

# FELIX, ELSA, ANDRÉ GIDE AND OTHERS

*Some Unpublished Letters of F. P. Greve*

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I N 1976 DESMOND PACEY, with the assistance of J. C. Mahanti, published *The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*.<sup>1</sup> In an Appendix, he included correspondence between Felix Paul Greve and his publishers, the Insel Verlag of Leipzig, letters held in the archive at Weimar. At that time, the Insel letters comprised most of what was known of Greve's European correspondence, apart from a few letters to Stefan George and Friedrich Gundolf that also had been identified in my *FPG: The European Years*.<sup>2</sup> Inevitably letters turn up after a publication, as biographical interest draws attention to them. There do not seem to be many Greve letters extant, though he was a prolific correspondent, but a few more have appeared that help to fill some chronological gaps. These hundred-odd letters, both those to André Gide and those of Greve's acquaintances in the Munich circle, give us occasional glimpses into his strange life. Equally strange and relevant, of course, is the autobiography of Elsa Ploetz, Greve's German wife, who later became the Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven.

The principal correspondence examined here is the fifty-five letters from Felix Paul Greve to André Gide, written from Switzerland, France and Germany in the period from December 1903 to October 1907. The remainder is the forty or so letters relating to Greve's year in Munich, 1901-02, where he met Elsa Ploetz, his first wife and his *femme fatale*. The letters centre on the arty-social circle of Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948), and the related Berlin salon of Melchior Lechter (1865-1937). These few letters are part of the extensive correspondence of Karl Wolfskehl. Of a wealthy Darmstadt family, Wolfskehl had established himself, his household and his 'jours fixes' at the centre of Munich art society. *München um die Jahrhundertwende ist ohne Karl Wolfskehl nicht denkbar*.<sup>3</sup>

The letters from Felix Paul Greve to Karl Wolfskehl, examined here, are part of the Wolfskehl Collection of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv of the Schiller-Nationalmuseum at Marbach. Mine of art talk and social gossip though it is, the Collection

has not been indexed with Felix Paul Greve specifically in mind, so that the Greve references are coming to light only randomly. The present article is therefore interim.

I include with the letters from Greve, reference to an early letter from Wolfskehl to Melchior Lechter, probably from 1899 or 1900, and a 1902 letter from Ernst Hardt to Botho Graef, because both refer to Elsa. In addition to Greve's letters are two photos of him, taken in July 1902, inscribed as postcards, and included among fifteen picturepostcards from Greve to Wolfskehl of 1901-02. The Wolfskehl Collection holds thirty-three letters from Greve to Wolfskehl, most of them short notes; this article describes only a dozen of them. There is also one calling-card from Greve, undated, and there are six letters (1904-1906) from Greve to the novelist Oskar Schmitz (1873-1931). The letters to Schmitz are dated, but not numbered; the earliest (28 May 1904) from the Bonn prison, was written just before Greve was released (incidentally the point where Elsa's autobiography ends). Two are from Switzerland, the first dated 21 September 1904; the second date appears to have been cut by a paper punch, so that only . . . I.05 is visible. The other letters to Schmitz are written from Berlin and dated 6 September and 14 December 1906.

The German letters are courtesy of Dr. Jochen Meyer of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv at Marbach. The Gide letters are included with the kind permission of Mme. Catherine Gide-Desvignes of Paris. Both groups of letters are examined here by permission of A. Leonard Grove of Toronto. The Elsa manuscript is courtesy of Blanche Ebeling-Koning, Curator of the Rare Books and Literary Manuscripts Division of the University of Maryland Libraries.

In this essay, as in Paul Hjartarson's "Of Greve, Grove and Other Strangers,"<sup>4</sup> quotations from the Elsa manuscript are given Part numbers (capital Roman) and page numbers, because the manuscript is numbered by Elsa only within its three discrete parts. Djuna Barnes' lightly edited typescript copy of it, however, which I use, numbers the pages sequentially throughout, while retaining the three part-divisions, as I do here. Thus, Part I ends and Part II begins on p. 33 of the typescript, so (II, 38) means the thirty-eighth page overall, though it occurs in Part II. The Greve-Wolfskehl letters are held in two sub-collections of the Wolfskehl papers; one of the two is closed to the public at this time. Most of the longer letters are dated; the brief notes are not, nor is their chronology clear, but all the Greve-Wolfskehl correspondence falls in the one year between November 1901 and October 1902. For reference purposes I use the Marbach index numbers that appear on the photocopies I have, though these are not consistently chronological, and two notes lack index numbers. The Gide letters are identified by date. The Munich correspondence is in German, the Gide correspondence in French, but for a few German phrases whose translation is being debated, but all these correspondents, and especially Greve, used numerous foreign phrases — in Greve's case English, Italian, Latin and Greek.

In this article all translations and paraphrases are my own, unless otherwise identified. Wolfskehl's letters are a special problem because his handwriting is execrable to the point of illegibility. I am especially grateful to Maria and Tony Riley of Kingston, who succeeded in deciphering almost all of the one Wolfskehl-Lechter letter I quote from herein.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven will be published by Oberon Press under the title "Baroness Elsa" in 1992. It is carefully examined by Paul Hjartarson in his "Of Greve, Grove and Other Strangers." Though it is in a special sense an autobiography, I would describe it as a confession, perhaps a confessional memoir. It begins (as Elsa wrote it), "I AM BORN AT THE EAST SEA IN MY FATHERS OWN HOUSE IN SWINEMÜNDE," as though it were going to be a full-scale autobiography, but page one takes us to the death of Elsa's mother when Elsa was eighteen. By page five she has run away to Berlin, where her career as chrous-girl, courtesan and artist begins. The bulk of the 205 pages is taken up with the years 1892 to 1904, from Elsa's escape from home in the summer of 1892 to her impending reunion with Felix Paul Greve on his release from prison at the beginning of June 1904. Of that record, the emphasis is heavily on the few months in Palermo, Naples and Rome in the winter of 1903-04 when, after Felix has been arrested in Bonn, Elsa is on her own in Sicily and Italy. She is at loose ends, she misses Felix, she is bored. She has no interests, she tells us, apart from men — her poetry is a sublimation of sex, and practised only when seducible men are unavailable. Her love for Felix obliges her, in consideration for him, to supplement by her own efforts the meagre amounts he can send her from his earnings while he is in prison. The only way she can imagine making money is — not by prostitution, which she says is out of the question for her — but by finding men to support her. Unfortunately, by a quirk in her own character she repeatedly analyzes, she cannot ask for money for sex. All her "affairs" are therefore futile; she even pays to travel with a man, and suffers the torments of guilt not at having had affairs but at failing to earn money from them. She is a fascinating woman, unimpeachably honest with herself, perceptively probing her feminine psychology, and perpetually in the dilemma of the woman who is fiercely independent and at the same time totally dependent on men.

Critically we might say that in this work Felix Paul Greve is a privileged absence. Not much of the book is devoted to him, but he is the referent, the model to whom other men must compare to their cost. She tells us relatively little about Greve because, as she says, it is her story not his, but at the same time she cannot ignore

him because, she acknowledges, he was her greatest lover, and the one she lived with (for ten years) longer than any other (II, 62-63).

From the point of view of the Grove scholar, the interest of "Baroness Elsa" is in Elsa's assessment of Felix's character. She admired him immensely at first, loved him passionately, then hated him, and sees him finally as the trickster who tricks himself to his own destruction. Unfortunately for us, she tells us almost nothing in the way of biographical fact; her gaze is inward. She does give delightful glimpses of herself — at the northern sanatorium where she is having her "womb twiddled" in compensation for her first husband's impotence and writing notes to Felix Greve; and in the honeymoon triangle, the cuckolded husband accompanying Elsa and Felix on the voyage to Italy and demanding their sympathy, until Felix buys him a bicycle and drops him off at Isschia to learn to ride it. In one of her leaps forward she presents dramatically the dialogue between herself and Felix when, farming in Kentucky ten years after their liaison began, and hating each other "up to the killing point," (III, 107) they approach their final separation, his betrayal as she sees it, of her. But this is not narrated in context, but as achronological leaps that Elsa makes as she examines herself as she was in Sicily in 1903 from the vantage of where she is, "captive in dead Germany," in 1925, reflecting on herself and writing out her reflections for Djuna Barnes.

THE NARRATIVE SEQUENCE of Felix Greve's life from 1902 until 1909 derives largely from the Insel Verlag correspondence as outlined in *The European Years*. Because it deals specifically with books, contracts, payments, publication dates, that correspondence is a limited but accurate guide. It leaves out, however, much of Felix's personal, and almost all of his social life, particularly as these relate to Elsa Ploetz. That story, or rather the essence of it, the psychology of it, is provided by Elsa in two complementary forms: the novel *Fanny Essler*, which she says was "dictated by me" as to "material," (II, 34)<sup>5</sup> and the autobiography. *Fanny Essler* gives us an apparently exaggerated portrait of the young Greve as Friedrich Carl Reelen, the god-hero-villain. The autobiography gives us the same portrait without the guise of fiction, and the two are remarkably similar, except that Fanny does not survive to become as disillusioned as Elsa was.

