson Bardsley has summarized, “as those few were selected according to ancient Scottish practices, . . . [r]eform—manhood suffrage or even property-based suffrage—would constitute a formal regularization of Scottish representation in Parliament which would also erase its historical legacy.” “Novel and Nation Come to Grief: The Dead’s Part in John Galt’s *The Entail*,” *Modern Philology* 99, no. 4 (May, 2002): 549.

12. I borrow this phrase from Caroline McCracken-Flesher’s *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

13. Patrick Irvine, *Considerations on the Inexpediency of the Law of Entail* (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1826), 16. Subsequent quotations will appear in the text by page number. Unsurprisingly, Adam Smith too thought the law pernicious: “They are found upon the most absurd of all suppositions . . . that every successive generation of men have not an equal right to the earth, and to all it possesses; but the property of the present generation should be restrained and regulated according to the fancy of those who died perhaps five hundred years ago. . . . The common law of England . . . is said to abhor perpetuities” (*Wealth of Nations*, 3:486).

14. According to Irvine’s estimate, in 1826, one half of the landed property in Scotland was “under the fetters of entail” (*Considerations*, 48).

For Sir George Mackenzie, the main architect of the statute, the fact that entail undermined the nation's commercial wellbeing faded in significance compared to what he saw as its real benefit. The desire to ensure the continuity and survival of Scotland's ancient families gained full legal sanction through this curious remnant of feudal law: "[T]he liberty of disposing upon our own as we think fit doth more nearly to concern us than the liberty of commerce, especially in this kingdom, which stands more by ancient families than by merchants."¹⁵ In juxtaposing the feudal system of landholding through entail to mercantile attitudes toward landed property, Mackenzie implicitly engaged in the urgent debate about the nature of Scotland's government during the turbulent years prior to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. A staunch royalist and, later, anti-unionist, Mackenzie's timing for legislating the law of entail is far from incidental. With this opportune expedient he sought to mobilize the country's gentry in support of the severely threatened royal prerogative.

It was this principle of dynastic landholding upheld by the statute that dismayed the English legislatures, who, from the 1707 Union onwards, undertook every measure to repeal the law.¹⁶ The Scottish entail, therefore, came to embody the symbol of national self-determination, allowing patriots to preserve the sense of sovereignty shaken by the nation's compromising merger with its politically and economically aggressive neighbor.¹⁷ Upon the union of the two kingdoms, however, the English did succeed in curtailing the statute if not repealing it: eager to pass a universal law of treason, the parliament abolished the clause protecting entailed estates from forfeitures in cases of high treason.¹⁸ This provision gained full force after

15. Quoted in Irvine, *Considerations*, 30.

16. England's laws on entailing property were much more relaxed, allowing for the so-called common recovery procedure that gave proprietors legal power to cut off the original entail. As Lord Kames explains, "The mischievous effects of English entails were soon discovered: they occasioned such injustice and oppression, that even the judges ventured to relieve the nation from them by an artificial reform, termed *fine and recovery*." *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. 3 (1778) (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2034/166613>.

17. See Mark Schoenfield, "The Family Plots: Land and Law in Galt's *The Entail*," *Scottish Literary Journal* 24, no. 1 (May, 1997): 60–65. Even today, some historians take pride in the law as a part of Scotland's distinct and independent legal institution. Hence C. F. Kolbert and N. A. M. Mackey: "Those who care for the law of Scotland as a distinct national institution must be grateful that this great statute was passed before the merger of the legislatures. It is clear . . . that the Parliament of Great Britain would not have passed it. In its judicial capacity it was to try its best to sabotage it." *Studies in Land Economy: History of Scots and English Land Law* (Herts: Geographical Publications Limited, 1977), 205.

18. See Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elucidations Respecting the Common and Statute Law of Scotland* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1993), 366.

the two Jacobite rebellions, when forfeitures of land belonging to Scotland's ancient families became the order of the day.¹⁹

During his long professional career in the Scottish legal system, Scott had on several occasions encountered cases dealing with entails and all the perplexing technicalities of a law that never failed to generate a high volume of litigation.²⁰ His best known, as well as most commented on, fictional treatment of entail concerns Baron Bradwardine in *Waverley*, who loses his entailed estate to the Crown after his unfortunate involvement in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. In the concluding pages of *Waverley*, Scott is mostly concerned with how to restore the Baron's ancestral seat after the estate has been forfeited—and yet do so within the bounds of what, legally speaking, would count as plausible (if not entirely likely).

To resolve this intricate peripety in Bradwardine's favor requires a great amount of skill and maneuvering, and Scott rises admirably to the occasion. We are first led to assume that the Bradwardine entail ends with the Baron's distant relative, the aptly named Malcolm Inch-Grabbit, who by default inherits Tully-Veolan. Faced with hostility on the side of the tenants who decide to boycott Inch-Grabbit in loyalty to their old laird, Inch-Grabbit sells the estate to Baron Bradwardine's friend, Colonel Talbot, who, in turn, resells the now conveniently unfettered property to the Baron. Acting as a true descendent of the Scottish nobility, who values the continuity of his family name beyond anything else, the Baron re-entails Tully-Veolan on the second son of Waverley and his daughter—only, however, “if God shall bless them with two [sons]”—who “is to carry the name and arms of Bradwardine of that Ilk without any other name or armorial bearings whatsoever.”²¹

In *Waverley*, however, entail is only one of several Scottish legal and national traditions that were affected by the ill-fated rebellion. The issue of the law's disputed political and economical appropriateness is eclipsed in *Waverley* by the grand—and obviously more romantic—narrative of an enthusiastic group of patriotic Scotsmen fighting for their nation's independ-

19. After the 1745 uprising, the government further undermined the law of entail by passing The Tenures Abolition Act (1746), which “made it lawful for the king to purchase any lands in Scotland for erecting buildings or making settlements, notwithstanding the strictest entail.” David M. Walker, *A Legal History of Scotland*, 7 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 5:748.

20. See David Marshall, “Sir Walter Scott and Scots Law,” *The Scottish Law Review* 46 (1930): 303–38, on the cross-connections between Scott's legal and novelistic careers. On the increase in litigation during the 18th century prompted by the disputes about the entailed land, see N. T. Phillipson, “The Social Structure of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland,” in *Law-Making and Law-Makers in British History*, ed. Alan Harding (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), 148–49.

21. Walter Scott, *Waverley: or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (London: Penguin, 1994), 468.

ence. In *The Antiquary*, the less romantic aspects of entail gain in prominence as the Jacobite's insurgency against the House of Hanover fades to the background to become a curious referent for the events of "the last ten years of the eighteenth century" during which the novel is set (4)²²—and particularly for the threat of the French invasion of Britain in 1794. In between "the age of our fathers" in *Waverley* and "the last ten years of the eighteenth century" in *The Antiquary*, the idea of treason too, as we shall see, has accrued more complex connotations beyond the fact of England's superimposition of its own Treason Act on Scotland. And the entailed estate of an almost bankrupt "baronet of ancient descent" (51), Sir Arthur Wardour, stands at the crux of the whole matter.

