

purpose of amusing oneself, displaying one's connoisseurship, passing time in a witty manner—Gracian's ideal of the man of leisure. This traditional literary posture of *otium* was a stance that women never had full opportunity to appropriate, although Ziegler bows to this convention in her prefaces by speaking of her poetry as "Zeitvertreib."

A female poet with requisite education and formal training might have transformed *galante Dichtung* into a vehicle for female expression, turning the objectification of women that is at the heart of the genre on its head. However, from the 1720s on, the change in literary expression toward a "natural" style, mediated by men who were conversant with ideas that stemmed from French and English writers, would have obviated such a transformation. Although women have been prolific poets since the Middle Ages, *galante Dichtung* highlights possible reasons for their difficulties in participating in highly stylized literary forms: their exclusion from the dialogue of literary history.

See also: Enlightenment; Ode; Ziegler, Christiana Mariana von.

Reference: Waldberg, Max Freiherr von, *Die galante Lyrik* (Strassburg: Trubner, 1885).

ELIZABETH POWERS

GDR Literature (1949–1990). This is the literature produced in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the eastern, socialist part of divided Germany, from 1949 to 1990. The underlying principle in the foundation of socialist society is equality. Women in the GDR had a legal position of equality in the workplace. In the private sphere, however, more traditional gender roles were upheld. In keeping with socialist ideology, women were a vital part of workers' as well as intellectual circles, and they were very active in literary organizations. The 1970s characterized a boom for women writers and the proliferation of feminist ideas.

The GDR was founded on October 7, 1949, as an antifascist state. As the basis for its legitimation, the GDR intended to establish new social conditions in an effort to prevent a recurrence of fascism. After the end of World War II the majority of the writers returning from exile emigrated to the Soviet-occupied zone. During their exile, these writers began a literary program of resistance to fascism. Upon emigrating to the GDR they formed the *Kulturbund* (July 4, 1945), an organization that represented the union between political ideology and cultural policy. Since the unification of Germany in 1990 the term "antifascist" has become problematic. The GDR itself employed repressive measures in both political and cultural arenas, causing suspicions that the state increasingly used its antifascist stance to justify its own repressive tactics.

Anna Seghers (pseudonym for Netty Reiling) returned to the GDR in 1947. Her fame and her commitment to socialism resulted in her obtaining powerful positions within the GDR's cultural politics (until 1978, she served as president of the Writers' Union).

In 1950, GDR writers organized and formed the Writer's Union (*Schriftstellerverband*). In March 1951 the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) stipulated the cultural development of the new society as one of its main goals. Throughout the 1950s, GDR literature rigorously followed the Soviet aesthetic dogma of socialist realism. Among writing women, Seghers was prolific; Brigitte Reimann and Irmtraud Morgner published their first prose texts.

The first Bitterfeld Conference (1959) shifted the focus of literature to the working class. The main impetus for the conference was the desire to achieve a socialist cultural revolution, producing a literature that would find resonance in the working class. The conference promoted a two-step process, with writers entering factories (in order to better represent working and social conditions in their texts) and workers writing about their own experiences. Reimann's *Ankunft im Alltag* (1961) is a direct result of her work experiences in Hoyerswerda and provided the name, *Ankunftsliteratur*, for this period, signaling the arrival of socialism.

During this initial phase, GDR literature emphasized the positive aspects of socialism, depicting a model society. Women's equality was described only in the productive, work-related sphere. This trend continued into the 1960s. Political events throughout the 1960s, particularly the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the participation of GDR officers in the invasion of Prague by Warsaw Pact troops in 1968, increased the writers' disillusionment with the socialist state. This same period saw a tightening of government control over writers, while the literature embraced political themes more critically. Christa Wolf entered the literary scene with *Der geteilte Himmel* (1963). As the 1960s progressed, writers became increasingly dissatisfied with the apparent contradictions in their society, and many texts clearly expressed the writers' desire for change. Beginning with Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (1968), women writers focused repeatedly on the inconsistencies in the construction of gender relationships in GDR society.

Changing literary traditions ushered in a new era in the 1970s. In 1971, Erich Honecker succeeded Walter Ulbricht as general secretary of the SED. Honecker proclaimed that aesthetic taboos would no longer exist. This liberalization of cultural policy spurred a new interpretation of heritage (*Erbedebatte*). During this "thaw" (*Tauwetter*), many women writers began to gain recognition in cultural circles. The year 1974 witnessed the publication of important prose works by women, all of which examined the question of women's emancipation: Morgner's *Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz*; Gerti Tetzner's *Karen W.*; Reimann's *Franziska Linkerhand*. These texts, similar to Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, questioned not only the role of women in society but also the role of women in literature. The contradictions between women's legal rights and the actual state of emancipation in the private sphere were widely thematized. Documentary work was also begun at this time. One of the most important volumes is Maxie Wander's *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* (1977), a collection of 17 interviews with GDR women who describe their everyday lives. In the 1980s,

women writers expanded their topics to include issues of marginality. In addition to portraying women and women's experience, their literature began to focus on the elderly, on physical and mental illness, and on different sexual orientations.

The expatriation of the oppositional GDR songwriter and poet Wolf Biermann in 1976 produced a crisis for GDR writers; 12 signed an original letter of protest that *Neues Deutschland*, the official party newspaper, refused to print. The letter subsequently appeared in the West and resulted in the tightening of publication policies. This led to the (often forced) exile of many of the GDR's best writers, among them Sarah Kirsch, who left in 1977.

Throughout the 1980s, literary production clashed with the socialist state's vision for literature. The decade witnessed periods of openness, controlled censorship, and the demise of the GDR. Critical topics included technology and environmental concerns (Wolf's *Störfall*, 1987; Monika Maron's *Flugasche*, 1981); and patriarchal versus matriarchal society (Wolf's *Kassandra*, 1983). At the 10th Writers' Congress (1987) writers expressed their mounting concerns about contradictions within society, and the first public remarks about censorship were voiced. Shortly following the congress, a relaxation of censorship occurred (1988). Despite the critical nature of their literature, GDR writers did not play a significant role in the events of the fall of 1989, with one notable exception: the speech of November 4, 1989, in which Christa Wolf and others advocated democratic socialism.

GDR literature as a category is controversial. The GDR no longer exists, but its writers continue to write. The final year of the GDR was marred by controversy after the publication of Wolf's *Was bleibt* (1990), a debate that began in the West German feuilleton and continued as an intellectual debate about the complicitous role of intellectuals and authors in the GDR regime.

See also: Ankunfts-literatur; Documentary Literature; Exile Literature; FRG Literature (since 1990); Marxist Theories; Morgner, Irmtraud; Protokolle; Socialism; Socialist Realism; Technology; Unification, German; Wander, Maxie: *Guten Morgen, du Schöne*; Wolf, Christa.

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