In one respect, the autobiography vindicates Felix, showing him in a more sympathetic light, and that is in connection with his trial, his elopement with Elsa, and his relation with Kilian. Whereas the trial and contemporary newspaper accounts portrayed Greve as an ingrate who had defrauded his best friend Kilian, and absconded with the wife of another friend, August Endell, from whom he also borrowed money for the purpose,<sup>6</sup> Elsa interprets Kilian as having been attracted homosexually to Felix, supporting him lavishly for that reason, and betraying him

finally because of Kilian's jealousy of Elsa. She also shows that the impotent Endell connived at the love of Elsa and Felix; that he accompanied them on their 'honeymoon,' and that Felix paid for Endell's wardrobe for that trip. When Felix was imprisoned and desperate for money, both to bribe his warders to let him work at his translations in prison to support Elsa, and to repay Kilian, Endell insisted on their agreement to a false divorce document that absolved Endell and threw all the blame on Felix, in return for Endell's repaying to Elsa the money he owed her lover.

A minor figure who appears in both *Fanny Essler* and the autobiography is the artist Melchior Lechter, called 'Muki' in the novel and 'Mello' in the autobiography. Elsa describes him as her "first artist friend" (I, 10) and portrays him as a prosperous, miserly esthete and designer of stained-glass windows, dabbling in pseudo-medievalism as the Stefan George Kreis did. Elsa, who suffered from his miserliness and hypocrisy, cheated on him, or tried to, using Wolfskehl for the purpose. The result, as she tells it, was hilarious but frustrating, because his penis was too big for coitus with her. She left Lechter to have a stormy love-affair with 'Ernie,' i.e. the poet-scholar Ernst Hardt, whose contemptuous treatment of Elsa led to her being rescued by his gentle young friend Richard Schmitz, who carried her off to Italy, where she lived in comfort for more than a year, having her own furnished studio in Rome. As the Wolfskehl fiasco took place in Berlin about the time of her break-up with Lechter, the Wolfskehl-Lechter letter apologizing for it, written a year after the event, must be the earliest relevant correspondence we have, dating from 1899 or 1900.

WHEN ELSA GAVE UP Richard and comfort in 1901 to study art in Munich, Richard's author-brother introduced her to the artistic salon recently established there by Karl Wolfskehl, who was hoping to make a place for himself in arty society. There she met August Endell, an architect/interior designer she identifies as one of three 'masters,' the other two being Melchior Lechter and Stefan George. Felix Paul Greve was another of the young men she met at Wolfskehl's. Apart from Greve, whose reputed wealth and sophistication distinguished him from all others, and Endell, whose initial success as a designer impressed her, all were would-be poets and artists and what Elsa scorned as "esthetes." As distinct from real artists, all esthetes are impotent, she says (II, 38). These men were all acquainted, were connected to the same salons, and wrote for the same little magazines. Their correspondence gives us some of the gossip of those ingrown little circles, including their reactions to Elsa and her relations with Endell and Greve.

To the dismay of the Munich circle, Elsa and Endell married and moved to

Berlin, where Endell was enjoying a temporary success. The marriage was a failure. A year later Elsa found herself hopelessly, as she thought, attracted to Felix Greve, who also had moved to Berlin and was offering advice to Endell, who had formed a business partnership with Richard Schmitz. At Christmas, 1902, according to the autobiography and *Fanny Essler*, Elsa and Felix consummated their love and, with Endell tagging along, sailed to Italy and thence, having escaped from him en route, for an extended 'honeymoon' in Palermo. The idyll ended when Felix was lured back to Bonn by Kilian, and arrested. This is the period covered in most detail by the autobiography, which ends with Elsa returning to Germany for Felix's release.

Ernst Hardt, 'Ernie,' Elsa had fallen romantically in love with when they first crossed eyes at one of Lechter's afternoon teas. Later, Elsa tells us in the autobiography, he became a theatre director. When she returned to Germany she tried to borrow money from him, twenty-five years after their passionate affair. In a sublimated way, Hardt draws on Elsa for a character in his drama, "Der Kampf ums Rosenrote,"; in a letter to Graef of 10 May 1902 he reports that he has changed the character's name from Elsa to Käthe.<sup>7</sup>

Oskar Schmitz, the author, I take to be Richard's brother, although Marbach cannot document this. To the long letter to Oskar just before release from prison in 1904, Felix postscripts his "regards to your brother." Perhaps it was Richard's loyalty to Elsa that retained the Schmitz connection through the years of Felix's imprisonment and subsequent exile and isolation in Switzerland, England and France. Felix's letters to Oskar Schmitz date from 28 May 1904 to December 1906, ending then probably because Felix and Elsa returned to Berlin. Together, and fitfully, Greve's letters to Schmitz and Wolfskehl, and the larger group to Gide, provide a social role and a social milieu for Felix in those critical years of his literary career and his domestic life with Elsa in Europe.

There is other correspondence between Wolfskehl and Lechter, but the only relevant letter yet identified is the effusively confessional and apologetic one of 1899-1900. Wolfskehl, apparently just ending a long visit to Berlin, begins:

I cannot leave here without having told you something awful that has stood between us for nearly a year now and has practically put me in the madhouse.

He has, he confesses, been "guilty of committing the sin with Fraülein Plötz on whose account you were angry with Hardt." (As we have seen, in Elsa's account the sin was not quite committed.) In this letter Wolfskehl appears as excessively confessional, self-deprecating, and deferential to the Lechter for whom Elsa feels little respect. Elsa herself is not blamed at all for her part in the affair.

The Greve-Wolfskehl correspondence may be assumed to begin shortly after Greve's arrival in Munich to enroll at university in the fall of 1901. He had dropped out of university at Bonn, without permission, a year earlier, and had spent most

of the intervening year wandering in Italy, where he wrote his 'Wanderungen' poems. Now, attempting to re-enter university, he needed permission from Bonn, which was granted early in November 1901.<sup>8</sup>

There is no introductory letter to the Wolfskehl correspondence; the first dated letter, (80 96/1) and the first known letter of Felix Paul Greve's, is of 2 Dec. 1901, and it shows Greve already a familiar of the Wolfskehl world, to which he may have been introduced by Friedrich Gundolf (1880-1931). It is a formal world, however; the letters to Wolfskehl are all addressed 'Dear Doctor,' and all end with formular good wishes to him and his wife. Many of these notes apparently were to be delivered by hand, as few of the envelopes are stamped, and some bear only Wolfskehl's name, others his name and street address, usually in Munich, rarely in Darmstadt. I have interpolated the undated notes into the chronology of the correspondence as a whole, but only speculatively, as all the evidence is circumstantial.

**T**HAT FIRST LETTER to Wolfskehl establishes not only that Felix is well acquainted with him now but also that Felix is already translating, or perhaps just reading English authors, as he offers a copy of Beardsley's 'Later Work.' He sends the Beardsley along with his next letter, of 10 December, (80 96/2) but also encloses some poems from his translation of Dante's *Vita Nuova* of — he claims — three years earlier. That Dante reference interests me because many years ago the German scholar Robert Boehringer wrote me from Switzerland that he had found in possession of the Wolfskehl family a translation of Dante's *Vita Nuova* that included parts by Greve. When I asked for more details, he replied cautiously that the family members he was dealing with were simple people, and apparently nervous, so that retrieving the book would be difficult. The book never did appear, but now it seems certain that Boehringer was correct, though I no longer have that correspondence, and I have not been able to identify which Dante edition he was referring to.

One of the undated notes (80 96/5) sent with it a revision of Greve's lyric 'Irrender Ritter' (Knight Errant); he hopes the Wolfskehls will appreciate the new style. This helps date the letter, which must have been written in January or early February 1902, because 'Irrender Ritter' is the last poem in Greve's *Wanderungen*, published in Munich in February 1902, and the version in the book is the revised one accompanying the note. Similarly, note #31 probably relates to *Wanderungen*. In it Greve writes that a mutual acquaintance, Franz Dülberg, (1873-1934, critic of art and literature), has said that the Wolfskehls would like to see more of Felix's poems. He encloses some, but adds that he is not pleased with the 'Heracles' because of the difficult rhymes. As 'Herakles Farnese' is also in *Wanderungen*, this note can be dated about the same time in January/February 1902.

Note #29 is one of a group mentioning photography. Asking to be excused from that evening at Wolfskehl's, Greve explains that a Herr von d.Müller is leaving and he and his friends want to spend the remaining time with him. "I'll find another day for the photography," he adds. #28 refers to "the pictures," which Greve is pleased with, especially of Wolfskehl and his wife, which are "little works of art." Again, a dated postcard of August 14th promises that "tomorrow" Greve will come and "do the photographing." Possibly 28 and 29 refer to the same event, and note #30 says "I shall bring my pictures this afternoon." It begins: "As Miss Klages is dining with you today, may I perhaps ask you kindly to tell her that in the Dorian Gray Ms. the first chapter is missing?" Helene Klages was a writer; was she going to look over Greve's translation for him? Though he is very busy, he will call later in the afternoon to bring some pictures. Note #16 says that he has "kept a copy of your picture for Helene Klages." Apparently Greve was both taking and developing the photos — which may remind Canadian readers of the metaphor of photographic development in *Our Daily Bread*.

Most of the notes and letters have to do with writing, negotiating with publishers, and planning publishing ventures, interrupted occasionally by visits and Felix's own travels. On March 12th he writes that the publisher Max Bruns has begun setting *Intentions*, (80 96/7) and at the same time that "my friend has left" — possibly referring to a visit to Munich by Herman Kilian.