According to critical consensus, *The Antiquary* questions the legitimacy and authenticity of historical discourse.²³ Equally important, however, it raises the specter of political and national genealogy, both theoretically—contemplating the ways in which the contested myths of national origins are produced and disseminated—and materially—explicitly linking history-as-genealogy with certain modes of inheriting property. Judith Wilt has suggested that the novel "is about the Romance of Property when the property is history,"²⁴ and this is certainly true given the novel's obsession with how, under the appropriating gaze of an antiquarian, history is transformed into an object to be collected, displayed, traded.²⁵ But the novel also proposes a far more immediate relationship between history and property, and not merely because its plot is driven by the protagonists' urgent desire to prevent the ruin of an ancient Scottish estate: it is Scott's insight about the volatility inscribed in the concept of inheritable property that shapes the novel's treatment of history as property and its understanding of

22. In the advertisement to the novel, Scott informs us that "[t]he present Work completes a series of fictitious narratives, intended to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods. *Waverley* embraced the age of our fathers, *Guy Mannering* that of our own youth, and the *Antiquary* refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century" (4).

23. If, as Fiona Robertson has argued, Scott's novels ask "what counts as a legitimate history for Britain within the rapidly changing European framework of Scott's time," they "are also fictions which repeatedly question their own legitimacies as fiction." *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 10, 12. See also Ina Ferris, "Pedantry and the Question of Enlightenment History: The Figure of the Antiquary in Scott," *ERR* 13 (2002): 273–84; and Nicola J. Watson, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790–1825* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994), 149.

24. Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Sir Walter Scott* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 157.

25. On the commodification of history in *The Antiquary* see Miranda J. Burgess, "Scott, History, and the Augustan Public Sphere," *SIR* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 123–36; and Yoon Sun Lee, *Nationalism and Irony: Burke, Scott, Carlyle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 571–601.

history and culture as a disputed inheritance, a site of friction and, more often than not, violent contention.

In *The Antiquary*, each of the main protagonists, through his engagement with landownership and money, seems to rehearse a particular version of the nation's history. Sir Arthur Wardour's sentimental Jacobitism is accordingly tied with his title as a "baronet of ancient descent" (51)—with a caveat, however: with "a large but embarrassed fortune" (51) and a huge debt that will almost eventuate in the loss of the already decaying Knockwinock estate. Jonathan Oldbuck, on the other hand, a staunch supporter of Hanoverian succession, who has inherited his estate from a German ancestor who had settled in Scotland after the Reformation, is valued in the community as "a ready-money man" (25), and is thus associated with the nation's "mercantile interest" (24). Oldbuck's nephew, Hector M'Intyre, a soldier and proud Highlander who owns "no fortune but . . . a Highland pedigree" (23) and hopes to inherit his uncle's estate, is quick to assert that "my father's pedigree of fifteen unblemished descents must have ennobled my mother" (185), whose veins, like Oldbuck's, "had been filled with printer's ink" (185). M'Intyre's excessive pride in his "long pedigree" (195) is, of course, compensatory, for, as one of his fellow soldiers remarks, "His father was a soldier of fortune just as I am a sailor . . . and whether one pursues fortune by land, or sea, makes no difference, I should fancy" (195). Scott is also careful to include "a bigoted Catholic and zealous aristocrat" (334), the earl of Glenallen, who mourns the inevitable waste of his ancestral seat due to the lack of a male heir on whom his property has been entailed. The picture, of course, would not be complete without the bardic figure of Edie Ochiltree, who, apart from being a radical Presbyterian, "the oracle of the district through which he travels—their genealogist, their newsman, their master of revels" (350), is also, by choice, a propertyless mendicant and beggar. And finally, the novel's *Waverley*-like hero, Lovel, is in search of his proper name and inheritance, hoping to clear the stigma of illegitimacy that seems to mark his mysterious birth. The novel's main challenge lies in isolating a common denominator within these competing fictions of fortune and property and conflicting historical perspectives that would generate a narrative of a unified, British nation. It will attempt to achieve such a precarious outcome through the exorcism of a stranger: a German alchemist, Dousterswivel, who is called throughout the novel by various characters a "landlouser" (127, 213, 418), a fitting name in Scots for a vagabond, for it is the nation's landed interest that is threatened most by his speculative monetary schemes.

The opening chapters of *The Antiquary* immediately set the stage for this battle over the validity of historical discourses, which is waged throughout the novel most fiercely, and most comically, between Oldbuck and

Wardour. “Motives of discord” between these two neighbors and friends, we are informed, “occurred in almost every page of history” (53). For instance, Wardour firmly believes in the authenticity of “that formidable bead-roll of one hundred and four kings of Scotland [most of whom were imaginary] . . . in virtue of whom James VI claimed to rule his ancient kingdom” (52–53). Oldbuck, on the other hand, “a shrewd and suspicious man, and no respecter of divine hereditary right, was apt to cavil at this sacred list, and to affirm, that the procession of the posterity of Fergus [the legendary founder of the Scottish monarchy] through the pages of Scottish history, was as vain and unsubstantial as the gleamy pageant of the descendents of Banquo through the cavern of Hecate” (53).

The argument between the antiquarian and the baronet about what constitutes the most authoritative version of Scottish history mirrors the debate between the dynastic and commercialist outlooks toward landed property surrounding the controversial and undefeatable law of entail: the supporters of the law saw in the entail a means to uphold the “divine hereditary right,” while its opponents espoused a progressive view of history, one that envisioned post-Union Scotland as a valuable partner in Britain’s narrative of economic and commercial development. Wardour’s contempt for Oldbuck’s mode of “historical investigation” (55), for his “pettifogging intimacy with dates, names, and trifling matters of fact” (55), boils down to the baronet’s aversion to Oldbuck’s “mechanical descent” (55): “that habit of minute and troublesome accuracy leads to a mercantile manner of doing business, which ought to be beneath a landed proprietor, whose family has stood two or three generations—I question if there’s a dealer’s clerk in Fairport that can sum an account of interest better than [Oldbuck]” (55–56). For Wardour, a proud member of landed nobility whose ancestral estate “is strictly entailed” (128), the privileged condition of owning land and belonging to the nation’s aristocracy is entirely incompatible with “a mercantile manner of doing business.” Indeed, just as the law of entail stipulates, Sir Arthur insists on a strict separation between the two realms. In other words, landed proprietors, according to this haughty baronet, should not engage in the degrading business of profiting from money-lending—of “sum[ming] an account of interest” (56). What obviously complicates matters is the fact that Wardour is a heavily indebted aristocrat, one whose status is paradoxically sustained by ready-money men such as Oldbuck. As Scott comically describes this crucial “connexion betwixt these worthies”: “Sir Arthur always wished to borrow; Mr Oldbuck was not always willing to lend. Mr Oldbuck, per contra, always wished to be repaid with regularity; Sir Arthur was not always, nor indeed often, prepared to gratify this reasonable desire” (54).

