

JOHN GALT AND THE CANADIAN STAR OF DESTINY

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JOHN GALT CAME TO CANADA IN 1825 seething with ideas for practical improvements in canals, mills, and roads, and also with notions about business engineering: money-raising, lobbying, cash flow, and company organization. He also arrived with a major reputation as a writer. By the mid 1820's he was a very successful novelist, rivalling Sir Walter Scott in popularity and in sales, if not in critical reputation. He was admired by Coleridge, by the Royal Family, by Byron his erstwhile travelling companion in Europe, and by many thousands of less illustrious readers. Galt had produced nineteen novels, eight biographies, three children's books, eighteen plays, four books of poetry, a long string of school texts and an even longer list of short stories and essays. Ian Gordon, in his excellent book *John Galt, the Life of a Writer*,¹ lists forty-two volumes published in Galt's lifetime, and Professor Gordon has been busily bringing out other unpublished works every year or so since.²

Galt's career as a writer, like his business career, had its reverses. He made the fatal error of writing in the vernacular of the west of Scotland — a Lowland language that became increasingly inaccessible to readers both in Britain and in the New World. Galt's admirers of course make a case for the strength and suppleness of the language,³ but the argument against it on the grounds of narrow audience seems indisputable. Admirers of Galt also argue that even greater than his novels was his achievement as autobiographer. Certainly the two accounts of his life, the *Autobiography* (1833) and *Literary Life and Miscellanies* (1834), are invaluable source books on the years of transition between late Romantic and early Victorian days.⁴ They are also wonderful accounts of the dabbling of this virtuoso in all the political, business, scientific and publishing ventures of his day. For Canadian social and literary historians, they provide essential information. But again, fate has operated against Galt's claim to attention, and the two autobiographies in their

easily readable standard English are now out of print — at a moment when more and more of his minor works are being given handsome production by the Scottish presses.

Nevertheless, in the light of his gifts to the world in letters, as well as in practical improvements of life through technology, and advancement of prosperity through business facility, John Galt might well consider himself in 1825 a genius.

He came to Canada with the belief that all his previous endeavours — in business, in political lobbying, in authorship — had been links in a chain drawing him to Canada as a destined stage. To understand how he himself explained his failure to fulfill his dreams, particularly in Canada, the land of his highest hopes, I propose to focus briefly on four of Galt's lesser known works, connected with the concept of destiny. Together they suggest the way Galt's vision of destiny affected his own life, and was tied to the moment in Canadian history in which he played a part.

Galt had grown up in Scotland in an epoch when the national life seemed poised between culture and technology. The last years of the eighteenth century had been glorious ones for Scotland. In architecture, philosophy, literature, political science, and many other branches of the humanities, Edinburgh, "Athens of the North," had been illuminated — glorified — by Adams, Hume, Walter Scott, Adam Smith, and a galaxy of other Scots. By 1800, that glow was being replaced by the harder light of industrial and technical genius, manifest particularly in western Scotland, especially Glasgow. Stevenson, Watt, McAdam — the railway designers, the steam power geniuses, the engineers — pulled Scottish energies into non-humanist channels.

John Galt, twenty-one years old at the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, had been early infected by dreams of technical advance. As a boy, he tells us in his *Autobiography*, having "a bias for mechanics" (*Ab* I, 17), he constructed a scheme for tunneling to bring water through a mountain; as a youth, he projected the turning of Glasgow into a seaport (*Ab* II, 255).

John Galt was equally inventive in business. He had begun as an under-educated clerk in a Greenock counting-house; quickly rose to a London business partnership, which as quickly collapsed, in 1807. Behind a smoke-screen of genteel travelling, sometimes in the company of Lord Byron, Galt managed to get some import-export businesses moving. (Terms such as "smuggling" and "black-market" come to mind when one reads about these enterprises of 1809-1811.) Another entrepreneurial career began when he became involved in lobbying in British Parliament first for a canal from Glasgow to Edinburgh, later for a scheme to sell Crown and Church lands in the Canadas in order to repay Canadian loyalists for their losses in the War of 1812. This second scheme swelled into the great Canada Company, of which Galt became Superintendent.⁵