Probably also in March, in a note dated only "Tuesday evening" (80 96/34) Felix reports that he has been searching all evening for a plan to bring their proposed undertaking to fruition. Though the outline is not yet complete, the main points are covered. This letter concedes that gaps have been left in the "list of recommended works" because "I have no directories here, to look up exact titles." Readers will recall Friedrich Michael's reference of 1972 to Greve's plans "to edit the whole of German literature in verse";<sup>9</sup> though it got no further than one volume of Hofmanswaldau, this may have been its origin. Wolfskehl would subsequently compile an anthology of early German poetry himself. In that spring of 1902, however, a meeting had been planned to discuss the outline Felix was to provide, but even then he "still won't know what to say" about it, and apparently cannot face it as, weather permitting, he hopes to escape on Thursday or Friday for a day's respite in the mountains. On March 17th he does send the outline, but concedes that a formal prospectus is not yet ready and would not be successful at this time (80 96/8).

The great undertaking must have been at least part of the incentive for a trip Felix takes in April 1902 to Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin. On April 21st he writes from Dresden, where he has consulted his physician.

The result is a favourable one. He doesn't need to operate and says, moreover, the overall condition of my illness shows significant improvement over last year. With a sensible lifestyle, absolute abstinence from alcohol etc.etc. the doctor believes



the fluid will gradually subside, as otherwise I have an absolutely healthy and strong constitution. (80 96/9)

Possibly the doctor was Kilian's father, the chief surgeon at Dresden, but this seems unlikely given that Felix for some reason is in Dresden secretly:

The weather is marvelous. Everything is green here. I almost regret my incognito, and should like to stay here longer. But my work doesn't permit that, so tomorrow evening I travel to Berlin, where I have reserved accommodation at the Hôtel de Rome. I have written to Mr. Endell, and asked for a meeting.

The next day Felix writes from Berlin, on hotel stationery, that he has met Endell, and will dine with him, and plans also to have supper with Botho Graef (80 96/10); probably both Graef and Endell were initially Wolfskehl introductions. Felix has taken the opportunity also to negotiate with the book designer, Holden, and writes that "my play will about break even in his hands." Japan printed, it will be "a typographical art work." The play is Felix's *Helena und Damon*, a closet drama written for the nuptials of a friend. Published in May 1902, in multichrome, it was described by Verwey as "beautifully printed."<sup>10</sup>

Felix is bringing home with him a load of books and manuscripts, apparently as part of the great undertaking.

... I'm bringing the wealth of India with me to Munich. Manuscripts and incredible treasures in books. You will be proud of me. Frankly I've spent so much, I'll have to postpone setting up my establishment for a few months.

With these letters is Felix Greve's calling card, probably from this date, the printed Bonn address replaced by the handwritten Munich one, and the inscription offering a gift of Dresden candies.

Three weeks later he is travelling again, this time with Kilian. They stop at Gundolf's home in Darmstadt and then on May 16th they visit Stefan George in Bingen, before continuing down the Rhine. From Cologne they send a joint postcard to Wolfskehl on the 17th (80 96/12), and on the 21st another joint card from Paris, "after a few lovely days in Darmstadt and Bingen." (80 96/13) Felix returned to Munich at the end of the month.

**A** SERIES OF LETTERS emerges from his summer holiday of 1902. It is during this break that he introduces himself to the Insel Verlag. In a letter of 12 July he writes to von Poellnitz, the editor, using Wolfskehl as his reference. He has heard that Insel might be interested in translation from English literature, and he offers Dowson's *Dilemmas*. On his return he writes again, reporting that during his 'long sojourn in Italy' he has translated Pater.<sup>11</sup>

The long sojourn was a little more than three weeks, from about July 20th to August 14th. All the letters to Wolfskehl and to von Poellnitz from Gardone are

dated in that August fortnight, but the only date on the photos from Gardone is July 23d. Felix is back in Munich on August 15th. Gardone-Riviera in the lake district of northern Italy was a favourite spot of Greve's. Probably it was inexpensive because of the summer heat: he reports temperatures of 46 degrees celsius. He sends Wolfskehl a photo of his very modest pension there, the Pension Haberlin, and inscribes it simply: "It speaks for itself."

The first letter from Italy, of 3 August, asks "Have you kept the pictures?" which presumably refers to the series of photopostcards of himself and of Gardone scenes, which must have been sent earlier. His holiday activities: "letting my beard grow, swimming, and translating Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*," which he raves over as "the supremest nonsense."

In the Gardone setting we see Felix Greve posing as an Englishman, spending the hot afternoons in pubs talking politics with the locals, and denying everything cultural and philosophical. As a result of his swimming exploits, he claims, the Italians would elect him to parliament, except that they know "I hate all cultural questions."

In *The European Years* I referred to a letter of 6 August 1902 from Albert Verwey to Wolfskehl in which he reports that Greve has sent him "his poems [*Wanderungen*], a beautifully printed drama [*Helena und Damon*] and Wilde's aphorisms."<sup>12</sup> At that time I assumed the aphorisms meant *Intentions*; it was, however, the *Epigrams* which Felix translated as *Lehren und Sprüche*, his first Wilde publication. Presumably Felix had sent Verwey the books just before leaving on his holiday.

The swim — "my immortal swim" he calls it — was a nine-hour marathon across the lake and back. In a letter of 13 August Greve reports that as a result he is considered another of the "mad ingles," especially as he also has translated into Italian and distributed among them his *Wanderungen* poems (80 96/18).

In this same letter we see Greve in a role that he repeated sometimes in Canada, posing as someone with exceptionally sophisticated connections in order to mock the ignorance of his interlocutors. In this his longest letter he is mocking a Berliner, but he himself passes as English in order to put down his fellow countryman's pretensions to literary knowledge:

He was a Berliner who in my leisure hours declaimed Schopenhauer in a guard lieutenant's voice. I began to talk of Schopenhauer's wife and Nietzsche's son, both of whom I knew personally, and that helped. Finally I defended Christianity and presented him with the Precepts and Sayings. . . . Unfortunately he had read them and took me for Oscar Wilde, because I had spoken English in order to get rid of him, and said doubtfully: I believe, sir, you are a cynic. I was grateful for his good intention, gave him my Dublin address (where W. was born) and invited him to visit at his convenience, which he promised to do.

The pictures referred to in the 3 August letter may be the photopostcards, of

which the Marbach Literaturarchiv has fifteen. They were not sent as post-cards; there are no addresses on them, and they have the slightest of inscriptions: Gardone from Portese; Ferrara Castle from Lecchi Island; Verona, Umberto I Bridge. Two are distant shots of fishingboats and fishermen, inscribed as “friends.” A group of three little urchins is labelled “Three more friends of mine.”

Most interesting of them all, for Grove students, are the two photos of Felix Paul Greve himself — the only early photos we have. They seem to have been taken on the same occasion: in both he is wearing a wide-brimmed hat but otherwise is formally dressed, including starched white shirt with high starched collar and a white bow tie, as well as a black jacket despite the heat. He wears a mustache, and though the photo is not clear, there may be a spiky beard. The first inscription reads:

This is the way I looked on 23.VII.1902, on the day I began to let my beard grow, which only yesterday I had cut off.

The second photo shows him in a boat. Greve is on the edge of the picture, which centres on an Italian workingman, perhaps a fisherman. The inscription reads:

May I present to you the noble Francesco, my friend and boatman who, with his boat and provisions, had the honour of accompanying me on my immortal swimming tour (Gardone–Lecchi–Gardone)?

On August 15th Felix is back in Munich, faced with catching up the work he has missed, and begging off temporarily his copying for Wolfskehl. This presumably refers again to the joint editing project they were contemplating, but he has his own grand designs: “This winter I shall astonish the world.”

**A**T THIS POINT, in the late summer of 1902, a published poet and translator, Felix Greve is optimistic and confident in himself. He is planning a major critical statement on Decadence — there his reputation will rest, he is certain — but financial success and public acclaim will derive from his translations, notably of Wilde. On 20 August he sends a coy note to Wolfskehl:

Dear Doctor:

I quite forgot to tell you about another event in prospect for this winter. For the last few days I have been besieged by half a dozen theatres on account of Wilde. I should like to know who put them on to my trail. They all talk about me as the ‘well known’ translator and the ‘knowledgable expert’ [orally from Berlin!] on the poet.

At this time too he has reached the contract stage in his negotiations with Bruns to publish *Fingerzeige* [Wilde’s *Intentions*]. A few advance copies have been designated as for sale by the translator, and inadvertently he sends an order form to

Wolfskehl. On 23 August he writes again in embarrassment: of course the subscription form was not meant for the doctor, who will receive one anyway. Then he returns to the theatre excitement, toning it down only a little: "Definite negotiations are in progress with two theatres. I am keeping four copyists busy. Dorian Gray!" Then he adds, with a more sceptical reference: "Que scais-je, as Montaigne would say" (80 96/24).

He has been negotiating with von Poellnitz of Insel. "Now I am to translate Pater. I've committed myself, if they give me time." (Only six days before he had written von Poellnitz that on the Italian vacation he had translated the Marius and almost all of Pater.)<sup>13</sup> Though Felix could not know it, years of frustration over his Pater translations were to follow. Meanwhile, the theatres were demanding too much of his time:

The theatres both want another play to perform, and want translations from me. Where am I to find them? And people are so incredibly naive. They think I can translate a four-act play in an afternoon. I think I'll tell them shortly, I don't know Wilde.

Events move along quickly, however, and on 14 September Felix is able to announce that four of the Wilde plays are being produced at once, "in translations by one Mr.F.P.G." (unnumbered, 24a). The premiere of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is taking place in Berlin under the title *Earnest*. Tuesday evening Felix will travel to Dresden, from there to Leipzig and thence to Berlin, presumably both to negotiate with theatres and publishers and to glory in his premiere.