While the baronet scoffs at Oldbuck’s “German boorishness” and, by

implication, his “whiggish and perverse opposition to established rank and privilege” (55), the controversialist antiquarian displays no hesitancy in reducing Scotland’s ancient history to a literary artifact subject to poetic license. In a famous scene, he urges Lovel to undertake a composition of an epic called *The Caledoniad; or, Invasion Repelled*, “the grand old-fashioned historical poem” on the “battle between Caledonians and Romans” (134). When Lovel reminds Oldbuck that “the invasion of Agricola was *not* repelled” (134), the unapologetic antiquary answers, “No; but you are a poet . . . and as little bound down to truth or probability as Virgil himself—You may defeat Romans despite of Tacitus” (134–35). Moreover, he seems far more concerned with whether his work will “suit the present taste” (134) and be profitable—if an appendix or explanatory notes “will give great value to the work” (136)—rather than with the historical veracity of the whole enterprise.²⁶

With such a materialistic approach toward narratives of history, Oldbuck offers the best demonstration of Wilt’s above-mentioned proposition that *The Antiquary* treats history as property. But it’s not just any type of property; in Oldbuck’s scenario, history becomes a commodified, movable form of property, a reflection of his commercialized attitude toward real property in land and other immovables. Thus what Wardour would call the antiquarian’s “whiggish” answer to Wardour’s pride in his entailed estates runs as follows:

Why, I am master of my own acres, man—there is the advantage of being descended from a man of more sense than pride—they cannot oblige me to transmit my goods, chattels, and heritages, any way but as I please. No string of substitute heirs of entail, as empty and unsubstantial as the morsels of paper strung to the train of a boy’s kite, to cumber my flights of inclination, and my humours of predilection.
(155)

Oldbuck’s anti-genealogical mindset inevitably informs his suspicion of the dynastic concepts of both history and landownership. His snub at entail’s legal power to secure perpetuities through the succession of heirs that are “as empty and unsubstantial as the morsels of paper strung to the train of a boy’s kite,” replicates, with a slight variation, his vaunted skepticism toward the imaginary line of Scottish kings. For Oldbuck, both are equally unsubstantial.

26. As Lee has noticed in her excellent analysis of the “self-conscious ideological impurity” of Oldbuck’s antiquarianism (and, generally, of antiquarian discourses and practices during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries), “Oldbuck’s antiquarianism is distinguished not only by its acute reckonings of value but also by its easy embrace of extravagant fictions as acceptable simulacra of knowledge” (*Nationalism and Irony*, 91, 100).

This is not to say, however, that Oldbuck's "mercantile manner," his opposition to nationalist genealogies and the legal and historiographical apparatuses designed to uphold them, makes him a radical opponent to the landed prerogative. For not only does Oldbuck own the lands that, at least since the Reformation, have been transmitted through inheritance within his family, but he also takes immense pride in being distinguished "by his territorial epithet [Monkbarns], always agreeable to the ear of a Scottish proprietor" (21). In a sense, Oldbuck as a descendent of "one of the original printers of Germany" (23), and as the "laird" of Monkbarns, typifies an equilibrium of the landed and commercial interests, an ideal to which Scott, notwithstanding his aristocratic leanings of Wardour's kind, would probably have subscribed. Oldbuck as Monkbarns—as a landed proprietor—would have been disassociated from the danger presented in the eighteenth century by the speculative moneyed interest that, many believed, threatened to subvert all modes of property.²⁷ Even more so, his keen alertness to "the advantages attending the possession of money" (24) seems to be subordinate to his leisurely lifestyle as a landowner who is firmly anchored in the landed property he possesses:²⁸ "the burghers of the town [i.e., those who didn't own land] near which he lived regarded him with a sort of envy, as one who affected to divide himself from their rank in society, and whose studies and pleasures seemed to them alike incomprehensible" (24).

Scott insists on making the point that Oldbuck's commercial sympathies are entrepreneurial rather than speculative.²⁹ His German ancestor was a "painful and industrious typographer" (66), while the English Oldbucks enlarged their estates through frugality and hard work. Fittingly, the family's motto reads "kunst macht gunst" (108)—"that is, skill, or prudence, in availing ourselves of our natural talents and advantages, will compel favour and patronage, even when it is withheld from prejudice, or ignorance" (108). Oldbuck's capacity, therefore, to provide credit to indebted gentry such as Wardour does not make him a representative of owners of capital who reduce all relations between citizens to relations between debtors and creditors. This despite his "red memorandum-book, of which Sir Arthur . . . abhorred the very sight" (222), and which contains an exact record of the baronet's debt to his friend: "eleven hundred and thirteen pounds, seven shillings, five pennies, and three-fourths of a penny sterling" (222).

27. See J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 196.

28. On the independence and leisure that property confers on individuals, see Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 109–10.

29. See also Burgess, "Scott, History, and Augustan Public Sphere," 132.

As Scott immediately informs us, Oldbuck had already given up on the debt, “which he had long regarded as wellnigh desperate” (222).

Regardless, therefore, of Wardour’s prejudice against Oldbuck’s commercialism, and, perhaps more surprisingly, regardless of Oldbuck’s own antagonism toward entail as a tool for instituting the dynastic ideals of land-owning and, consequently, quasi-genealogical interpretations of history, the antiquarian exerts all his energies to save the Knockwinnock entail. And his emotional investment in preventing the loss of Wardour’s lands seems less a reflection of his amiability toward the baronet than a genuine mourning for “the ruin of an ancient and honorable family” (128). Contemplating the grandeur of the Knockwinnock castle, the antiquarian informs Lovel with a “melancholy cast”: “*cito peritura!* [soon it will perish]. . . . I doubt greatly—and it wrings my heart to say it—this ancient family is going fast to the ground” (126).

The present crisis in Wardour’s affairs isn’t the first time that the Knockwinnock entail has faced disruption. According to the family’s foundational myth, the estate had, once upon a time, been usurped by one Malcolm Misticot (from Misbegot), an illegitimate offspring of the first mistress of Knockwinnock. Eventually, his “most unjust attempt to establish his own illegitimate line,” which “gave rise to such family feuds and misfortunes” (125), was defeated by his legitimate half-brother, and Malcolm was forced to retire into a neighboring monastery where he died soon after. Ever since his death, and even to Wardour’s times, the family has lived under fear of a mysterious prophecy that “whenever Misticot’s grave was found, the estate of Knockwinnock should be lost and won” (243). The family feud raises the specter of bastardy that on the national level had marked the Protestant succession ever since the illegitimate Monmouth’s ill-fated rebellion against James II. Throughout this period, the charged issue of legitimacy would continue to plague the country, culminating in the two unsuccessful Jacobite uprisings that generated, as in the case of Wardour’s feuding ancestors, “fighting and blude-spilling about it, for the gentles took different sides” (243).

During the 1745 rebellion, the Wardours were suspected of high treason by Oldbuck’s own father, who, “in the name of George II, [seized] upon the Castle of Knockwinock,” and both Sir Arthur and his father were imprisoned in the Tower of London (51). Not having been able to detect any “overt act of treason” (52), the government released the Wardours, who were free to return to their estate and “talk of their sufferings in the royal cause” (52). Unlike the Bradwardine entail in *Waverley*, which is dissolved because of the Baron’s treasonous involvement in the uprising, the property of Knockwinock survives intact the whole upheaval and its aftermath.

