



Herta Müller was born 1953 in the German-speaking village of Nitzkydorf, in the Banat district of Romania. She left her village to study German and Romanian literature at the University of Timisoara. Here she became part of the Aktionsgruppe Banat, a group of idealistic Romanian-German writers seeking freedom of expression under the Ceausescu dictatorship. After completing her studies she was employed as a translator in a machine factory.

In 1987 she emigrated to the West with her husband, Richard Wagner. Since then, she has been living in Berlin. She has published a chronicle, *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* (1986), short stories, *Barfußiger Februar* (1987), *Reisende auf einem Bein* (1989), essays, *Eine warme Kartoffel ist ein warmes Bett* (1992), *Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel* (1991) with lectures on "Gedanken zum Schreiben" that Müller held at the University of Paderborn in 1989-1990. Müller published a complete set of 94 collages under the title, *Der Wächter nimmt seinen Kamm. Vom Weggehen und Ausscheren* (1993), novel *Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger* (1992), *Herztier* (1994) and *Hunger und Seide* (1995), a collection of essays on her situation as dissident in Nitzkydorf and Timisoara.

She has been an outspoken critic of those East German writers who collaborated with the secret police, and has recently withdrawn from P.E.N. as a protest against its decision to merge with its former DDR branch. She has won a dozen literary prizes, including the Marieluise-Fleißer Prize (1990), the Kranichsteiner Literary Prize (1991), the Kleist Prize (1994), and the European Literary Prize "Aristeion" (1995).