Presumably, but not certainly. This trip was to be a fateful one for Felix, but the narrative line is not clear. On September 28th, writing to Gundolf, he is still his bumptious self: 'Dekadenz' will be his "most distinctive book."<sup>14</sup> A week later, the house of cards has all come tumbling down.

How much of the tragic fall was due to malice in others, how much to weakness in Felix's character, how much to the sexual power wielded by Elsa, we cannot say. In that note of 14 September to Wolfskehl, Felix's mood seems to shift from buoyant to truculent. He has decided to publish his article on George to show that criticism does not have to attach blame nor beat the reader over the head. Had the critics begun to hurt him? We know that from *Wanderungen* on his rival reviewers had been merciless. Apparently there were also slanderous tongues. A hint is given in von Poellnitz's letters to Felix of 4 November and 12 November. Having returned the Marius manuscript, and given Felix the cold shoulder, he finally admits that it had to do with that Leipzig visit. There had been Felix's "premature" request for an advance of 800M, on short acquaintance with Insel, ostensibly to buy a rare collection of Decadence literature. Then there was talk of lavish dinners given for FPG in Leipzig, and of the many books of his that Insel was going to publish. And, von Poellnitz adds, when he began to look more closely, there were some other, uglier things.<sup>15</sup> As Felix acknowledges, in a second reply, that he has

more than just himself to worry about now, clearly the uglier things had to do with the liaison with Elsa Endell.

It is the timing of the correspondence that is puzzling. We know from "Baroness Elsa" that during the autumn of 1902 Elsa was in that northern sanatorium having her "womb twiddled," that she was back in Berlin having afternoon teas with Felix "more than a month . . . up to Christmas" (II, 43), and yet the unexpected, shattering letter to Wolfskehl is dated as early as October 7th:

Dear Doctor!

I intend to write some words to you, but *I beg you earnestly not to ask what is behind them*. You will not see me in Munich any more. I'm going away. Where, I don't yet know. Perhaps initially to Berlin, until I have made all the arrangements to leave Europe. Now I'd like very much to say something very heartfelt to you and your wife. . . . Only this much: the past year has been the happiest one of my life. And much, very much of that is thanks to you. (80 96/25)

In this painful letter Felix confesses that his highest hopes have now been crushed, but he cannot say why. Instead, he launches into an obscure poem beginning "Life is the most bitter satire," and then concludes: "I'm selling my things. I'm leaving as soon as I can get ready."

We do not have Wolfskehl's reaction, but writing for the last time on 10 October, Felix reports that he is leaving on Sunday for Berlin to "arrange last things," and then to Hamburg where he will depart on a "German-African steamer"; he has tickets for an eighteen-month trip (80 96/26). He leaves to his friends his books and manuscripts. He would like to see Wolfskehl once more in Darmstadt, but that is impossible: "I'm in a state where I may break down at any moment."

**H**ERE THE WOLFSKEHL correspondence ends. Elsa tells us the story of Felix's travelling with the reluctant virgin on whose brother's behalf he paid 10,000M. It was the scandal over this, she says, that caused his break with Munich and move to Berlin (II, 58). This would account for Felix's financial crisis, as of course he didn't have 10,000M. But Elsa considered the virgin story to be common knowledge in the circle; there would have been no need for Felix's elaborate reticence in writing to Wolfskehl.

Which ever crisis it was, virgin or Elsa, Felix knew in breaking with Wolfskehl he was breaking with the whole Munich circle and with its tangents in Darmstadt, Bingen and Berlin, and perhaps also with Kilian and his financial support. On 1 December, writing to von Poellnitz, Greve says for the first time, "You know I have not just myself to think about now." By this time, then, the Elsa story was out. Her autobiography gives the impression that the liaison began at Christmas, 1902; clearly the crisis had begun more than two months earlier. The astonishing thing

is that Felix recognized that socially, professionally and financially it would ruin him, all his hopes shattered if he made that liaison — and still with the fatalism of high tragedy, he did it.

**I**N *The European Years* OSKAR SCHMITZ is mentioned in connection with Gide and Greve.<sup>16</sup> Oskar was almost certainly the older, author — of *Lothar* and other works — brother of the “sweet boy” Richard Schmitz who rescued Elsa from the beloved but spineless and cruel ‘Ernie’ Hardt, and whose wealth sustained her during their year and more in Italy. Oskar’s name had been her ‘Open Sesame’ to Wolfskehl’s salon. During and after his prison experience, when Greve seems to have felt himself ostracized by others, the Schmitz’s apparently kept up their friendship.

The six letters from Greve to Oskar Schmitz — five plus a two-line note — are mostly literary in focus, Greve playing the role of omniscient critic looking slightly condescendingly at Schmitz’s work but simultaneously flattering, almost fawning on him, which seems not untypical; Felix could never be confident of his own position.

The first, long letter, of 28 May 1904, alludes to earlier correspondence. “To my great regret,” it begins, “I have not yet been able to answer your kind letter of January, to thank you for the dedication to your ‘Halbmaske’.” After praising certain of Schmitz’s works, it goes on to pontificate about “our young authors;” Greve himself is 23 at the time.

His praise of Schmitz’s poems is too general to be meaningful, and he acknowledges that he cannot make connections: “I am writing beside packed suitcases,” unable to look up the classics that a few chosen lines of Schmitz recall:

almost like reading Rabelais or, to name something modern in the same genre: the best poems of Swinburne (the great Ode on Victor Hugo or the Adieu to Mary Stuart, perhaps also the *Laus Veneris*, of which I no longer know a line, though I have read them hundreds of times), or finally like Wilde’s *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, perhaps as art the most meaningful poem of the whole English Decadence (an awful word). Lucian, the divine, belongs with them, Apuleius, Pé[trarch?] and Pindar and Homer. You see the association is frightening, but also to stand, if only with one line, in such company is worth a little trouble, I think.

Greve’s own poems, “whose still remaining copies I have had pulped, hopefully will, if not disappear, at least be forgotten. But,” he adds, “I am preparing a huge novel for the press, that should come out during the winter [*Fanny Essler*], and I’m at work already on a second” [*Maurermeister Ihles Haus*]. The familiar arrogance, name-dropping and simultaneous debunking of his own work continues:

What will interest you more is that I am making progress with my British work. To arouse attention in your circle, there will be a little book that Bard, Marquardt and

Co. will publish in Berlin, in a series sub auspiciis Georgii Brandis (!!!!for godssake don't blab it yet!!!!): its title reads: 'Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst.' In the same series of publications I expect to bring out another book: 'George Meredith and the English Romantic Tradition.' (Unfortunately I'm committed to these awful titles.) In addition I plan, in a very expensive private edition for subscription (to be printed at the Ormond Press in London, where my Wilde-Essays probably will appear in English, translated by the author) a small collection of Aphorisms: 'Prolegomena to an Aesthetic of Artwork' (to complement the earlier 'Aesthetic' of the Artist to be published privately.) This pamphlet could be out already, except that it seems to me, whenever I try to send off the Ms., to be awfully funny, because it is so serious; at this rate I won't see it published for the next ten years.

He then turns to his translating, which has "blossomed" over the past year. He has asked Bruns to send Schmitz a copy of 'The Ordeal of Richard Feverel,' and is sending today both a couple of little Browning plays ['On a Balcony' and 'In a Gondola'] and Wilde's Tales. Because the books have been packed for some time now [as Greve awaits release from prison] he can't remember whether he has inscribed them; if not, he will do so when he comes to Munich.

Greve then adds a forwarding address, at the Hotel St. James and Albany in Paris; evidently the Gide interview has already been arranged. But thereafter he hopes to escape to the distant north, perhaps to Greenland, whence he may send a card. Wouldn't you like to escape too, he asks Schmitz, to some godforsaken little seaside resort, where you could swim and ride? He would himself be ready "for such immortal things, if I could find companionship." Clearly Greve is ready to leave Elsa behind; it is not her sort of companionship he has in mind. After arguing that it could be done cheaply, and not necessarily in German territory, he ends the letter — but for the marginal greeting to Oskar's brother — with the question, "What do you think?"

Presumably there was no further conversation that summer, as Schmitz has not had Greve's address. The next letter to Schmitz, dated 21 September, is from Wollerau, on Lake Zurich, in Switzerland. It begins: "I've wanted to write to you for a long time and thank you for sending your book. Of course it reached me late, after coming a roundabout way." The letter is entirely about their respective publishing, but typically it is very indefinite in its criticisms: "that a few corrective combinations; that sharply reducing a single small part; that omission of one or other episodic arabesques, could have improved it. But all this is trifling, set against the great plasticity of the episodes and good structure."

Greve complains that he has accomplished little, his whole summer having been taken up with "travel and trivialities." He is, however, prepared to send a copy of his Wells translation, shortly to be published, if that is to Schmitz's taste, or his translation of the Browning-Barrett correspondence, if he likes "fullscale English Sentimentality." It is, Felix adds, "a hideous document temporis et morum." He

attaches a postscript attacking the degeneration of the magazine, *Die Blätter für die Kunst* — the outlet of course for Wolfskehl, Gundolf, Verwey and George, Felix's erstwhile friends.

The one brief note from 1905, also from Switzerland, congratulates Schmitz on his forthcoming marriage, and adds that whenever Greve's "huge novel" comes off the press, he will send a copy.

SOME TIME IN 1906, the Greves returned to Berlin from their self-imposed exile. A letter of 6 September — the address is Nachodstrasse, where they would live as long as they remained in Europe — apologizes for "my long silence." They had come from Paris, via Cologne. Since then, Felix has had to struggle with six large volumes of translation, and then to go to England where he became ill "and remained so through the whole trip, and still am. I don't yet know if my lungs will come through." Back in Germany now, he has had to furnish an apartment by his own efforts.

