

novel's aesthetic function accordingly operates on the reason-imagination interface, leading to an antirationalist, and antitheorizing stance. Conradi, moreover, asserts that Murdoch is a romantic writer, who makes the strange seem familiar and the familiar seem strange, or quoting Dr. Johnson's comment on Shakespeare, she "approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful."

Thorough and comprehensive in exploring the formative influences of Plato, Freud, Simone Weil, and Sartre on Murdoch's thought and imagination, the book can be complemented by discussing the impact of the writings of Elias Canetti, whose seminal masterwork, *Crowds and Power*, Murdoch admirably reviewed, and to whom she dedicated her second novel, *The Flight from the Enchanter*. While Conradi offers us intelligent and detailed readings of Murdoch's oeuvre, one may find his militant admiration, couched at times in superlative terms, a bit overwhelming: one feels that some critical distance from Murdoch's point of view would have made the analysis more valuable and engaging. This limitation, however, is minor, and should in no way detract from the solidity of the scholarship and the honesty of perceptions. Certainly, Conradi has given us a highly readable book.

Paul Hjartarson, ed.

*A STRANGER TO MY TIME: ESSAYS BY AND ABOUT
FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE*

Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1986. Pp. xii + 356

Reviewed by Axel Knoenagel

Almost 40 years after his death, Frederick Philip Grove is still one of the more controversial Canadian novelists. Not only that the question for his literary classification has not yet been answered, but we do not even know yet who that man was, hidden behind the initials FPG. Douglas O. Spettigue's discovery in 1972 of Grove's true identity as the German poet, novelist, and translator Felix Paul Greve not only undermined the uneasy consensus that critics had arrived at in labeling Grove a "Prairie realist," but also diverted a considerable amount of research interest to his biography rather than his bibliography. No book about Grove had appeared since Spettigue's research report, *FPG: The European Years of 1973*, but several essays every year attempt to discover the mysterious stranger behind the books.

In his collection, *A Stranger to My Time*, Paul Hjartarson attempts to do justice to both the man and his books. His stated intention is, "to reintroduce that stranger to us . . . to make the unknown a little better known, to put us on a more familiar footing with the writer and his texts" (p. xi). Hjartarson divides Grove's career into three geographical and temporal parts—Germany, Manitoba, and Ontario—and concludes his volume with the hitherto unpublished "Thoughts and Reflections," a very sporadically kept diary that Grove apparently intended for later publication "as a record of his best thoughts for posterity" (p. 301). Each of the other three parts consists of essays written by Grove during the period in question and of recent essays concerned with the author's work of the same time.

The volume's great strength lies in its original material. This includes not only essays such as "Apologia pro Vita et Opere Suo," "Assimilation," or "A Writer's Classification of Writers and Their Work" which Grove published in periodicals in the 1930s and which have so far led a relatively hidden life in Grove scholarship, but it also makes accessible for the first time four pieces of Grove's writing that shed a fascinating light on the development of his perception of himself, art, and life. The first of these pieces, "Flaubert's Theories of Artistic Existence," published in a German newspaper in 1905, begins as a review of Greve's own translation of Flaubert's correspondence but then develops into his earliest printed pronouncement on the interrelationship of art and life. How far this FPG is still away from the one who wrote *It Needs to Be Said* or the above-mentioned "Writer's Classification" becomes obvious from his concluding statement: "The artist is as unable to live in life as is the coral creature unable to live on land" (p. 10). In addition to "Thoughts and Reflections," which covers the years 1933 to 1940, *A Stranger to My Time* also includes two early Canadian pieces.

The short "Of Nishivara, the Saint," written in a manner resembling the prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as "Chapter 1" of an apparently never-continued work allows for interesting conclusions regarding Grove's mystification of his own past. The gem among the four pieces is "Rebels All: Of the Interpretation of Individual Life." In this essay, Grove takes an early account of his achievement in life in his typical veiled manner, yet acknowledges aspects of his past that he would deny in his publications of later years. Not only does he mention a literary as well as a criminal past (p. 69), he even refers, without naming names, to his association with the German Decadents around Stefan George (p. 75-6). He refuses to accept the term "failure" for himself—"since each failure has helped to make me what I call 'me'" (p. 75)—yet he already gives an image of himself that he would preserve all through his life: "I am an utterly lonely man" (p. 68).

Grove's own pronouncements are supplemented by what the back cover text calls "essays on Grove by his most perceptive critics." Here again Hjartarson has assembled old and new material. In one of the two new articles, D.O. Spettigue established a coherence for Grove's oeuvre by linking the self-portrait Friedrich Karl Reelen in *Fanny Essler* to Edmund Clark, the youngest *Master of the Mill*. Both portraits demonstrate "the conflict between reason and emotion [a]s essential to Grove's art" (p. 61) and lead Spettigue to a definition of "the ultimate conflict in Grove and what he means by tragedy: the conflict between the heroic life that gives value to human action, and the meaninglessness of cosmic existence which denies it" (p. 62). The other new essay is—how could it be different in Grove scholarship?—concerned with Grove's biography. In his "Of Greve, Grove, and Other Strangers: The Autobiography of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven," Paul Hjartarson has followed up Lynn DeVore's conclusion that Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* is based on the unpublished memoirs of the woman who had been Grove's wife in Germany, emigrated with him to the United States, was abandoned by him, and later became a Greenwich Village eccentric admired and feared by Marcel Duchamps, William Carlos Williams, and others. Hjartarson concludes his reading of Baroness Elsa's memoirs with the remark, "For Felix Paul Greve life was a text he kept revising and we, his readers, keep encountering new versions of the stories he lived and wrote" (p. 283). The story discussed by Hjartarson gives us some factual information on the "dark period" 1909 to 1912, but at the same time it means that we, too, have to revise our story about Grove's life.

The remainder of the book is taken up by previously published essays on Grove, ranging from W.J. Keith's "Grove's *Over Prairie Trails: A Re-Examination*," first published in 1972, to "Of Words and Understanding in Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh*," published by Camille Labossiere in 1985. Although Hjartarson has collected some of the finest articles written on Grove over the past 15 years—such as E.D. Blodgett's essay from *Configuration* and J.J. Healy's "Grove and the Matter of Germany"—the selection of essays constitutes the only weak point of *A Stranger to My Time*. Most of the essays included here are easily available in their original publication, and the interested reader could get hold of them with the help of the selected bibliography that concludes the book. At least this reader would have preferred some more new critical material instead.

A Stranger to My Time is a good and useful edition for anyone wanting to know more than is conveyed by Grove's novels. The volume contains enough material by and about Grove to sustain and deepen the interest which the reader had had at the outset. But it remains doubtful whether he or she will actually come to know the mysterious stranger. After all, Grove himself wrote into his diary on 6 April 1933, "I hardly know who the F.P.G. is who is compact of contradictions." (p. 307)

Ralph Sarkonak

CLAUDE SIMON: LES CARREFOURS DU TEXTE

Toronto: Les Editions Paratexte, 1986. Pp. 194

Reviewed by Doris Y. Kadish

The central ideas in Ralph Sarkonak's *Claude Simon: Les Carrefours du Texte* are not likely to surprise the New Novel specialists for whom this scholarly, carefully conceived, and well-executed work is intended. That for Simon the novel strives but ultimately fails to represent reality, that the only story is the story of writing, that the novel's purpose is to procure a