Like most Scots of his time John Galt was in the process of converting the Presbyterian dogma of divine predestination into a new sense of personal power and

control. Yet in spite of rational scientism and business proficiency, like many Scots he preserved a deep sense of the irrational, based on the awful thought of a fate after death, implacably set by God's will, rather than by man's will, his works, or his faith. In Scotland, an interest in second sight, in chance, and in omens had always misted the hard doctrine of election. From the Highland fastnesses, in the Celtic cadences, swirled a belief in mysterious personal destiny, revealed in visions and in fey foreknowledge. The bardic sense of great heroes differed from the Presbyterian idea of the humbling will of God, and in the early days of the Romantic revival that occult sense of human grandeur spread southward through the vogue for Ossian, for James Thompson, Hugh Mackenzie, and the young Walter Scott, balladeer. These popular writers displayed a concept of destiny very different from the official Scots creed of predestination.

John Galt joined these Scottish writers in capitalizing on the revitalized interest in the dark and the mysterious, expressed in the taste for Gothic. Lord Byron — Scot and fellow-traveller — climaxed the gothic phase of Romanticism with his Faustian dramas, *Manfred*, *Cain*, *The Giaour*, and with his poems of restless, fateful flight. Galt's first writing on the theme of destiny was a Byronic drama. "The Star of Destiny," written in 1813, soon after *Manfred*, dealt with the wilful sale of a soul to the devil.⁶ The hero is destined to damnation because of his pact. That is, as in the traditional Faustian plot, the hero wills his own tragic fate. In Galt's version, there are some interesting variants.

Everything the hero wants, he receives: the beautiful Beatrice comes to him, her husband is discredited, a mountain is moved. But the hero comes to regret each of the demon's gifts, and arranges to countermand the demon's arrangements: his friends, and his nation eventually benefit from his life, rather than suffering from his egomania. Furthermore, each of the demon's contrivances can be explained by naturalistic causes; Galt lets his audience see that pacts with the devil have in fact little to do with the working out of human stories. Yet some unknown power of nature does link man to universal history. As the hero says in his first speech,

O'er every birth a star of fate presides,
 And he that knows his orb of destiny
 May, by the changes of its radiance, tell,
 Whene'er his good or evil genius reigns. (*Ab II*, 377)

Byronic verse, but the sentiment is Galt's own. Humans have powers for good or evil, powers in either case for genius. And the working out of human fate is not foreshadowed but reflected in the stars, in the cosmos. The stars do not affect us; we affect the stars. The universe shines more brightly when our genius expresses itself in good, benevolent deeds.

In 1833, Galt added a preface to this early effusion. At that later date he underlined the fact that he had meant to create in his early work an allegory of self-deception. "The silent servitude of the fiend is but the phantasy of [the hero's]

morbid and moody imagination" (*Ab* II, 373). But the star of destiny is real, he says, and the power of working out one's genius in such a way as to brighten the radiance of heaven continued to seem real to him.

Second of Galt's works on destiny was a novel, published anonymously in 1825, the year of Galt's first trip to Canada. This novel, titled *The Omen*,⁷ was very well received; it was attributed by some reviewers to Sir Walter Scott. It is a strange, very readable, very creepy story in a tone soon to be popularized by Edgar Allan Poe. (Galt incidentally was one of Edgar Allan Poe's literary mentors: he was connected with the Allan family; Poe as a child had visited Irvine, Galt's home; Poe echoes quite closely many of the older writer's effects.)

The Omen is based on *Hamlet*, with a double dose of fated, incestuous passion. Threaded through the gothic scenes and events are comments on the mystery of destiny, "tremendous and impenetrable destiny." Once again Galt presents a hero who desires to turn his genius to the good of the world; but again life goes awry. "Alas!" says the hero, "I have been but predestined to rue and endure the miseries of those crimes which . . . I had fancied myself commissioned to weed from the world" (*O*, 103). In this novel, the realities of destiny are conveyed to the spirit by foreknowledge, or "bodements."⁸ In analyzing the power of some people to foresee the future, Galt distinguishes carefully, and interestingly, between two kinds of dreams. One kind of dream is an involuntary remembrance, the association of impressions which have been made on the senses: "the mere metaphorical clothing of unregulated reflection. . . . It may be that the soul never sleeps, and what we call dreams, are but the endeavours which it makes, during the trance of the senses, to reason by the ideas of things associated with the forms and qualities of those whereof it then thinks" (*O*, 85). Such dreams are metaphors for cares and anxieties and fears — a good Freudian definition of an ordinary dream.