As I could not, and would not, enter a furniture store, I had to learn to bang tables together with glue, etc., etc. And just to complete the story, I add to this that I have a novel in press, plus a volume of grotesque novellas, and a comedy to finish up. Translation work is also waiting, and in order to carry my workload, I've had to start using the typewriter. My novel, once the printing gets done, in mid October (I'm seeing it through the press) may yet come out before Christmas, otherwise it will be next summer. Once again it was started too late. Of course I've got insurance. Perhaps that is no longer necessary in your case. Your books begin to appear by themselves. How lucky!

In assessing Schmitz's *Lothar* series he notes that the second novella is "not quite genuine Berlinish," and then offers: "If, as a specialist in German dialect, I may help you with modest corrections for a possible new edition — I am at your disposal." The novel Felix was seeing through the press was *The Master Mason's House*, published by Karl Schnabel in 1906. The novel mentioned in the 1905 letter was of course *Fanny Essler*, which Axel Juncker had published.

Two brief notes follow, both dated 14 December 1906, and both related to Felix and Elsa's marriage. One of the innumerable puzzles of Elsa's autobiography is that she tells us about her marriage with Endell, and at least in response to a question she notes that she married the Baron in 1913, but she never says where or when or — except very indirectly — whether she and Felix were married. The only clues we have, therefore, are provided by this first (typed) note to Schmitz:

Two things: 1.) Could you send me the address of the cigarette supplier again? I thought I knew the firm, but cannot find it any more. Many thanks, in anticipation. 2.) Would you be interested in a 'luncheon' with us, mid next week? I would take you to an old Berlin pub for gourmets, in a so-called 'Stadtküche.' I will try



to persuade Siegfried Jacobsohn as second guest. As tables are often booked some days in advance during this shopping season, I'd be pleased if you could let me know soon. I suggest Wednesday the 19th, at 2:00.

Best Greetings from both of us.

P.S.

If you enjoy English ways, you might consider it as a wedding breakfast, as I have just got word that, in the opinion of researchers employed for the purpose, the impediment to a legalizing of my marriage is removed. Naturally this is good news.

This is no more precise than any other of Greve's personal remarks, but it does seem to say that he and Elsa had gone through a form of marriage, that a legal difficulty had been raised, and that after professional consideration the difficulty was now judged by "rechercheurs" to be removed. He does not say that it has been legally removed, or that they are, or are to be, married, but only that the luncheon can be considered "as good as" [so gut wie] a wedding breakfast. We do not know what he told Elsa. The second note, the same day, only confirms the date and time as Wednesday at 2:00, when he will try to get a table at Ewest's on Behren Street.

This last of the Schmitz letters tells us all we know of the marriage, assuming that there was one. The only other reference is Gide's, in the 'Conversation avec un Allemand,' where he has Greve say that he and Elsa are leaving for Switzerland where in two months they will be married. Typically, they then left not for Switzerland but for England. My examination of marriage books in England for 1904 and the following years failed to uncover any record of their marriage there, nor has correspondence resulted in any positive replies from either Swiss Cantons or Berlin.

THE ACQUAINTANCE OF Felix Greve with André Gide apparently began as correspondence, but we do not have that beginning. The first letter we have from Greve to Gide is dated 27 December 1903, and it regrets that Felix [who is in prison] cannot meet Gide in Italy. It thanks him for his letter and the book, with its inscription, presumably to Felix, which arrived, he says, "just as I sent two essays to you c/o the *Mercur*." Felix longs to meet him, however, and suggests next June in Paris — where in fact they did meet, as the 'Conversation avec un Allemand' records.

Whereas Gide's 'Conversation' of June 1904 has FPG say that he and Elsa are going to Switzerland, the second letter to Gide, dated July 20th, apologizes for Felix's failure — because of continuous illness — to write him from England. By this time the Greves are in Switzerland, in a remote but scenic corner of the Canton of Schwyz:

Now I am in Switzerland — with my wife — and I have two small rooms in the little inn of a little community on Lake Zurich. The view is marvellous. From my window I take in most of the lake. But I have to work from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. So forgive me. I'll write at length and send you the letter I promised you in a few weeks — after our luggage arrives.

Felix has undertaken to get translations of Gide's works published in Germany, but is not having much success. The Insel Verlag having turned him down, he suggests Bruns. Gide's reply (5 August) is, however, cool to the Bruns suggestion, and the negotiations drag on through the summer. Greve makes other suggestions, tries to place Gide's dramas, tries to get excerpts from translations into magazines. A difficulty is, of course, his own wounded reputation in Germany; the journals he prefers will not accept him. At one point he even suggests using a translation by his arch rival, Franz Blei, just to get Gide into print. In the event, confusion about what was Blei's and what was Greve's was to rupture the friendship with Gide and involve Felix in a legal brawl.

Late in October, after not writing all summer, Greve "bombards" Gide with letters (ie. of 23 and 25 October) "like the sound of cannons in the mountains" (whose purpose he apparently does not grasp). He has made a deal with Bruns (for the *Immoralist*) for 2000 copies, but typically would like a little deluxe edition of twenty. Would Gide be willing to have his name with Greve's on the title page? (Since his imprisonment, Felix has been using pseudonyms, but wants to begin using his own name again; the letters include frequent arguments for such a move.) And what other Gide books may he translate? What about *Nourritures*? "You know I have translated it." Perhaps he can get an excerpt published in a journal: "Unfortunately, at the moment, *Freistadt* is the only one available to me." He writes in haste and apologizes for the scrawl — interestingly, in this as in the German correspondence, Greve has a wide range of handwriting, depending on his correspondent and his circumstances.

Only rarely do we get any sense of the life the Greves were leading at Wollerau. Early in November Felix complains at having had to walk all the way to Zurich to look up a word, as he had no library. On November 24th, "after a week of nervous fever," he is discouraged about the *Immoralist* proofs, but he encloses a fragment of *Nourritures* for publication, and notes that the magazine *Zukunft* will carry two little articles of his on Wells and on Meredith — so the translator's name can appear.

No doubt he was cheered by Gide's reply (undated, but on or about 27 November). Gide is delighted with the *Nourritures* fragment, which he is sending on to Blei, and he adds his praise: "To translate some parts as you have done, you had to grasp my text with the senses as well as with the mind." He finds in the translation the "rhythm," the "nuance" and if he may say so, the "*temperature*" of his own work. Perhaps both men later regretted the fulsome praise. Because of it,

Greve pressed for, and believed he got, exclusive rights to translate Gide in Germany, and Gide had later to point out that subsequent Greve translation had not maintained that “temperature.”

In reply to Gide’s concern that Greve has arranged to put part of the *Immoraliste* into German journals, Felix replies from Zurich on 31 October — one notes how prompt the mails were in those days — that of course he meant to place an excerpt from the *Nourritures*, not the *Immoraliste*. But there are problems. On the one hand, he prefers *Die Neue Rundschau*, but to publish his translation there, it “would be necessary to suppress the translator’s name,” as Greve and Bruns are involved in a legal suit with S. Fischer Verlag — hence the suggestion that the excerpt be, or be seen to be, a Blei translation. (This raises a bibliographical problem unsolved in the 1990s: Is the unidentified translation of a part of the *Nourritures* in *Die Neue Rundschau* of 1906 by Blei or by Greve?)

**S**UBSEQUENT LETTERS RELATE almost entirely to business: how to get Gide published in Germany, how to hurry publishers, how to get more work for FPG. Like Grove in Canada, Greve in Germany never doubts he can work beyond normal human limits as long as his health allows, but psychologically he was wearied and frustrated at the lack of recognition and financial return. He is forever at Gide to find more French authors for him to translate, forever scheming for more publications, forever lamenting the lack of success and the burden not only of work but of the thousands of marks he had to repay. He wanted at the same time to beg employment any way he could and also to play the role of the man of integrity whose work could not be challenged by mere hacks — like himself. He rails continually at editors’ criticisms, but apologizes abjectly for errors pointed out to him by Gide. On 1 December 1904 he is furious with Bruns for giving Greve’s translation to a philologist for correction. In February he has been battling with the “stupid critic,” but he is “désolé” at the corrections Gide has had to make; there hadn’t been time to correct the proofs of the *Menalkas*.

In the same letter of 7 February 1905 he cites the Berne Convention and points to the calendar: when will protection expire on *Paludes*? Can he then have it for translation? Moreover, he wants to translate the *Immoraliste* into English. Possibly Reginald Smith would publish it. “Right now I am translating my Wilde essay into English. . . . probably I’ll translate my novel, *Fanny Essler*.”

Uncharacteristically then, he turns to “choses personnelles”:

I’m looking for a little seaside place; not too bourgeois, not too dear. I’ve been thinking of *Blonville*. What I need is a two-bedroom maisonette, dining room and, if possible, bathroom. Moreover, this maisonette must be located close to a hotel, where lunch and dinner are available. Conditions sine qua non: sandy beach (no

stones) close to a town. Living costs (including rental of the maisonette) should not exceed 400 frcs a month for two people and two dogs.