Waverley addresses the consequences of the political institution of the Hanoverian entail, which effectively delegitimated the dynastic outlook of holding property, and which gained its political expression through rebellious Jacobitism.³⁰ *The Antiquary*, on the other hand, depicts the Wardours' Jacobitism as empty talk: they "displayed all the enthusiasm of [the Jacobite] party, while it could be served with words only" (51).

The result of the Wardours' non-involvement in the actual rebellion is a relatively harmonious continuance of the Scottish ancient entail of Knockwinnock under the recently established political entail of the house of Hanover, notwithstanding the symbolical re-enactment of the German "invasion" through the seizure by Oldbuck's father of the family's estates in 1745. In a sense, according to the family's ancient prophecy, the Knockwinnock estate had been "lost and won," regardless of the continuation, from the Jacobite viewpoint, of the illegitimate rule of the house of Hanover. From *The Antiquary's* perspective, that whole incident curiously prepared the ground for the moment in the novel's present when "the old feud" (53) between the two families can be put aside, and Oldbuck, the son of the Wardours' enemy, is allowed to help protect this ancient family from ruin. The baronet himself is keenly aware of the irony of such a scenario, as he exclaims on the eve of his bankruptcy, "it is a fine pass we are come to, when the affection of an Oldbuck is of consequence to a Wardour!" (392). If Wardour's "dreams are of standing armies and German oppression" (61), the threat posed by Oldbuck and, by association, Hanover, has seemingly assumed secondary status in a time of personal crisis for the baronet's family and general crisis for a nation nervously awaiting the French invasion.

Nevertheless, the "German oppression" remains as urgent an issue as ever. The threat has been displaced onto a "High-German landlouper, Dousterswivel" (127), a swindler who, claiming to possess mystical powers, "debouch[es] the spirit of the ignorant and credulous with mystical trash as effectively as if they had besotted their brains with gin, and then pick[s] their pockets with the same facility" (128). With the introduction of Dousterswivel onto the scene, Scott exposes the dangerous, speculative side of commercialism that was associated with the establishment of the Hanoverian succession and the Whig system of government that supported it. By positing a German swindler and alchemist as an embodiment of this speculative commercial interest, the novel balances the mercantile and dynastic attitudes toward property represented by Oldbuck and Wardour, respectively. Only a Scotland purged from this threat, the novel seems to sug-

30. As Walker explains, the Protestant succession represented by the house of Hanover "was in substance a statutory entail of the crown," an ideologically determined juridical circumstance that "created a further formal barrier to James's claim to the throne." *A Legal History of Scotland*, 5:104.

gest, would be able to see these two extremes unite “in dutiful love and allegiance to the sovereign who now fills the throne [George III]” (61). But, from the novel’s standpoint, even more urgent than preserving this balance is protecting the landed prerogative—for the Scottish entail emerges as expressly at hazard from the threat posed by Dousterswivel. Wardour’s “embarrassments have of late become so pressing” (127) not simply because of his creditors’ demands to pay off the debts he owes them; more important, he has allowed himself to be persuaded by Dousterswivel to invest large sums of (borrowed) money in order to gain “mountains of wealth” (128).

Initially, both the antiquarian and the baronet fall victim to Dousterswivel’s speculative schemes, but it is Wardour who loses the most. As Oldbuck explains,

[Sir Arthur’s] estate is strictly entailed, and he has always been an embarrassed man. This rapparee promised him mountains of wealth, and an English company was found to advance large sums of money—I fear on Sir Arthur’s guarantee. Some gentlemen—I was ass enough to be one—took small shares in the concern, and Sir Arthur made great outlay; we were trained on by specious appearances, and more specious lies, and now, like John Bunyan, we awake, and behold it is a dream. (128)

Dousterswivel clearly functions here as a negative prototype of the eighteenth-century stockjobber who trades with promises, “specious appearances” and “specious lies.” For this class of men, property performed as any other sort of currency that could be pawned for the fantasy, the dream, of a prosperous future: in the end, to use Pocock’s formulation, “what one owned was promises.”³¹

The whole enterprise highlights the extent to which monetary transactions depend on faith, on “the magic or fetishistic conversion of ‘faith’ in mere paper into substantial wealth.”³² As Dousterswivel cunningly coaxes Sir Arthur into risking “[v]ery great expense” by investing in his grand alchemist schemes, “dere must be de great expenses—de expense is de seed—de riches and de mine of goot metal . . . they are de crop” (208). He also dissuades the baronet from confiding in Oldbuck about their “hopeful scheme” (124), for, as the alchemist argues, “it is want of credulity—what you call faith—that spoils the great enterprise” (169). Furthermore, as Wardour’s golden quests precipitate him deeper and deeper into debt, his creditors must rely on faith in his ability to repay the sum plus interest that he has thus incurred. After Dousterswivel presents the credulous baronet

31. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 113.

32. Brantlinger, *Fictions of State*, 112.

with a small casket of antique gold and silver coins (previously planted in the spot by the adept himself), Wardour asks Oldbuck for a loan that will help him finance the future—and much bigger—excavation project. In his answer to the antiquary's warning that the alchemist "has made a gull of you above ground and underground" (224), Wardour indignantly retorts, "I think you will give me credit for having seen what I *say* I saw" (224).³³ The mention of "credit" here almost literally refers to money, for by crediting Sir Arthur's story of the miraculous discovery Oldbuck is invited to issue the baronet a credit of one hundred pounds for thus having, as Dousterswivel coins it, "de faith and de patience for de grand experiment" (228).³⁴

This dependence on future contingencies, when extended to government and politics, threatened to place political and economical relations "at the mercy of passion, fantasy, and appetite."³⁵ And Scott was obviously well attuned to the atmosphere of fear fostered by the specter of exaggerated speculative interest, as his portrayal of Wardour being hooked, so to speak, on Dousterswivel's promises fully testifies. The baronet's irrational behavior reaches its climax after he has found a casket of silver buried in the ruins of an old priory, an acquisition that puts Wardour "in a state of mind more resembling ecstasy than sober sense" (384):

Indeed, at one time his daughter had become seriously apprehensive for his intellect . . . his language and carriage were those of a man who had acquired the philosopher's stone. . . . He corresponded with an architect of eminence, upon a plan of renovating the castle of his forefathers, on a style of extended magnificence that might have rivalled that of Windsor. . . . Troops of liveried menials were already, in fancy, marshalled in his halls, and—for what may not unbound wealth authorize its possessor to aspire to?—the coronet of a marquis, perhaps of a duke, was glittering before his imagination. (385)

33. Interestingly, Wardour's faith in Dousterswivel's obviously fraudulent "grand experiment" (228) is directly related to the fact that his "faith . . . as an antiquary was boundless" (52). Oldbuck himself, who delivers this estimate about his credulous neighbor, doesn't fare much better in Edie's opinion: "Monkbarns is no that ower wise himsell, in some things—he wad believe a bodle [a copper coin] to be an auld Roman Coin" (213). Nevertheless, the narrator does concede that Oldbuck was "much more scrupulous in receiving legends as current and authentic coin" (52).

