

U3A

Dunedin Charitable Trust

A LEARNING OPTION FOR THE RETIRED

in association with



Series 2 2012

**THE DIVIDED VOICE OF GERMANY:
THE WRITER CHRISTA WOLF
(1919 – 2011)**

Dates: Monday, 11 June – Monday, 16 July 2012

Time: 2.15 pm – 4.15 pm

Venue: Salmond College, Knox Street, North East Valley, Dunedin

Enrolments for this course will be limited to 20

Course Fee: \$40.00

Tea and Coffee provided

Course Organiser: Bill Wilson (477 2282)

Course Assistant: Diana Wilson (477 2282)

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You may apply to enrol in more than one course. If you wish to do so, you must indicate your choice preferences on the application form, and include payment of the appropriate fee(s).

All applications must be received by noon on Wednesday, 16 May 2012, and you may expect to receive a response to your application on or about 25 May.

Any questions about these courses after 25 May should be referred to the Secretary, U3A Dunedin, telephone 471 9913 or on email at <graysinn@clear.net.nz>

Please keep this brochure as a reminder of venue, dates, and times for the courses for which you apply.

THE DIVIDED VOICE OF GERMANY: THE WRITER CHRISTA WOLF (1919 – 2011)

Christa Wolf was one of the best-known names of German literature in the twentieth century, respected in both East and West. Her work reflects the times and political systems in which she lived: Raised in Nazi Germany, at 16 her world collapsed, and she was forced to flee her hometown and to confront the truth of the Nazi regime. Her new home was in the Soviet-administered East, where she encountered a new ideology, Socialism, which seemed to her generation to embody the hope of a more humane and honest world. She embraced this hope and committed herself to the building of this new society, remaining faithful to that vision, despite her early disillusionment with the regime that established itself in the GDR. Her critical voice made her controversial in both East and West, not just for her political stance, but for her engagement with issues of her time, such as the role of science in the modern world, and feminism. Central to all her work is the possibility of finding and being true to oneself in a political world.

Not all of her work is at present available in English, but those for which she is best known are. The following can be ordered from Amazon:

The Quest for Christa T.

Patterns of Childhood

Cassandra

What Remains and Other Stories

For those interested in her essays and addresses, particularly around 1989 and the events that followed, the following is also recommended:

Parting from Phantoms: Selected Writings 1990 – 1994.

The course will be presented by Alyth Grant, a former lecturer in German at the University of Otago.

The Programme

Monday 11 June:

- Introduction to the author: the connections between biography and writing
- Reading *The Quest for Christa T.* Who speaks? Memory and “knowledge” of another. The desire for self-knowledge.

Monday 18 June: *The Quest for Christa T.* contd.

- The search for self in a political context
- The role of imagination
- “When, if not now?” A tragic life?

Monday 25 June: *Patterns of Childhood*

- Context: The search for self: “How do we become the way we are?” Problems approaching the writing of autobiography. Accessing memory.
- The “patterns” identified: in the family and in society

Monday 2 July: *Cassandra*

- A novel in the context of the four essays “Conditions of a Narrative”. In search of a new narrative perspective on an ancient tradition.
- Cassandra as “seer”. The motifs of blindness, seeing, madness, dreams, self-deception
- Autonomy

Monday 9 July. *Cassandra*

- *logos* – the word
- feminist utopian elements
- the enigmatic ending and critical interpretations

Monday 16 July. *What Remains*

Christa Wolf and the end of socialism. 1989 and after.