Elsa would not, could not prepare a meal, hence the need for a hotel-restaurant nearby, but Felix wanted solitude, hence the need to be out of town, both for his bruised emotions and his work. But his translating work, he assures Gide in this same letter, is not to be supposed to involve long reflection:

My 'desk diary' for 1904 reads: '*Gide Immoraliste, commencé: 16 avril, fini: 1er mai*. . . . You are astonished? A second entry says: '*Gide, Immoraliste, revised 26 and 27 October*.' That's all. I simply do not understand how a translator can translate otherwise. The author has done everything. . . . all that remains for the translator: is *nothing!* He must take the temperature (as you say) of a book, get the tone. . . . and shape the *sense* by keeping the same words as far as possible. Could anything be simpler? Of course: he has to be able to write: but that's just what I flatter myself I can do.

That this breezy attitude to translating contradicts his own agonized complaints about his struggles suggests that he did not mean Gide to take it seriously.

In his next letter (13 Feb.) Felix is searching for an equivalent to Gide's title, *Paludes*. *Sümpfe* would be the literal translation.

The title always seems to me the hardest part. We shall see. It's something that just hits you one day, that comes like an inspiration, the way a line of poetry comes, without thinking about it. Do you remember Wilde's 'Pen, Pencil, and Poison?' I translated it by 'Gift, Stift und Schrifttum,' after pondering it for more than six months.

Turning to his holiday plans, he elaborates on the sort of place he wants on the French coast: "Perhaps I forgot to mention something very important: that is, that I don't want mountains, nor hills," and he adds in the margin, "except dunes! Avoid everything picturesque!!" What he wants is level plain:

completely flat and monotonous. I have a real thirst to see a simple expanse without elevations. I'd go, certainly, to north Germany, if I weren't shunned there. What I want to see is ploughing, harvesting, and the extension of the plain at low tide. Above all: no arrogant countryside like this, like Italy, Spain, Greece. And I want no more 'distractions.' The salt air, a plain, where I can get on a horse, the smell of cow-dung, farmers, that's what would suit me. . . . Only, I have to think of Madame, which means that two or three times a week there must be at least the *possibility* of receiving visitors, and serving tea. As for my own need, to see *life*, I'll take a whole mouthful in just one night in Paris. That will last me for months at a time.

What he wants, he goes on to say, is a flat of his own, where he can shut himself in, seeing and hearing no one. Then, absorbed in Gide's novels of moral freedom, he adds: "What I need is

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in the neighbourhood of a city."

Through February and March he is working on Wells' *Anticipations* ("How boring Wells is!!!") of which Bruns is printing the first part before Felix has translated the last, and he is completing a draft translation of *Paludes*, which is more difficult than he supposed, and is bombarding Gide for more work to translate. Early in April he sends a copy of the *Immoralist*, with apologies for the appearance. He has wanted it austere grey and plain. Bruns' style is "bourgeois and old-fashioned." Felix has a horror of what "MM. Diederichs, S. Fischer etc call 'Buchsmuck.' I wrote to him: no arabesques, no vignettes etc! The result, you see." Felix has heard, however, that von Poellnitz, of the Insel Verlag, is dead, in which case they may be able to return to Insel.

**T**HE PROBLEMS WITH publishers and publishing were endless. On 9 April Greve writes that he spent a month translating Stendhal's *Vie de Henri Brulard*, and three months seeking a publisher for it, only to find that it had already been published elsewhere. Moreover, his own reputation is such that he cannot get 'Fanny Essler' published. In the April 4th letter he explains:

I have myself written a "roman de filles": it is powerful and would be a great success. Bruns accepted it: it now appears that he did so without having read it. I should have parted with him when he refused to print it. This has been an unexpected blow. And now: everybody is *afraid*. Nobody will print it. If I could write in French, I would publish the book in Paris. As for England: M. Reginald Smith has read two chapters in my translation: that may be the end of our friendship. Besides, it is *indispensable* that the book be published in German because a large part of it is written in the Berlin and Munich dialects. What to do! I don't know.

In May 1905, amid the struggles with translations and publishers, Greve is preparing to leave Switzerland. (Elsa too, but as she tells us in the autobiography, Felix had to do the work because she could not even pack her own suitcases. III, 155) On 10 May Greve reports enthusiastic response to the *Immoraliste*. "A M. Oskar A. H. Schmitz, to whom I gave a copy, will write to you." (This is Gide's first notification about Schmitz; on 31 May, according to his journals, he dines with him in Paris.)<sup>17</sup> Greve adds that Schmitz's *Lothar* has enjoyed some success, and then says condescendingly that Schmitz has some influence: "He may send you his books. Don't read them. But do me the favour of speaking nicely to him. He will do an article for the "Hamburger Korrespondent — a rather important journal."

Other news: Harden, of *Die Zukunft*, will publish Gide's 'Ménalque' and a few lines of Greve's about the *Immoraliste*. Bruns has accepted *Paludes* for September. Felix is still negotiating about his own novel, but hopes to come to Paris.

On 19 May he reports that he finally has a publisher for *Fanny Essler*, though on very bad terms, but it may be enough to pay for the move to France. He expects

to arrive in Paris on 1 June. Then he returns with ill concealed excitement to his novel:

I believe (and my editor believes) that my novel will be a smashing success. The book could perhaps be better, but it could not be more artful than it is. It was written with success in mind. I must have *a voice* in Germany. Then we shall see. That will help all our enterprises.

Elsa tells us that she and Felix both counted on its success, and were disappointed. (II, 35).<sup>18</sup>

**E**ARLY IN JUNE the Greves settled at Paris-Plage, near Etaples, on the Pas de Calais. Felix writes ecstatically on 6 June:

As for the landscape, I am delighted. The dunes, the plain. . . it is Germany — but Germany more complete, more perfect — never have I seen anything so right. Now I feel ten years younger.

Felix sends note after note through June, partly with variant translations of Gide's verse *Envoi*, with and without rhyme, partly with news from publishers about the Gide translations, partly with concern about *Fanny Essler*. On June 12th printing has begun; he would like Gide to read some of it in proof. On the 20th he has re-read it himself, and has not found it good, but it does move along.

On July 1st he writes that he has sold 'Kritik und Kunst: eine Kampfschrift' (Criticism and Art: A Manifesto). This is another bibliographical puzzle, because there is no record of the publication, though the title appears in lexica. The same is true of the next two works he mentions:

As a diversion from the harshness of my "Sentimentalist" — I am writing "Pindar, Schiller und Herr Märzenbach, Drei Grotesken von F.P.G." There is scarcely a German poet who is not pilloried in it.

Only . . . I'm so curious as to what you will say about my novel. That intrigues me. For — after all — however written with an eye to success . . . having re-read it, I saw with considerable astonishment that it was I who wrote it. The method is mine; and it is a method without commentary; editing the text without annotations.

I swim and I sleep. I scarcely work at all. There are the dunes, the dunes!!! and there is France. . . and there are the French! the French!!!! All the little children speak French!!! It's very strange.

And, I bought a white *rabbit*, that already follows me around like a dog.

(There is much of Grove as well as Greve in this. Readers will remember that, in *A Search for America*, Phil's father retires to this same spot near Etaples, and that when in the fiction he dies, he leaves behind a hutch full of rabbits.) Bruns advertised Greve's novel, 'The Sentimentalist' in *Fanny Essler*, for publication in February 1906, but apparently it was never published.

He had other irons in the fire. In August he is still working on *Paludes*, still can't get Gide's verse Envoi right, but is so "overloaded" with reading the proofs of *Fanny Essler*, the proofs of Flaubert's Correspondence, and those of Wells' *Anticipations*, that he accepts Gide's corrections to *Paludes* without checking them. Moreover, he is trying to found a literary journal of his own. On 14 August he writes that, though Insel has published half a dozen of his translations in the past, the company is run by men he cannot work with, to his regret, because he wants to leave Bruns (with whom Gide was not pleased) and he needs the Insel Verlag, especially now:

at the moment when I start my journal (weekly, politics and literature — I hope to publish the first number in April 1906 — and I'm counting on you!! — the literary contributors will be from all countries) I shall break definitively with Bruns. In all this I'm relying heavily on my novel, which will certainly be charged by the public prosecutor. That is the best advertisement I could hope for. That will 'launch' my journal. . . .

He warns Gide that he can't expect to enjoy the novel; it is

disgusting in the extreme. My "Sentimentalist" is making progress. After all, it is *my book*. In addition I'm doing some poems in the style of *SOMEBODY*. (Needless to say the "somebody" doesn't exist.) Do you want to hear about it? It will be a volume called "Lieder eines Irren" — a mystification, like almost everything I write. . . .

P.S.

In two weeks I'm leaving for England, where I expect to stay for a week.

A rather strange letter, dated 17 August, is prompted by the receipt of Gide's article on Wilde's *De Profundis*, a book Felix dislikes and will not read.

This man, who was nothing in himself, as artist or as man, had to take his punishment, as he took everything, that is, in reference to others. Really, I have long regretted having my name associated in any way with Wilde's. And I regret it, because one cannot consider his work as work, separate from the man. Certainly there is scarcely a man I should less have liked to live with than Flaubert: but 'Madame Bovary' and 'Bouvard et Pécuchet' — they are *something*. . . . This impossibility of separating the *odor* of the author from the odor of his work means that I can hardly bear to read more than a few lines of the German poets. Goethe, George, Hoffmannsthal don't smell simply bad but always weak. It's a physical antipathy. If I prefer 'les capitaines vainqueurs,' it may be because of their 'strong odor.'

Then in a postscript he turns to a very different subject, perhaps to illustrate his political astuteness, in 1905, or his personal cynicism:

If war breaks out between Germany and England — which is probable — I shall have to fight; which is not something I would mind. But there would have to be a Franco-German alliance. I hope to see that some day. You ask if I am mad? Mais oui.