34. Georg Simmel likens credit to religious faith: "in the case of credit, of trust in someone, there is an . . . element which is hard to describe: it is most clearly embodied in religious faith. When someone says that he believes in God, this does not merely express an imperfect state of knowledge about God, but a state of mind which has nothing to do with knowledge, which is both less and more than knowledge. . . . Economic credit does contain an element of this supratheoretical belief." *The Philosophy of Money* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 179.

35. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 112.

Wardour has become a speculative man *par excellence*, “the slave of his passions,”³⁶ with Dousterswivel on his side to “keep up [his] golden dreams” (386).³⁷ He fails to realize, of course, that the real risk of losing the property of his forefathers only mocks his vain dreams of enlarging it.

In describing the baronet’s infatuation with Dousterswivel’s promises of “golden dreams,” Scott draws on David Hume’s warning about the vulnerability of a country whose economic wellbeing is overly dependent on public credit. As Hume argued in his essay “Of Public Credit” under the empire of speculation and debt, proprietors exhibit self-destructive behavior, falling prey to a debilitating “lethargy” caused by “a stupid and pampered luxury.”³⁸ In the unstable economic climate during which Scott was composing the novel, it was certainly not a time for the members of landed gentry to revel in “golden dreams” of “unbounded” imaginary wealth. To lose the war of entail in such pressing economic circumstances would imply the loss of an idea of stability imbedded in the notion of an inheritance safely locked and secured in a strict family settlement. For, as Pocock has argued, at the bottom of Hume’s uneasiness about speculation—an apprehension that certainly would have resonated with Scott during 1816—resided a fear that if the “debt expanded to include value of land, all might still be lost.”³⁹ Interestingly, Sir Arthur’s own faith in the adept’s schemes stems from utter desperation; in Edie Ochiltree’s words, “He’s like a desperate man, and just catches at this chance as a’ he has left, to escape utter perdition” (214). His debts and his speculative adventures thus serve as “a means of arresting the future, of quantifying time,” as John Vernon has characterized the function of credit,⁴⁰ an alternative and, Scott seems to be suggesting, not unrelated form of achieving futurity from the one secured by the entail. In Scott’s mind, both practices demand serious reform.

In many respects, the novel’s treatment of Wardour’s “frantic projects” (392) trades in the most common anxieties of the period related to the pre-

36. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 115.

37. In his frenzied state of mind over the “absurd and expensive operations carried on by this High-German landlouver,” Wardour resembles the infatuated victims of the South Sea Bubble, whose condition was often described in terms of delirium and madness. See Brantlinger, *Fictions of State*, 58.

38. David Hume, “Of Public Credit,” in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Adam Black and William Tait, 1826), 3:403. According to Hume, public debt exerts similar effects on the national level for, as he argues, a government that has “mortgaged all its revenues . . . necessarily sinks into a state of languor, inactivity, and impotence” (3:403).

39. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 139.

40. John Vernon, *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 112.

carious nature of the credit system, and it is clear that Scott was well aware of the flimsy character of paper currency and debt culture associated with it. The ready-money Oldbuck himself archly concedes that some of his own valuable papers share the airy quality of Smith's winged paper money. In a futile attempt to find a few specimens of his own composition "among a quantity of miscellaneous paper, ancient and modern" (107), the antiquary exasperatingly exclaims: "Curse the papers!—I believe . . . they make themselves wings like grasshoppers, and fly away bodily" (107). Nevertheless, Scott paradoxically launches his critique of the dangerous, irresponsible aspects of the credit system by promoting a specifically Scottish bias toward paper credit. Such a maneuver allows Scott to exploit shrewdly the general feeling of patriotism mobilized by Britain's decision to suspend payments in gold and silver during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars even as he is advancing a local agenda whereby a certain form of money—i.e., paper rather than metal—becomes a privileged expression of Scottish nationalism.⁴¹

Nowhere is this championing of paper over metal in the novel more evident than in the parallel that Scott draws between Oldbuck and his "countrymansh" (164), Dousterswivel. Throughout the novel, Oldbuck can't stand to hear the name of the swindling adept, let alone see his face, and not least because he had been cheated by this self-proclaimed philosopher out of one hundred pounds to support Sir Arthur's mining project. And although, as Lee has pointed out, Oldbuck himself boasts of one of his German ancestor's skill in chemistry, thus confirming the link between himself and the alchemist,⁴² the pride that Oldbuck feels in his descent stems from the fact (which Oldbuck doesn't fail to mention as often as he can) that he has "descended from one of the original printers of Germany" (23) who had not only "accomplished the printing of the great Chronicle of Nuremberg" (66) but of "the Augsburg Confession" as well (97). In his discussion on "the semiology of coins as . . . symbols of works of literature," Marc Shell notes that because coins "were the first widely circulating publications," the "material . . . on which coin-writing appears is, unlike Gutenberg's paper, an especially valuable one."⁴³ Dousterswivel attempts to capitalize on his assumption that both Wardour and Oldbuck would appre-

41. On paper currency as Scotland's privileged expression of national feeling, see Rowlinson, "Scotch Hate Gold," 60–61. On a more general note, Brantlinger shows how "[money], and its corollary, public credit (or public debt), which is all that legitimates money to begin with, are . . . fundamental to the fictional or ideological creation and maintenance of the imagined communities of modern nation states" (*Fictions of State*, 22).

42. Lee, *Nationalism and Irony*, 97.

43. Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 152, 64, 65.

ciate the value of this qualitative difference between the two materials as he invites Oldbuck to invest in his alchemistic scheme: "If you join wid Sir Arthur, as he is put one hundred and fifty—see, here is one fifty in your dirty Fairport banknotes—you put one other hundred and fifty in de dirty notes, and you shall have de pure gold and silver, I cannot tell how much" (228). Oldbuck, however, as a "representative of the typographer" (54) whose ancestor seems to go as far back as to Gutenberg, holds the value of his "dirty" paper much higher than the adept would want him to, and would sooner part with any of his antiquarian possessions than with another hundred and fifty pounds for Dousterswivel's "nonsification" and "planetary fiddlestick" (224).

The silver that the desperate Sir Arthur does eventually find—and, fittingly so, in the grave of his illegitimate ancestor, Malcolm Misticot—serves as perhaps one of the most striking examples of the degradation of coins as inscriptions, as symbols of writing and, by extension, of literature. Planted in the grave by Lovel, who is in love with Wardour's daughter and who wishes to help the baronet without revealing the identity of his donor—especially since Wardour disapproves of Lovel because of his own supposed bastardy—the coins are unable to recount the tale of their value and origin since "there was neither inscription nor stamp upon them" (235). Later in the novel, we learn that the coins were made out of "a quantity of plate which had belonged to [Lovel's] uncle," who had melted it down so that Lovel wouldn't find out the story of his true birth (428). And although the value of the silver is real—even Oldbuck, "almost unable to *credit* his eyes" (235, my emphasis), "found himself compelled to admit, that Sir Arthur had possessed himself of the bullion to the value perhaps of a thousand pound sterling" (235)—it is this treasure that eventually makes Wardour's "imagination [so] heated with the hopes of possessing the most unbounded wealth" (386) that he almost loses everything he ever owned. In this respect, the treasure mirrors the ruinous gold found by Martin Waldeck, a character in an old German folk tale recounted, significantly, by Wardour's daughter as a perhaps unwitting cautionary tale against her father's "golden dreams."