But there is another kind of dream, "an apocalyptic admonition from heaven" (*O*, 117). Galt is interested in this other kind of dream — a bodement, a foreknowledge of destiny. Such foretokens, he says (and his language here is precise and interesting) are part of "providential engineery," fitting into the notches in the machinery of fortune, though we cannot trace "the manner in which webs and chains and racks combine" (*O*, ch. 6). These apocalyptic dreams have their own impalpable energies; they in part instruct fate. The same inscrutable intelligence that works between the ocean and the moon, the season and the flowers, Galt says, links the dream, the omen, and destiny.

WHEN GALT WAS WRITING *The Omen* he was also packing for a first trip to Canada. Between January and April 1825 he travelled with four other Commissioners through Upper Canada, exploring the possibilities of estab-

lishing settlements there under the aegis of the Canada Company. In 1827 he returned to Upper Canada as Superintendent of the Canada Company. Then for the next two years he set aside his writing and moved into practical action. His *Autobiography* traces the course of that movement as he flung himself into the life of Upper Canada. He played with schemes for harnessing Niagara's power, and worked out plans for pumps, mills, locks, and canals. He drew up a project, a pretty sensible one, for a St. Lawrence Seaway (*Ab II*, 45-47). Perhaps his most interesting idea from the Canadian days was the invention of a way of constructing a railway: laying the lines on tree stumps, cut to the proper height to serve as God-made supports for the steel, and thus to avoid the expense of building embankments.⁹

Few of his plans eventuated, partly because he quickly antagonized the political and ecclesiastic establishment in York, and the Canada Company accountants in London, England. Yet in spite of opposition he began to create new hope and a new life for many settlers. He took pride in founding a model town sixty miles west of York at Guelph, and in the subsequent cutting of a road westward to the town of Goderich on Lake Huron. His *Autobiography* records in particular his sense of the significance of his plans for Guelph. He sees Guelph resembling "all cities *fated* with a high destiny" (my emphasis; *Ab II*, 63). He saw the city as a plane on which he could work out his aspirations to benefit mankind, by applying his own technical, commercial, and cultural gifts.

He did what he could to popularize his own notion of the city's auspicious destiny. "I was well aware of the boding effect of a little solemnity, on the minds of most men," he says, "and especially the unlettered" (*Ab II*, 54). With his friend "Tiger" Dunlop he came through the Ontario bush in 1827, to a place where a river formed a horseshoe around a pleasant piece of land. Here he ordered his woodsmen to lay axes to a big maple tree, he himself beginning the task by striking the first blow. As the great tree crashed, "Tiger" Dunlop wrapped himself in two Indian blankets — one draped like a Roman toga, the other wrapped like a Highland kilt — and poured a dram of whiskey as a libation.¹⁰

Galt, more soberly, faced westwards, turning his back on York and on Britain, and laying his hand, fingers outspread, on the stump of the tree, he decreed that the woodsmen cut five avenues in the shape of those fateful fingers. One road was to run southwest to a school-house and a public square. A second was to scale a western bluff where a Catholic church would sit. A third would stretch to St. George's square, chosen for the Anglicans because there was a nice flat spot there for a cricket pitch; the fourth to another mound where the Presbyterian church would rise. And the fifth would run northwest from the business office, where Galt himself would run the business affairs of the new community, to the profitable sawmill on the swiftest part of the river he named the "Speed."

The details about the whiskey and the toga may be *post hoc* additions to the

legend, but there is no doubt that John Galt did make a grand ceremonial gesture of the founding of his town. He believed it would be a royal city, a centre of world culture and technology. He worked out the ceremonial felling of the tree because he recognized the importance of ritual "at eras which betokened destiny, like the launching of a vessel, or the birth of an enterprise, of which a horoscope might be cast" (*Ab II*, 54). Such an "era," fit for ritual launching, was the founding of a city.

