

## Herta Müller, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (October 8, 2009)

### Abstract

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On October 8, 2009, the Swedish Academy declared German author Herta Müller the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Müller, the daughter of a former *Waffen-SS* soldier, was born in 1953 in the Romanian village of Nitchidorf and grew up as a member of the German-speaking minority of the Banat. After studying Romanian literature and German studies, she began working as a translator in an engineering factory. She was dismissed, however, after refusing to cooperate with Romania's secret police, the *Securitate*. Müller began to write while teaching kindergarten and giving German lessons. When she applied to leave Romania on account of censorship laws, she became the target of additional repressive measures. In 1987, Müller managed to emigrate to the Federal Republic of Germany and settled in West Berlin. Her best-known novel, *Atemschaukel* [*Everything I Possess I Carry with Me*] (2009), deals with the fate of tens of thousands of Romanian Germans who were deported to the Soviet Union after the Second World War (a fate shared by Müller's mother). In addition to honoring the artistic value of Müller's work, the Nobel Prize had a symbolic political function: it drew attention to the need to come to grips with the history of Communist dictatorships.

This photo shows Herta Müller (left) and Bernd Neumann (CDU), state minister of cultural affairs, at a press conference in Berlin.

### Source

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