Indeed, metal as a commodity is so undesirable in the world of *The Antiquary* that even the beggar Ochiltree refuses to have it. After many offers of gold and silver from various characters for services rendered to them by Edie, the beggar explains: "Na na! I never tak gowd!" (84) and "I downa take muckle siller at anes, its against our rule" (117) and, as he later explains, would "ruin my trade" (215). One of Edie's most important "trades" as an itinerant beggar is that of the "news-carrier, the minstrel, and sometimes the historian of the district" (47), one who is not only aware of "the precarious tenure of human possessions" (115) but is also particularly

invested in saving Sir Arthur from ruin—and, indeed, turns out to be instrumental in that enterprise.⁴⁴ Edie deliberately excludes himself from the economy of desire enabled by monetary systems as he exclaims, “I am the fittest man in the hail country to trust wi’ siller, for I neither want it, nor wish for it, nor could use it if I had it” (416).

But Edie also seems to be wary of any exaggerated faith in the credit system. At one point, after Wardour’s creditors agree to extend the deadline for the payments of his debts, Oldbuck delivers a speech in which he distinguishes between “tricksters” and honorable creditors, in “a profession where unbounded trust is necessarily reposed” (409):

To such [honorable] men their fellow citizens may safely intrust the care of protecting their patrimonial rights, and their country the more sacred charge of her laws and privileges. (409)

The wise Edie, who had witnessed both Oldbuck and Sir Arthur indulge in “unbounded trust” in money, legends, and myth-histories, sardonically counters Oldbuck’s eulogy of the worthy creditor with, “They are best off, however, that have least to do with them” (409).⁴⁵ As “one of the last specimens of the old-fashioned Scottish mendicant” called the King’s Bedemen (43), Edie seems to be particularly protective of his patrons’ “patrimonial rights” and, as a true soldier (his earlier profession), is willing to risk his freedom and life for them.

Setting the action of *The Antiquary* in the 1790s allows Scott to project all these extremely charged concerns both backward, to the issue of Hanoverian succession, and forward, to the present—and its crises—from which he is composing the novel. For Wardour, the house of Hanover and its “German oppression” (61) are indistinguishable from the Jacobins, “an enemy who comes to propose to us a Whiggish sort of government, a republican system, and who is aided and abetted by a sort of fanatics of the worst kind in our own bowels” (61). Ironically, Wardour fails to recognize that, above all, it is Dousterswivel—as a dangerous incarnation of the speculative “whiggism”—who poses the real threat to his own and, by implication, the nation’s landed interest. And in the novel’s imagination, the same nega-

44. As Derrida has argued, “The beggar has a regular activity, ordered by codes, rites, socio-topological necessities. . . . [The] activity of beggars may be of the most intense kind, even if it remains non-laboring and seems to produce no material wealth.” *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, vol. 1 (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 134. Indeed, Scot dubs Edie “the most important man that ever wore a blue-gown [the garb assumed in Scotland by the order of beggars of Edie’s kind]” (429).

45. Oldbuck, who always, albeit begrudgingly, bows to Edie’s discernment, hails the bagger after his wise remark with a fitting monetary metaphor (which he quotes from *Hamlet*): “Aha, old Truepenny, art thou there?” (409).

tive function of the German alchemist linking him with the undesirable aspect of commercialism associated with the Hanoverian rule, the original “Whiggish sort of government,” also turns him into the symbol of revolutionary principles.

The novel openly acknowledges that framing Dousterswivel as a leader of one of the pro-French political societies and instigator of “a plot against the state” (366) is a part of the conspiracy by Oldbuck in his attempt to save Edie Ochiltree from prison for beating up the German. As Oldbuck suggestively explains to a magistrate, “Now, suppose this . . . story of hidden treasure, and so forth, was a bribe from the other side of the water for some great man, or the funds destined to maintain a seditious club . . .” (358).⁴⁶ But beyond this conspiracy, there are other, more subtle, indicators that link Dousterswivel with the French Revolution. The first time we hear about the German adept, we are told that he was “an *Illuminé*, [who] carried on an intercourse with the invisible world” (127) and talked “of all the trumpery with which the Rosycrucians cheated a darker age, and which to our disgrace, has in some degree revived in our own” (127–28). Both Illuminati and Rosicrucians, together with Jews, Masons and other secret societies that were believed to engage in occultism, were also associated by conspiracy theorists with the radical principles of the French Revolution.⁴⁷ Burke in particular proposed that the “confederacies and correspondences” of Illuminati, formed by the opportunistic speculators and public creditors, “threaten[ed] a general earthquake in the political world,” even as they were propelling France into revolutionary chaos.⁴⁸ For Burke, they symbolized the threatening moneyed interest, an organized and united front against established religion, aristocratic privilege, and private property.⁴⁹

Dousterswivel’s threat is figured along similar lines: with his mystical ca-

46. The cause of the French Revolution has been traditionally linked by Scott’s contemporaries with the rule of paper money in France. As Burke laments in his *Reflections*, “By the vast debt of France a great monied interest had insensibly grown up, and with it a great power.” And since the “monied interest is in its nature more ready for any adventure . . . [it] is therefore the kind of wealth which will be restored to all who wish for change” (207–8). In another peculiar twist of Scott’s reimagining the political crisis of the French Revolution in economic terms, Dousterswivel as a representative of Jacobinism claims to trade in pure metals.

47. On the “conspiracy of [Illuminati] against all society, property, and sciences” and their role in the French Revolution, see Abbe Baurrel’s *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, 4 vols. (Hartford: Hudson and Godwin, 1799), 4:iv.

48. Quoted in Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 202–3.

49. It is also interesting to note that at the time Burke was writing *Reflections*, the revolutionary council in France decided to abolish the French law of entail. See J. P. Cooper, “Patterns of Inheritance and Settlement by Great Landowners from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200–1800*, eds. Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 276.

bal, his “strange tales” (128), and his “systems” (226), “this tramping philosopher” (15) and “strolling blackguard and mountebank [has] put the finishing blow to the ruin of an ancient and honorable family” (128).⁵⁰ And yet, the responsibility seems to fall on “that pair doited deevil of a knight-baronet” (212), as Edie Ochiltree describes Wardour. Significantly, the baronet’s gullibility, his inability to read through the German’s deceit, is expressly presented as a result of his misconceptions about Scotland’s history. When Oldbuck attempts to enlighten Wardour that the supposedly antique gold and silver coins dug up by Dousterswivel represent “merely one part of his trick and mystery” (225), the offended baronet replies, “I suppose you think, that because I believe in the ancient history of my country, I have neither eyes nor ears to ascertain what modern events pass before me” (225). Which turns out to be precisely the case. And while Wardour refers here to Dousterswivel’s experiments, other far more urgent “modern events pass before” the baronet in his blind devotion to “the ancient history of [his] country”: he fails to assess the danger of the revolutionary principles imported through the German’s speculative machinations, the same machinations that aim to subvert the nation’s landed prerogative.