Galt's city plan was directed westward, partly because of the lay of the land, but more importantly because of Galt's vision. He turned his back on the political, theological, and economic powers of the east, and fanned his hand toward the Great Lakes and the unknown country beyond them.

The city as he designed it would have been a pleasing manifestation of all the interests of a transitional age. The central section would have risen westward along three avenues to the three religious establishments; education, commerce and sociability would have been accommodated to the southwest with the academy and the market place; technology (the sawmill) and administration (the Priory, company headquarters) would have loomed on the northwest. Guelph — Galt's Guelph — would have been a visible reminder of Galt's mastery of all the channels in which men of his time were moving.

Yet the *Autobiography* had to record also a sense that the desired future might not eventuate for Galt or for Guelph. He noted "an inexplicable boding of evil with which I had entered Upper Canada" (*Ab II*, 8). When he came to ready the *Autobiography* for publication he included in volume II the announcement that *The Omen* was his work (breaking the secret of anonymity), and he tucked into the end of the "Canadian" volume of the *Autobiography* that early play "The Star of Destiny." It was as if, in connection with his tale of the frustrating Canadian adventure, he wanted to remind readers of his earlier meditations on the complex relations between the man of genius, his bodements, and the destiny worked out as part of the "engineery" of the universe.

Gifted in both cultural powers and in technical know-how, believing he could work out a life in which both aspects of his genius could combine, he was fated to be discounted on both sides. He believed himself destined to muster all his abilities, cultural, technological, and entrepreneurial, to further the good of humanity. He believed the working out of his destiny would make the stars of the universe glow more radiantly. But something in Canada frustrated him.

The city he designed was not destined to develop in the crescent of the Speed. His plan for Guelph was not approved by Galt's employers, the Canada Company. The grand design was not considered financially sound; in a slow exchange of charge and counter-charge — slow because the age of rapid steamships had not quite arrived — the patience of officers of the Canada Company in London ran out, and so did Galt's tenure of his job as Superintendent.¹¹

Few in Upper Canada rallied to his defence. John MacTaggart's *Three Years in Canada* (1829) was one of the few contemporary accounts to speak warmly of Galt; years later Samuel Strickland's *Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West* (1853) would corroborate this endorsement.¹² But Galt had offended all the Toronto powers, political and ecclesiastical; had sparred with Maitland, the Lieutenant-Governor, and antagonized Strachan, the Anglican archbishop. The quarrels had concerned social protocol in the one case and the depletion of church funds and lands in the other. Galt felt that these quarrels and his difficulties in Guelph were matters of high moment, not only for himself but for Canada. In his *Autobiography* he was to describe the whole sequence of events in a highly-wrought way.

Galt told the story of his quarrel with Maitland in terms of high fate: he was accused, he said, of "undervaluing those among whom it was my destiny to sojourn" (*Ab* II, 51). But clearly Maitland was deterred from helping Galt because as Lieutenant Governor he considered Galt offensive in his proud assumption of the airs of a man of rank and power. Maitland and his secretary Major George Hillier had also turned against Galt because apparently by chance Galt had become connected with his fellow-Scot, the radical William Lyon Mackenzie. Archbishop Strachan had also become ill disposed toward Galt, as the man who years earlier had furthered the proposal of Roman Catholic Bishop Alexander Macdonnell to sell Church lands in Upper Canada. Was it indeed fate that had caused Galt's business affairs to cross the interests of the great Ontario churchman, years before Galt ever dreamt of coming to Upper Canada himself? Certainly his early west-of-Scotland friendship with Macdonnell had queered Galt's chances of enlisting Strachan's support in the final quarrel with the Canada Company.

The tone of the *Autobiography* suggests a further cause for friction. Galt's conception of his own genius (well founded as it was in his accomplishments) rubbed sorely against the other geniuses in a sparsely settled colony. Strachan and Maitland considered themselves to be geniuses also.