Greve's letter of 2 September hints at a possible rift between him and Gide, perhaps on the ground of Felix's failure to place his Gide translations:

I've already done all I could. We shall see. Only: never ever will you get from Bruns or any other German publisher except the Inselverlag . . . anything faultless. On the other hand, the Inselverlag will never publish more than a stated number of copies; it is not at all popular. I understand what you're saying and that you would prefer not to have a large audience at the price of being vilely edited. If I had the money, I'd do the same as you. I designed the cover for my novel myself, for free, for the simple reason that I didn't want to get something unbearable. Believe me, what Bruns did for the Immoralist was, compared with the average German publishing house, an *effort*.

Felix will not deal with Insel under any circumstances; he has had to threaten legal action to get paid for his last translation with them, Browning's *Paracelsus*. If Gide wants to deal with Insel, he may do so on his own. If he prefers to work with Blei rather than Felix, Blei at least has contacts with Insel and S. Fischer.

In a letter dated 8 September Felix proposes Cassirer as a possible publisher for Gide. Cassirer has been begging him for a Wilde translation; Felix has offered 'The Sphinx,' which he has worked on for three years. But Felix has also "insinuated" Gide's name: is Gide interested? A second piece of news is that the three little plays Greve wrote in prison are under negotiation. "But!!! nobody understands a word of what is *not* said in the dialogue. Nobody has even understood the rather subtle psychology." So Felix asks Gide to read one of the manuscripts and tell him "if it is *impossible* to understand."

On 20 September he offers to send the 'Sphinx' manuscript if Gide will write an introduction for it. He will also send the play. All three plays, he admits, are "so personal that I foresee nothing but a terrible failure." What he fears, however, is not failure but "indifference."

The printing of my voluminous novel (576 pages) is almost finished.

I want to know if it is the same with all writers: I have written three strong books, of which one promises more than common success, and I haven't received a cent. I'll be here for the first part of the winter probably, until December. I'm not translating any more, having nothing left to translate, and I feel like a tower that is crumbling to ruin. In revenge I'm writing a satire: *Der Zahnadel* (The Tooth Aristocracy), a title you won't understand, and I'm outlining some chapters of my 'Sentimentalist' — a novel which certainly will fool everybody who expects from me something exciting, titillating — everybody except the two or three friends; but what serious book doesn't deceive practically everybody! As for Fanny Essler, I am so certain of its success that I'm only awaiting its publication before negotiating with a financier on the basis of my 'Twenty-first Century' political and literary, for which I want to write the political articles.

With that letter Greve sends the manuscript of one of his plays. His next letter, of September 28th, reacts to Gide's criticism of it:



You've given me just what I wanted. That is, an impression, but sometimes an impression can be a critique: yours is. The play is a flop, I see that. It is incomprehensible. Completely — COMPLETELY — You don't understand me? Well, no. But you don't want to understand? Maybe. . . . What is certain, is that you can't. As a work of literature? Certainly I am not making literature. If I make anything, it will be — revolution. But still . . . some prestidigitation? Yes — but isn't a literary work always a sort of prestidigitation? I don't believe I know just exactly what a work of art is. Nevertheless I shall make a criticism. We shall see. But still . . . document? Document of me or of. . . . But it isn't that. I've taken care not to appear and for this reason, that I am holding a truth that I don't want to reveal until the end, that is, after I have said all I have to say about the others. Believe me, you don't know me. I don't know if you *want* to (you understand me?) . . . For I am a *moralist* — an angry moralist. I feel the urge to preach. I'll do it. . . . There is a scene in my novel that resembles this little play that you just read. . . . I don't believe you're reading the novel: it all goes *contra coeur* (is that French?) — but if you read the chapter that follows this scene, there you might find a revealing phrase, a phrase that is the basis, the pivot of all I think about a life that is not one of glacial solitude — like mine. I don't think that the person who might be found in that phrase . . . yet this is the single instance where I show my face. You don't think I can be SERIOUS. Of course — I'm not what you call a "pessimist" — quite the contrary. I am not one of those who are broken by prison. But even less am I one of those who cannot learn. I learned a lot there, more perhaps than I have learned in my whole life. And everything I have learned leads me to believe in my own strength.

In December the battle with Blei begins. In his letter of 16 December Felix claims that Blei has cheated him twice. "Je suis en conflit avec M.Blei," who "invokes the living and the dead: you and M.de Poellnitz." It is a literary scandal. I may be forced into court, Greve says, and he warns Gide that "I may not be able to keep silent as to what you have said and written to me about M.Blei." Not only has he been cheated by Blei, but he has also been insulted in his name: "M.Harden has said that *I*, F.P.G., should be pleased if the public mistook a translation of F.P.G.'s for one of M.Blei's!!!"

Greve's letter of 28 December 1905 outlines the conflict and incidentally further complicates the *Bunbury* puzzle:

It's about a little book of Wilde's that I published in 1902. This was not *translation*, but word for word was changed, especially the title. Now I find the title, which was not Wilde's, and my version in a publication of M.Blei's. That's not all: two months after the publication of my version M.Blei, then one of the editors of the *Insel* [*Insel* magazine, which preceded the Insel Verlag] printed it in the last number of the review, without any authorization on my part. But see what he claims: he never took his new version from my volume, which he knew very intimately (from having printed it): he says he translated it without even remembering my version!!!

There is a further charge, apparently involving Gide and his 'Ménalque' as well as Blei and Harden, which Greve withdraws. But, he warns, if it comes to court, he must use Gide's letters against Blei.

**B**Y FEBRUARY 1906 the Greves are back in Berlin. In March Felix reports that *Fanny Essler* is into its second edition [apparently a second impression], and *Maurermeister Ihles Haus* is in press. The latter he describes rather oddly as “the study of a sort of unconscious übermensch: the master mason is something like a wild beast become bourgeois.” Of the unknown *Sentimentalist* he says that it is “the story of a young Berliner — but without the least resemblance to Flaubert’s *Education* — the intention, I may say, of my novel is of another world from that of Flaubert’s novel.” Meanwhile, Felix must “translate and translate,” and again he begs Gide for titles: “novels, if possible; it’s not at all necessary that they be *good*: quite the contrary!”

At some point during the summer of 1906, probably after their return from England, the Greves move into the apartment on Nachod Street in Berlin that was to be their home for the remainder of their European life. On 28 August Felix writes to Gide that — again — he “may have” a buyer for Gide’s *Nourritures* and *Saül* and the shorter works. For himself, he is working on “a new novel, two philosophical volumes, a volume of verse” and a translation of the works of Gabriel Tarden from an English edition he got from H. G. Wells. In a few months, then, he will be publishing “my FIFTIETH volume.” He misses Paris-Plage, however, “the only place in the world where I could be happy.”

I spent the summer in England (in London and Folkstone). But the *dira necessitas* to make money, money, money forced me to locate finally in Berlin, where I have furnished a little apartment. I live absolutely devoid of friends. Even you have been silent for some months. And again I am ill — a sort of chronic pleurisy — and an eternal cough. . . . I’m getting old, and I despair a little, and fear that I may die sooner than I would like.

As for his work, “I no longer believe in success. I’m nothing but a writing machine, and I’m becoming dull, uninteresting.” On 13 October his spirits have been buoyed somewhat by the prospectus for the first volume of his translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*, but he is still unwell, and Berlin air is almost as “murderous” as the air of London. There has not been much correspondence in the interim, and he fears he has offended Gide. (As drafts of Gide’s German correspondence for the same period show him looking for another translator and trying to place his works with journals, Greve’s fears seem to have been justified.) On 14 November he sends the first typewritten letter to Gide, while apologizing for being so busy.

There may be missing correspondence; the next letter from Greve to Gide is dated 14 February 1907, and begins without preamble to list Felix’s charges against Gide for breaking their unwritten contract. He quotes from Gide’s letters and from their conversations in Paris, with dates, to show that Gide had said

consistently that Felix was to be the sole German translator, in this case specifically of the *Saül*. Readers will recall the entry in Gide's *Journal* for 12 February 1907, when he must break off his reading of the proofs of his *Fils Prodigue* to answer the letters from Berlin: "Blei and Greve are sniping at each other over my *Saül*, each one thinking he is winning out."<sup>19</sup> Felix had felt confident that he had won out; now he feels compromised:

I committed myself: I publicly denied that it was M.Blei who had your authorization. I said (in the *Litterarisches Echo*) that M.Blei could never do a translation without stealing it or getting help. I won the victory in this affair.

"The efforts made by Blei to place Saül (I'm quoting you) were *my own* efforts: *he only embellishes what others have done: that's his way.*

"Don't be under any apprehensions' (I'm quoting you) — *never* will your Saül be performed for the handsome eyes of M.Blei. It has a special interest for you, and I *guarantee*, that Saül will be played for itself, and a little out of *friendship* for me.

Felix reiterates his position: he is committed, he must prevail in this. And he adds ominously: "I always succeed in doing what I want."

In this instance Greve does win. On February 16th Gide writes to both Blei and Greve, stating clearly that the translation of the *Saül* is entrusted to Greve. This might have settled the matter, and Greve's next letter, of 3 March, makes no mention of it:

My work over the last 2 years 9 months? . . . . 62 volumes, including 5 vol. of Flaubert (correspondence, *Temptation*), 4 vol. of Browning (poems), 6 vol. of Meredith, 8 vol. of Wells, 2 vol. of Pater, 2 vol. of Lesage, 1 vol. of Murger (what a Horror!), 5 vol. of Wilde, 3 small vol. of André Gide (not counting the vols. that are not yet published or sold), 6 vol. of the 1001 nights, 2 novels, 1 comedy, a treatise by me (not counting the articles, little poems etc., spread among the reviews) etc.etc. I'm also preparing an edition of the selected works of the German poets of the 17.century, of which the first volume will be out in a few weeks. That's enough, isn't it?

