**Grove, Frederick Philip (1879-1948)**

Frederick Philip Grove was born Felix Paul Greve in Radomno, Prussia, to middle-class parents in 1879. Under his German name, he was a minor poet, novelist, playwright, and prolific translator. As a young man, Greve travelled extravagantly in western Europe and, in 1903, spent a year in prison for fraud. After his release, Greve worked indefatigably as a translator in an unsuccessful attempt to pay his considerable debts. To avoid a second prison term in 1909, he faked his suicide, clandestinely emigrated to North America, and assumed the name Frederick Philip Grove. After travelling in the United States for several years, Grove settled in western Canada and over the next three decades became one of Canada’s most significant novelists. In the 1970s, literary critic D. O. Spettigue revealed that Greve and Grove were the same person, a fact the author kept hidden in his lifetime.

Greve’s first German language works included *Wanderungen* (1902), a book of poetry influenced by the French symbolists, and *Helena and Damon* (1902), a verse drama. His first novels, *Fanny Essler* (1905) and *Mauermeister Ihles Haus* (1906), were written under the influence of European naturalism. Their realistic attention to detail and exploration of deterministic themes would reappear in his English-language novels, published under his new identity. Grove’s first major new world publications, *Over Prairie Trails* (1922) and *The Turn of the Year* (1923), were volumes of autobiographical nature sketches that describe the Canadian prairie in intricate detail. Grove’s first Canadian novel, *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925), was among the founding works of Canada’s prairie realism, a form of writing that fuses modernist experimentalism with traditional realism. Grove’s next novel, *A Search for America* (1927) reached a wide audience with its vivid fictionalization of its author’s itinerant wanderings in the United States. Its success lifted Grove into the first rank of Canadian writers, and he travelled Canada on two speaking tours that generated much attention. Grove’s second work of prairie realism, *Our Daily Bread* (1928), explored clashes between traditional and modern values through a rural patriarch’s relationship with his children. A volume of essays on cultural and literary topics, *It Needs to Be Said* (1929), reflected Grove’s increasing importance as a public intellectual. In the 1930s, the Canadian publishing industry suffered catastrophic collapse, and Grove struggled to publish three more novels. *The Yoke of Life* (1930) was an experimental attempt to fuse symbolism and naturalism. *Fruits of the Earth* (1933) was Grove’s final and most ambitious work of prairie realism. *Two Generations* (1939) was another novel of agricultural life, this time set in Ontario. Grove’s most complex novel, *The Master of the Mill* (1944), explored industrial and technological change and employed temporal shifting and stream of consciousness writing reminiscent of Joyce, Woolf, and Faulkner. Grove’s falsified autobiography, *In Search of Myself*, ironically won Canada’s Governor General’s Award in 1946. His final novel, *Consider Her Ways* (1947), presented a satirical allegory in which humankind and an ant-colony are contrasted. Much of Grove’s writing remained unpublished at the time of his death. In more recent years, collections of his correspondence and short fiction have appeared, and his remarkable life story continues to fascinate critics.

**Biographies:**

Spettigue, D. O., *FPG: The European Years* (1973)

Stobie, Margaret R., *Frederick Philip Grove* (1973)

Martens, Klaus and Paul Duncan Morris, *F. P. Grove in Europe and Canada* (2001)

**Major Works:**

Poetry

*Wanderungen* (1902)

Drama

*Helena and Damon* (1902)

Non-Fiction

*Over Prairie Trails* (1922)  
*The Turn of the Year* (1923)

*It Needs to Be Said* (1929)

Novels

*Fanny Essler* (1905)

*Mauermeister Ihles Haus* (1906)

*Settlers of the Marsh* (1925)

*A Search for America* (1927)

*Our Daily Bread* (1928)

*The Yoke of Life* (1930)

*Fruits of the Earth* (1933)

*Two Generations* (1939)

*The Master of the Mill* (1944)

*Consider Her Ways* (1947)

Short Fiction

*Tales from the Margin* (1971)

Autobiography

*In Search of Myself* (1946)

Letters

*Letters of Frederick Philip Grove* (1976)

**Paratextual Material:**

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/collections/fpg/ill-pgs/ill_gro1920sPortPheCol.html> (1920s Grove photo)

<http://www.abebooks.com/books/nellie-mcclung-mordecai-richler-poetry-fiction/collectible-canadians.shtml> (See cover of first edition of A Search for America in third row from top)