In other writings Galt suggests that the Canadian climate proved very depressing to his spirit: perhaps that too affected his destiny. *Bogle Corbet*, the fictional account of founding a settlement on the "Slant," emphasizes the melancholy effects of Upper Canadian climate and landscape.¹³ The depression of exile, so finely expressed in "Canadian Boat-Song," published by members of Galt's Edinburgh circle in 1829, also enervated many Scots far from the hills, the small clear streams, and the tombstones of home.¹⁴

Yet he persisted in his work, feeling that through his efforts social progress was being achieved, and insisting, like the hero of *The Omen*, on the purity of his motives:

For my tasks were so evidently calculated to lessen the mass of afflictions, that, however teasing in the performance, they could not be contemplated without vivid

delight. The emoluments were no doubt respectable, but I have ever regarded pecuniary matters as subordinate, and at that crisis, if a thought gravitated down towards them, it was but for a moment, when I remembered my children.

(*Ab II*, 153)

Nevertheless he was touched by the bitter recognition that his time in Canada was ending, that he was being “unworthily treated” although his efforts “were all flourishing, and, without the blight of one single blossom, gave cheering promises of ample fruit” (*Ab II*, 154). He returned to the old concept of destiny, and with it reversed the imagery of a flowering harvest:

The Canada Company had originated in my suggestions. . . . Yet without the commission of any fault . . . I was destined to reap from it only troubles and mortifications.” (*Ab II*, 157)

Galt left Upper Canada in April 1829, and no one protested. Within a very short time, Galt’s plan for his city was replaced by a more practical chart. The new plan guaranteed increased revenue from sale of house-lots now drafted into the public market area. Those house-lots had been laid out between the academy and the town centre. The generous public gathering space had been sacrificed to business imperatives. Other changes followed: the Anglicans decided to build by the river, and St. George’s Square became the hub of small businesses, stores and banks; the Presbyterians chose to build *their* first kirk in the Market Place. Only the Roman Catholics were left on high ground. The new plan blotted out the general cultural pattern Galt had designed. The town he founded had shifted its shape to accommodate an imbalance he deplored; the country he had helped build withheld its confidence. He would never return to the little city in the bush.

SOON AFTER RETURNING TO Britain, John Galt was confined to debtors’ prison; there he wrote *Lawrie Tod* (1830), the story of successful working-class emigration to the new world.¹⁵ This best-seller was followed by another much-read work, his *Life of Lord Byron* (1830),¹⁶ and then by *Bogle Corbet* (1831), the sad story of a rather Byronic gentleman who settles on the banks of the “Slant” in Upper Canada and there works out an ironic destiny.

Galt ended his life in Scotland, knowing his three sons were making their way in Canada, but of course not knowing that his children and grandchildren would play crucial roles in the development of the country. (One son would become Chief-Justice of Canada, another would be Finance Minister and first High Commissioner to London; one grandson would help develop the coal and rail industries in south-western Alberta, while another in our own day would superintend the traumatic move of the Sun Life Headquarters from Montreal to Toronto.)¹⁷

John Galt died in the west of Scotland, in 1839. At his deathbed, a grotesque scene took place in which a minister tried to argue the paralyzed, speechless, dying man into confession and repentance of sins as a means of finding salvation. Galt had reasserted a faith in predestination in his *Literary Life and Miscellanies*,¹⁸ although in the *Autobiography* he admitted his aptness, “notwithstanding the strictness of my belief in predestination, to wince a little at the thought of having been sent into ‘this breathing world’ to accomplish no purpose, but only to endure ‘the ills that flesh is heir to’ ” (*Ab II*, 286-7).

Galt left unpublished in his lifetime a long poem that should also be considered in the story of his own fate in Canada. This is “The Demon of Destiny,” published posthumously in 1839.¹⁹ “Who shall unfold the mysteries of fate?” is the unpromising first line of this long meditation, reminiscent of Wordsworth in its slow sad music, and also in its espousal of resolution and independence in the face of apparent failure. The young hero asks:

Why, when I thought to build a monument
With blessed bow’rs, in yon far sunny land,
Was I so shaken from that bright design? (*T*, 256-7)

Wise advisors suggest that there is no answer to the pain of frustrated ambition, and urge patience on the young hero. But the Satanic Demon of Destiny offers the opposite advice. He urges the hero to renew his benign ambition, and “to seek pre-eminence.”