My illness? Pneumonia. I'm overworked, undernourished; I suffer from the winter. Can't stop working. I was forced to keep to my bed for 7 weeks, but then I had to dictate. This will last for about 10 years, until I am freed from my debts. Then life will begin. Success? I no longer expect it. I have shed my illusions. Work, that's all. As a result of the work, I earn, I 'make,' twenty thousand marks a year. I'm beginning to be read. Well, maybe that will reduce slightly the term of work: maybe, but I no longer count on it. I make books, as the cobbler makes boots. 'Life'? That means 'Wirken' [to be effective], I don't know the French word. One can't 'wirken' by books. One 'wirkt' by money. At least that's my theory.

But the Blei problem had not gone away. Greve's letter of 25 April begins:

Sir,

In the last number of the 'Rundschau' I find a translation of one of your works done by Kurt Singer. You once gave me your word that you would not let anyone

translate you but me. If you regret having given me that word, then say so plainly. It is true that we have no contract. I didn't think one was necessary. I was mistaken.

Really I don't think much of your treatment of me. You visit Berlin without telling me — and you change directions like clothes. If you prefer Messrs. Blei and Singer as translators, fine, I'll dissociate myself from your books. I think I have done more for the success of your books than M. Blei, who flatters you and belittles the merits of others. What moved me was the interest I took in you personally — not the little bit of money I could earn from this hard work. In return I ask to be treated like a 'gentleman.'

That's all I have to say to you.

P.S. In a few days you'll receive a copy of my translation of Saul.

Gide's reply is equally cold:

Monsieur Greve:

The tone of your last letter displeases me strongly, and nothing justifies it. Bie [Oskar Bie, journalist and editor, who had criticized Greve] asked me to contribute to the *Neue Rundschau*; I sent him 'l'Enfant Prodigue' that I had just finished. It pleased Bie to assign my manuscript [for translation] to a M. Curt Singer, whom I knew only from a very friendly letter he sent to me on the subject. I took care to write to Bie that I retained *all rights* to this work. . . .

But Gide, once he establishes his command, is prepared to be magnanimous. The unwritten agreement with Felix applied only to the *Narcisse*, *Philoctète* and the *Ajax*, not yet complete. "You are free to consider them yours," and if so Gide will send them on.

M. Grève, it is in my nature to be loyal, but not to maintain connections that upset me. True, when I was aware of your Immoraliste translation I expressed the wish that you might translate other works as well. But that was an expression of my free will, and I insist on the right to withdraw it, if you write any more letters like that one.

Rebuked, Felix can now be forgiven: "I'll ignore your last letter, if you wish." Apparently, however, the power was not all on one side. Felix maintained a silence that Gide was forced to break. He writes again on May 17th, urging a reconciliation:

What am I to think of your silence now? Don't you think I need a word of assurance from you that your last letter does not represent your opinion of me?

He "eagerly awaits" Greve's reply. By coincidence, Felix had written him the same day, a typed, businesslike letter that avoids mentioning the quarrel. But his next letter, of 26 May, also typed, returns to the charge, though he must be brief because he is so busy translating the whole of Cervantes. (He does not claim to speak Spanish; the assumption is that he used other translations.)

I identified myself with your interests. I have done battle for you. . . . If M. Bie asked you to contribute to the *Rundschau*, the credit is entirely mine. If he asked

you directly, that's because he hurt me once, and it's always embarrassing to ask for something from someone you've hurt. Once you told him it was F.P.G. he had to reply to, he wouldn't have done it. Today he already has. But this time you spared him the pain. That is what I blame you for. It is I who won the battle, another who enjoys the victory. Well, t'was ever thus.

We cannot know whether Gide's reply, pointing out that "four or five persons" could make the same claim as Felix, was ever sent; it exists in the correspondence as a very rough draft reviewing the course of the quarrel.

**F**ELIX'S LETTER of 17 June 1907 is written from "*Neuendorf auf Hiddensee* (bei Stralsund)." It says briefly, "Let us say no more about it," then goes into the cost of copyright for the Ajax. A brief postscript explains the address:

I had to leave Berlin, because I was rather ill once again. I have found a very solitary island, deserted in fact, where I am all alone.

There is no mention of this in Elsa, who does not deal with this period.

Felix writes from the island again on 1 July, a brief note, saying "Excuse me. I am ill. And there are crises in my life." Then he deplores the poor return he makes on translations. For the twelve volumes of the *1001 Nights* he earns 7000 marks. Each volume costs him sixteen days' work. And the six volumes of Cervantes "(of 500 pages each)" pay him only 2750 marks. "But I believe that some day the *Immoraliste* will achieve success. Then that will return something *without* any more work."

A short business note from Berlin on 22 September encloses a letter from the publisher Oesterheld & Co., declining the 'Ajax' on the grounds that it has already appeared in the 'Rundschau' in Kurt Singer's translation. Felix explains that the other three treatises have been accepted. His letter of 18 October is typed, with apologies:

I am overloaded with work, as always. The first two volumes of my Cervantes will appear shortly, and add that I am committed to supply three more (not counting three volumes of the *Nights*) by the end of the year, and you will readily imagine the load I bear.

With this letter, of October 1907, the file ends, though the correspondence did not. Extant elsewhere there is, for example, Greve's letter of 22 June 1908 in which he announces to Gide both that he will be going to Norway, and (wishful thinking?) his divorce.<sup>20</sup>

What we have of Greve's correspondence — the Wolfskehl letters of his Munich days, the Schmitz and Gide letters of his post-imprisonment — give us not so much

new information as new impressions. They confirm our sense of the metamorphosis of Felix from dandy to drudge. Along with Elsa's revelations about the Endell affair and the trial, these letters elicit our sympathy. We have to admire the courage with which Felix faced that change, and wonder at the capacity for sheer work that enabled him to produce those sixty-two volumes in thirty-three months, when virtually everything was against him. He was an extraordinary young man.

What he acknowledges to Gide, but perhaps could not have anticipated, was the resultant 'burn out.' He is becoming "dull, a writing machine." How could it have been otherwise? This — together with the discovery that he could not find enough work to translate — must have led to the revulsion that prompted his flight from Europe. Otherwise he might have done the near-impossible, repaying the 40,000 marks!

The other side of the story, though, also appears dimly through the Gide correspondence: that sense of being despised and rejected, that seeking for desert islands and lonely dunes, and a place of his own. That he was trapped, with Elsa, in a domestic situation he could not escape from, that was making far more difficult the repaying of the debt, and adding to his miseries, is his side of the story Elsa tells. She felt that he betrayed her; we might say that he betrayed, through her, himself; he could never be free after making that fatal liaison. As Elsa herself says, he was really her slave. (III, 96) Regrettably we have nothing to tell us why he had her follow him to America; why he arranged for her to meet him in Pittsburgh; why he included her so illogically in his pioneer-farming attempt in Kentucky. Perhaps it was integrity; or what Niels Linstedt felt as his "peasant nature" continuing doggedly on a course when there was no longer any reason for it. Perhaps it was to give us the plot of *Settlers of the Marsh*.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Toronto and Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> A useful source-book, which includes not only excerpts from the correspondence of Karl Wolfskehl, Albert Verwey, Friedrich Gundolf, Melchior Lechter and Stefan George but also photographs of them all, is Manfred Schlösser's *Karl Wolfskehl 1869-1969: Leben und Werk in Dokumenten* (Darmstadt: Agora Verlag, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> "Of Greve, Grove and Other Strangers: The Autobiography of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven." *A Stranger to My Time: Essays by and about Frederick Philip Grove*, ed. Paul Hjartarson. (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1986): 269-84.

<sup>5</sup> Barnes misreads the passage, substituting 'dedicated to' for Elsa's 'dictated by.'

<sup>6</sup> *The European Years*, 95-96.

<sup>7</sup> Copy of the Hardt letter courtesy Dr. Jochen Meyer.

<sup>8</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 172.

<sup>10</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 73.

<sup>11</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 75-76.

<sup>12</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 73.

<sup>13</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 76.

<sup>14</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 78.

<sup>15</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 83.

<sup>16</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 131.

<sup>17</sup> *FPG: The European Years*, 131.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Hjartarson has *Maurermeister Ihles Haus* the one they pinned their hopes on (*A Stranger to My Time*, 281), but this is a misreading.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in *The European Years*, 142.

<sup>20</sup> Pacey, ed., *Letters of Frederick Philip Grove*, 548.

## MUMMERS

*Cornelia C. Hornosty*

the squeeze of university  
causes extraordinary lepage  
into air, water, onto pavement  
towards the golden splay  
of birch trees in afternoon sun

the burden of beards and briefcases  
among heavily loaded libraries  
forces us onto sidewalks —  
here we make a serious search  
for crevices of human error  
hints of the usual and unread  
for comic book bubbles  
of thought in small words,  
casual talk and careless chatter

in this silent game  
of costumes and credentials,  
no one means to be a poseur —  
yet say your lines on cue,  
focus your eyes just so,  
bob and sway to the music,  
otherwise in this locale  
among the cracks and lepage  
flat out on parking lots,  
play yourself and die