The novel, however, goes much further than simply exposing and critiquing Wardour’s blindness about Dousterswivel’s motives, for this very blindness turns the baronet into the enemy of the state. Having spent the treasure from the ruins in no less than three days—“some part was given to the adept, some wasted upon extravagances which seemed to the poor knight fully authorized by his full blown hopes,” and the rest given to paying off the most pressing debts (386)—the baronet finally reaches the point of no return when the officers of law are sent to both collect his property and arrest him. Remarkably, however, he is not imprisoned for debt but rather for treason. Oldbuck explains:

You suppose, now, a man’s committed to prison because he cannot pay his debt? Quite otherwise; the truth is, the king is so good as to interfere at the request of the creditor, and to send the debtor his royal command to do him justice within a certain time—. . . what follows? Well, that he be lawfully and rightfully declared a rebel to our gracious sovereign he has disobeyed, and that by three blasts of a horn at the market-place of Edinburgh, the metropolis of Scotland. (371–72)

One might be tempted to join “the unenlightened” Captain M’Intyre (372) as he responds, “but if a man must pay his debt or go to jail, it

50. The words “cabal,” “systems,” and “philosopher” have all widely circulated in the contemporary writings against the French Revolution.

signifies but little whether he goes as a debtor or a rebel" (372). The distinction between debt and rebellion, albeit from M'Intyre's perspective very fine, is nevertheless crucial and, within the novel's political universe, "signifies" quite a lot.

The seriousness of the charge against the baronet can best be measured against the seemingly much more charged incident during 1745 when the Wardours were suspected of actively participating in the Jacobite rebellion and were almost accused of high treason. The baronet himself, although aware of the relationship between the two allegations, still fails to grasp the gravity of the present charge. As he is escorted from "the castle of his fathers" (403), this proud "descendent of an ancient line" (403) comments on his degrading arrest: "When I was sent to the Tower with my late father, in the year 1745, it was upon a charge becoming our birth—upon an accusation of high treason. . . . [A]nd now, here I am, in my old age, dragged from my household . . . for a paltry concern of pounds, shillings, and pence" (403). The reality of the 1790s—and, for that matter, of 1816—teaches precisely the opposite: Wardour's misguided and stubborn aloofness from the "paltry concern of pounds, shillings, and pence," combined with his misguided investments in golden schemes, emerges as a much more serious offense than his family's dated Jacobitism and is explicitly described by the novel as rebellion and treason.⁵¹

The baronet's behavior here, as well as throughout the novel, recapitulates Sir Mackenzie's entrenched position in defending the law of entail he authored, a stance that, as we have seen, disregards Scotland's commercial interest by insisting that the nation "stands more by ancient families than by merchants." Scott, however, reverses the priorities of Mackenzie's equation by introducing this somewhat bizarre Scottish law on debt, which, significantly, predates the Entail Act. For, as Oldbuck enlightens us, this feudal law on debt was paradoxically designed "for the protection of commerce" (372) rather than the nation's ancient families; it testifies to "the elegance of the legal fiction, and the manner in which it reconciles that duress, which, for the protection of commerce, it has been necessary to extend towards refractory debtors" (372). In other words, in order to protect entail, the nation's aristocracy cannot afford to disregard the "paltry concern of pounds, shillings, and pence"—nor can it count on entail to safeguard the futurity of aristocratic property without actively tending to the nation's commercial wellbeing. By charging Wardour with rebellion through debt, the government clears the way for breaking the Knock-

51. Perhaps as a result of his speculative bent of mind that has made him into "such an infatuated idiot" (400), Sir Arthur's Jacobitism too has been reduced to "a sort of speculative opinion merely,—the shadow of the shade" (63).

winock entail and forfeiting Wardour's property, an outcome that, ironically, the family managed to avoid during the 1745 uprising.

The arrival of the officers of law in the Knockwinnock Castle with their warrant to arrest Wardour is befittingly described by Oldbuck as "a siege" (410) for it represents the largest crisis in *The Antiquary*, one that galvanizes all the major actors in the novel into action. Fighting this "siege" symbolically figures a nation putting aside its factional differences in order to "do this poor ruined family the best day that has been done them since Redhand's days" (396), to use Edie Ochiltree's words—who risks his own freedom for a man who was previously ready to prosecute the Presbyterian Edie "for spreading disaffection against church and state" (61). And even Captain M'Intyre, a proud soldier in George III's army, risks the charge of being in the "contempt of the king himself" (399)—and thus a rebel—in his zeal to protect the Wardours from the officers of law who have come to escort Sir Arthur to prison. The whole event acquires a warlike aspect, and the success of this unusual crew in locating the baronet's estranged son, who manages to diffuse the crisis by advancing a large sum of money to his father's creditors, is similarly portrayed as a military victory. As Captain M'Intyre approaches the Castle with this good news, he issues forth a "shout of triumph" whose "warlike tone was not easily distinguished from that of battle" (405).

In the meantime, and quite appropriately, Dousterswivel does turn out to be in some sort of "unlawful correspondence on the other side of the water" (400). Scott seems to be inviting his readers to put their minds to the "real" threat embodied by this character, which allows him to get away, so to speak, with staging a mini-rebellion against the king by his Scottish subjects. In one of the novel's numerous twists, Scotland itself is imagined as a French Flanders besieged by the English (who subsequently had been "driven from the town . . . with savage ferocity by the republicans" [427]), and readers are encouraged to rejoice at the defeat of the officer of law, the King's representative of Wardour's creditors, and together with Hector, to watch him, "as a jealous mastiff eyes the retreat of a repulsed beggar, evacuate Flanders" (408). Saving the baronet's property might lack the romantic grandeur of a Jacobite uprising, and yet, as Oldbuck asserts, "these are such sieges and such reliefs as our time of day admits of—and our escape is not less worth commemorating in a glass of this excellent wine" (411). He playfully adds: "Upon my credit, it is Burgundy, I think" (411), a double innuendo that most economically bespeaks the antiquary's appreciation of both the economic and political implications of the whole event. Only after this important victory has been won does the novel allow itself to settle into a farcical gathering of the nation in response to the false alarm of the (real) "French coming to murder

us!” (421); both the French invasion as well as the German oppression had been already repelled with the victorious salvation of the Knockwinnock entail, so that the allegiance to the king by these rebels-in-*potentia* can be restored with a triumphant shout, “God save the King!” (405).