It would be foolish to compare this poem with *Paradise Lost*, but like Milton, Galt succeeds all too well in dramatizing the Satanic arguments. What emerges most strongly from the poem is not the official consolation of modified ambition, but rather a passionate questioning of the ways of the universe. The Demon presents the theory that genius is a glorious emanation of God; the hero is “fumed” into believing himself “destined to improve mankind.”

The outcome shows the falsity of the Demon’s inflaming promises:

When hope’s in the ascendant,
And all the aspects of the horoscope
Allure with promises of Fame and Fortune,
Something that’s native in the field of life
Untimely balks the reaping of the harvest.

Opposition to the hopes of genius has shifted from the Canada Company to an unspecified “something” in the field of life. Galt never did understand what it was that had “balked the reaping of his harvest” in Canada and directed subsequent generations away from his “bright design.”

There was to be a further twist in the fate of the finger-plan of Guelph. Between Galt’s time and ours, the city he planned was powerfully affected by technology. In the 1850’s, railway construction further blotted his town plan. By 1880, four

railways had been laid through Guelph, spawning stations where spaces had been, and leaving an overpass where the ceremonial maple tree had stood.

There was a prophetic symbolism in the new pattern superimposed on the city. The rail lines sickled within the curve of the Speed. The Wellington Bruce and Grey County Railway ran to the north, the Grand Trunk Northern to the northwest, the Great Western to the west, and the Green Valley Railway ran to the southwest. There was still no direct connection with Toronto and the East. Just as Galt had turned his back on Maitland and Strachan and the city of Toronto, so Guelph, thirty years after Galt's death faced westward, thanks to the new technology. The diminution of the Via railway service between Guelph and Toronto in 1989 is the latest sign of the weakening link with the east.

On a grand scale, history has validated at least the westward-facing aspect of Galt's vision. The destiny of Canada, ultimately, has been western-directed. In our own time we have seen a shift of economic power from Montreal to Toronto, and to some extent from Toronto to Vancouver. Culture too moves westward, to Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria, as writers, painters, musicians, architects, and critics realize the west.²⁰ The shift is still in process. It is perhaps an extension of the movement in Galt's century, and in his country: from East to West, from Edinburgh to Glasgow, from Europe to America — a shift accompanying the emergence of modern technology. Galt, refusing to bow eastward to Great Britain and York, to Maitland and Strachan, could not survive in his Upper Canada; but ultimately destiny would seem to face, like the little town of Guelph, westward.

Two final notes conclude this story of a fated Scot and his fated Canadian city. First, Galt's rough sketch of a plan for Guelph, which had remained literally obscured for over a hundred years, has been rediscovered by Dr. Gilbert Stelter, an urban historian at the University of Guelph. Using high intensity lighting while photographing the 1829 plan, he noticed a blurring in some of the lines. He peeled back an overlay — and there was Galt's original dream of a city, still surviving its long masking by the company which substituted business imperatives for cultural ones.²¹

Another work by Galt, identified by Nick Whistler among new acquisitions to the Scottish collection at the University of Guelph, is an unfinished short story, in Galt's handwriting, titled "The Man of Destiny," not yet transcribed or analyzed. Soon it too may be "peeled back, to reveal some other secret about Galt's philosophy of fate.

Galt's life had been a mix of the grand and the ridiculous, a turbulence of hope and disappointment, a record of honour and contumely. But the results of that life remain, and are important: the great body of novels, Lowland dialect and all; the city of Guelph, railway lines and all; and perhaps the shift westward, literally and metaphorically, of Canadian destiny.

