

laboration in the social production of meaning. Ulrich Greiner of the West German newspaper *Die Zeit* introduced the label *Gesinnungsästhetik* to disparage Wolf's work as falsely moralizing and the author as a political opportunist. Critics have used the pejorative term *Gesinnungsästhetik* to denounce *Engagierte Literatur* and raise questions about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics.

In addition to West German criticism of GDR writers, *Gesinnungsästhetik* refers to a manifestation of the global problem of the role of the intellectual in modern and postmodern Western societies specific to the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). After World War II, literature was expected to do the work of remembering and mourning for society in general. Through political and moral engagement, the author became a substitute conscience for a society plagued by collective guilt.

Nonconformist literature of East and West Germany played a similar role in the two societies; during the 1950s and 1960s, intellectuals adopted an oppositional stance, performing a moralistic and critical function without challenging the sociopolitical system. The literary circle *Gruppe 47* functioned as moral proxies for West German society in the 1960s, while GDR literature modeled the social-pedagogical function of antifascist exile authors.

See also: Engagierte Literatur; FRG Literature (1949–1990); FRG Literature (since 1990); GDR Literature; Gruppe 47; Wende, Die; Wolf, Christa.

References: Anz, Thomas, ed., *“Es geht nicht um Christa Wolf”*: *Der Literaturstreit im vereinten Deutschland* (Munich: Spangenberg, 1991); Deiritz, Karl, and Hannes Krauss, eds., *Der deutsch-deutsche Literaturstreit oder “Freunde, es spricht sich schlecht mit gebundener Zunge”* (Hamburg: Luchterhand, 1991); Gerber, Margy, ed., *The End of the GDR and the Problems of Integration* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993).

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Goddess. A goddess is a female deity. Contemporary understanding of the goddess' origins is based on feminist matriarchy research and feminist archaeology in the Middle East and Eurasia. Excavations have revealed that many of these pre-historic cultures may have been matriarchal, egalitarian societies; the anthropomorphic female deities they revered, for example, the Mother Goddess (35,000–10,000 B.C.) or the Mistress of Animals (9000–7001 B.C.), were connected with fertility and life-bearing, sexuality, and reproductive powers. These goddess-worshiping societies are credited with the development of agriculture, writing, medicine, and mathematics.

Many pre-Christian goddesses in the Germanic tradition share characteristics of the earliest female deities. Depending on local customs, these figures are still thought to influence daily and seasonal events. Freyja (who lends her name to *Freitag*/Friday) is a fertility goddess in the Germanic pantheon. The winter goddesses Percht and Holle have feast days celebrated in areas of Germany, and their names have entered German speech (*Perchtemnacht* in Styria, the night

before Epiphany; *Frauhollenabend* for Saturday in the Rhön mountains). Visuna, a goddess of healing, is believed to inhabit the springs at Baden-Baden; Aeracura, an Earth goddess, and Nemetona, a goddess of war, inhabit the Rhineland. Veleda, a goddess of war and fate, was revered during Tacitus' time as the warrior queen of the continental Celts.

Of interest to feminist theologians and archaeologists is the transformation of polytheistic, goddess-worshiping societies to monotheistic, god-revering cultures with the onslaught of barbarian hordes from the north, 4500–2500 B.C. Following the credo that man makes God in his own image, the new social and political order created its own pantheon of male gods; as the existing social order was replaced, the formerly autonomous female deities became secondary or tertiary in the new cosmology as the wives, mistresses, daughters, and sisters of the male gods. Later, Christianity and Judaism also succeeded in overthrowing the goddesses in favor of a single male god. The goddess was demonized: female powers of sexuality and reproduction became the forces of evil, destruction, and chaos.

The reclamation of the goddess is an important component of late 20th-century feminism. The goddess symbol stands for the merger of the divine and the cosmic, for the unity of goddess and world. The desire to re-create this unity leads feminists to examine the interrelatedness of all life, to honor the dignity of the female, to discover the power of creating ritual, and to perceive work for ecological and social justice, not just as a civic, but also as a spiritual, responsibility.

Various German-language writers have made the goddess the subject of their works. Benedikte Naubert, for example, valorized the Germanic goddess Veleda in her protofeminist novel *Velleda, ein Zauberroman* (1795). Barbara Frischmuth's work *Die Frau im Mond* (1982), a matriarchal mythology of the moon goddess, recalls some of the most primary goddess images. Other literary critics (e.g., Göttner-Abendroth) work to uncover the hidden goddesses in Germanic folk and fairy tales.

See also: Fairy Tale; Matriarchy; Wisewoman.

References: Ann, Martha, and Dorothy Imel Myers, *Goddesses in World Myth* (Denver: ABC-CLIO, 1993); Carson, Anne, *Goddesses and Wise Women: The Literature of Feminist Spirituality 1890–1992. An Annotated Bibliography* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1992); Göttner-Abendroth, Heide, *Die Göttin und ihr Heros: Die matriarchalen Religionen in Mythos, Märchen und Dichtung*, 8th ed. (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1988); Monaghan, Patricia, *The Book of Goddesses and Heroines* (New York: Dutton, 1981); Wacker, Marie-Theres, “Feminist Theology and Anti-Judaism: The Status of the Discussion and the Context of the Problem in the Federal Republic of Germany.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7 (1991): 109–16.

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Governess. The relative absence of the governess in German literature stands in inverse proportion to the key importance these educators played in the social