There is little doubt that this settlement in many ways confirms Scott’s purpose of asserting “an essentially new Scotland” designed to “[sustain] the larger British Union,” as Peter Garside has proposed.⁵² In this sense, the Scottish entail too undergoes a significant ideological transformation, one that invites a more flexible interpretation of the familial and national genealogy than Wardour’s rigid veneration of ancestry would allow. As Edie Ochiltree exclaims in his eagerness to help the baronet in his crisis, “for as sure as e’er an auld saw came true, Knockwinnock house and land will be lost and won this day” (396)—once again. This time, however, the hereditary line of these newly won estates will not only include the Presbyterian Edie but also, through marriage with Lucy Wardour, the English and Protestant Lovel, who turns out to be a legitimate heir of the Catholic Glenallen’s entail. In true feudal fashion, Edie himself is allowed to preside over this harmoniously consolidated family in a symbolic capacity as the “last privileged fool, or jester, maintained by any family of distinction in Scotland” (410). But even as this incorporating scenario upholds the British Union, it is still, in legal and economic terms, the essentially Scottish entail—bolstered by good credit—that emerges as instrumental for such a union. Saving the Knockwinnock entail is crucial for preserving the delicate balance of interests in a country “threatened with invasion from abroad, and insurrection at home” (61). More important, from Scott’s postwar perspective, only the entail coupled with the responsible and entrepreneurial brand of commercialism of Oldbuck’s sort—one cleansed from the speculative moneyed interest and disassociated from gold and silver⁵³—can truly sustain this new national order.

Such a neat closure, however, belies the irony that inevitably blunts the triumphalism of the novel’s concluding pages. Although Dousterswivel has been “sent back to play knave in his own country” (419), his spirit still hovers over *The Antiquary’s* happy outcome. The false alarm that has prompted the gathering of Scotland’s patriots to defend the nation from the French was caused, we learn, by the army’s mistaking of Oldbuck and

52. Peter Garside, “Scott, the Eighteenth Century and the New Man of Sentiment,” *Anglia* 103 (1985): 86. See also Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, 205.

53. Fittingly, a part of Wardour’s debt is paid by *bills*, and the baronet has managed to purchase another bit of futurity with further promises: as one of Wardour’s creditors insures him, “there is not the slightest hurry in settling the balance of your accompt with us” (408).

Wardour's bonfire (in which they had previously burnt Dousterswivel's machinery) for one of their own beacons. Oldbuck, "not a little ashamed of having been of so much disturbance" (425), responds with utter frustration: "The Devil take Dousterswivel with all my heart!—I think he has bequeathed us a legacy of blunders and mischief, as if he had lighted some train of fireworks at his departure—I wonder what cracker will go off next among our shins" (425).

And indeed, this is not the last time we hear from Dousterswivel. In Scott's preface to *The Betrothed* (1825), he is aligned with the fictionalized "Author of *Waverley*," a chairman presiding over "a general meeting of the shareholders designing to form a joint-stock company, united for the purpose of writing and publishing the class of works called the *Waverley Novels*."⁵⁴ Oldbuck receives the role of a secretary, while various literary characters and narrators from Scott's novels act as shareholders in, as the "Author of *Waverley*" puts it, "the valuable property which has accumulated under our common labours" (*The Betrothed*, xx).⁵⁵

As the chairman tries to persuade his skeptical audience of the soundness of his idea to incorporate themselves into a company, he mentions a letter from "the ingenious Mr. Dousterswivel," who has proposed, "that at the expense of a little mechanism, some part of the labour of composing these novels might be saved by the use of steam" (*The Betrothed*, xx). After a general "murmur of disapprobation at this proposal," and Oldbuck's infuriated protest—"I object to that fellow's name being mentioned; he is a common swindler" (*The Betrothed*, xxi)—the "Author of *Waverley*" describes Dousterswivel's "mechanism":

this mechanical operation can only apply to those parts of the narrative which are at present composed out of commonplaces, such as the love-speeches of the hero, the description of the heroine's person, the moral observations of all sorts, and the distribution of happiness at the conclusion of the piece. Mr. Dousterswivel has sent me some drawings, which go far to show, that by placing the words and phrases technically employed on these subjects, in a sort of framework . . . and changing them by such a mechanical process as that by which weavers of damask alter their patterns, many new and happy combinations cannot fail to occur, while the author, tired of pumping his own

54. Walter Scott, *The Bethothed* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), ix. All subsequent references to the novel will appear in the text by name and page number.

55. See Sutherland's "Fictional Economies" for an excellent reading of this scene, in which she discusses the commercial aspect of Scott's authorship in the light of Adam Smith's definition of labor in *The Wealth of Nations*.

brains, may have an agreeable relaxation in the use of his fingers. (*The Betrothed*, xxi–xxii)

Ironically, Dousterswivel's machinery from *The Antiquary*, which emerges as the main cause of the blundering confusion about the supposed arrival of the French, reappears in Scott's late novel not as a tool to mine the elusive gold but as a steam "mechanism" for mass reproduction of the Waverley Novels—another flighty paper. And just as Dousterswivel's machinery allows for the nation's farcical bonding against the French cause at the end of *The Antiquary*, one wonders whether the happy outcome of the Knockwinnock entail isn't simply an early prototype of "the distribution of happiness at the conclusion of the piece" that, in 1825, becomes one of the main selling features of the German's steam mechanism. In other words, can the readers credit the restorative closure of *The Antiquary*? The novel seems to entail an unsettling "beyond," pointing to a curious pattern rehearsed by the Waverley Novels: as soon as he realizes the desired poise, Scott immediately, even if obliquely, disturbs it.

In the "beyond" of *The Antiquary*, the dangerous speculative interest that threatened the destruction of Scotland's landed prerogative becomes incarnated in *The Betrothed* as an ironic champion of the modern forces of industrialization, which Scott himself, as a co-owner of a printing firm, was willing, though not without ambivalence, to embrace.⁵⁶ And if, as Sutherland has argued, Scott rationalized his lifelong commercial venture of converting his novels into money by exchanging them for land and "the trappings of family tradition" (106), he was also aware of the irony of such an equivocal enterprise. In an 1817 letter to Ballantyne, which informs the bookseller of Scott's newest purchase of land for Abbotsford, he writes: "I have closed with Usher for his beautiful patrimony, which makes me a great laird. I am afraid people will take me up for coining. Indeed, these novels, while their attractions last, are something like it."⁵⁷ Scott assumes here the role of the swindling Dousterswivel, who, in *The Antiquary*, deals in fraud and fabrications through his spurious claims that he indeed knows how to "convert all his lead into gold" (386). As the novel has shown us, however, gold cannot ground land—and nor, for that matter,

56. Scott's obvious irony in these passages is considerably tempered by our knowledge of his own attempt to introduce in the business of printing innovations of Dousterswivel's kind. As Sutherland explains, "One of the improvements Scott made to his printing firm . . . was the early introduction of new steam-powered presses . . . and in 1825 as *The Betrothed*, with its description of the machine for writing novels, was scheduled to appear, he was negotiating with Archibald Constable a revolutionary venture to flood the market with cheap reprints of the Waverley Novels" (*Fictional Economies*, 116).

57. Quoted in J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (London: Fredrick Warne and Co., 1888), 325.

can paper. One of the tragic ironies of Scott's life is the fact that, eventually, he ended up exchanging the earnings from his novels for a piece of paper, for this is what Abbotsford and the rest of his land became after his bankruptcy—a piece of paper in the form of a trust deed that allowed Scott, through his arduous sentence, to pay off his land-incurred debts.

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