NOTES

- ¹ Ian Gordon, *John Galt: The Life of a Writer* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972).
- ² P. H. Scott in *John Galt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985) lists eleven novels which have been issued in new editions since 1970.
- ³ See Scott, *John Galt*, 4; Derek McClure, "Scots and English in *Annals of the Parish* and *The Provost*," in *John Galt 1779-1979*, ed. Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head, 1979), pp. 195-210; Henri Gibault, *John Galt, romancier écossais* (Grenoble: Publications de l'Université des langues et lettres de Grenoble, 1979), p. 169.
- ⁴ John Galt, *Autobiography* (London: Cochrane and McCrone, 1833), 2 vols.; cited hereafter as *Ab*; *Literary Life and Miscellanies* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1834), 3 vols.
- ⁵ The background of the Canada Company affair was traced in R. K. Gordon, *John Galt* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1920); new insights are added in Roger Hall and Nick Whistler, "John Galt," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1988).
- ⁶ John Galt, "The Star of Destiny," published as an appendix in *Autobiography*, II, 378-409.
- ⁷ John Galt, *The Omen* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1825). Cited hereafter as *O*.
- ⁸ Nick Whistler draws attention to Galt's recurrent use of this term in "Galt's Life and the *Autobiography*," *John Galt: Reappraisals*, ed. Elizabeth Waterston (Guelph: Univ. of Guelph, 1985), p. 50.
- ⁹ Jennie Aberdein cites David Moir's record of these projects in *John Galt* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936).
- ¹⁰ Carl Klinck reprints a letter from Galt to Moir, first published in *Fraser's Magazine*, (November, 1830) II, 456-7, in *William "Tiger" Dunlop* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1958), p. 137.
- ¹¹ Ian Gordon, "Galt and Politics," *John Galt: Reappraisals*, p. 123.
- ¹² John MacTaggart, *Three Years in Canada* (London: Colburn, 1829), 2 vols.; Samuel Strickland, *Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West* (London: Bentley, 1853).
- ¹³ John Galt, *Bogle Corbet, or the Emigrant* (London: Bentley and Colburn, 1833), 3 vols.; Vol. III and part of Vol. II are reprinted as *Bogle Corbet*, ed. Elizabeth Waterston (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977).
- ¹⁴ See "The 'Canadian Boat-song': a Mosaic," compiled by D. M. R. Bentley, *Canadian Poetry*, 6 (Spring/Summer, 1980), pp. 69-79.
- ¹⁵ John Galt, *Lawrie Tod, or The Settlers in the Woods* (London: Bentley and Colburn, 1831). This novel has not been included in the recent series of reissues by Scottish presses. Although set in New York State, it reflects settlement conditions in Upper Canada.
- ¹⁶ John Galt, *The Life of Lord Byron* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830).
- ¹⁷ H. B. Timothy, *The Galts: A Canadian Odyssey* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977).
- ¹⁸ *Literary Life and Miscellanies*, I, 287-8, cited by John MacQueen, "Ringan Gilhaize and Particular Providence," *John Galt 1779-1979*, p. 109.

- ¹⁹ *The Demon of Destiny and Other Poems* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1839), reprinted in *The Collected Poems of John Galt, 1779-1839*, ed. H. B. Timothy (Regina: s.n., 1982), hereafter cited as *T*.
- ²⁰ See Dennis Cooley, "RePlacing," *ECW* 18/19 (Summer/Fall, 1980/81); Eli Mandel, "Writing West," *Another Time* (Erin: Press Porcepic, 1977); W. H. New, *Articulating West* (Toronto: New Press, 1972); Fred Wah, "Contemporary Saskatchewan Poetry," *Essays on Saskatchewan Writing*, ed. E. F. Dyck (Regina: Saskatchewan Writer's Guild, 1987).
- ²¹ Gilbert Stelter, "John Galt: the Writer as town Booster and Builder," *John Galt: Reappraisals*, p. 38.

STANDING ON GUARD

Elizabeth Brewster

Back there in high school
in the first year of the War,
I won a prize for an essay
on "What Canada Means to Me."

Can't remember a word of it now
except the title,
but it was probably full of nature,
snow and violets and fresh-ploughed land;
I doubt if I thought of politics,
Grit or Tory.

Maybe the War came into it, too.
It would have come into that other essay
for the sale of War Bonds
for which my friend Phyllis and I shared the prize.

Then we stood on the steps of the Sussex Post Office
selling tags for the benefit of the Navy;
or went from door to door Saturday morning
collecting from housewives
their bits of soap and left-over bacon grease,
to be recycled into —
munitions, I suppose?

Our high school history teacher, Mr. Harris,
compared Hitler to Napoleon;
told us to study about the Greeks
because they invented democracy,
which we were defending now.