

The Department of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Studies cordially invites you to:

“The Pressure of Experience Forces Language into Poetry: Facts, Fiction, Autofiction and Surfiction in Herta Müller’s Work”

A lecture by Professor Paola Bozzi, University of Milan, Italy

Date: Thursday, January 28, 2010

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: State Street Room, UCen

On the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism in Europe, the Nobel Prize in Literature was surprisingly awarded to Herta Müller. The Romanian-born German novelist and essayist has a low profile in the English-speaking world, although she won the International Dublin IMPAC Literary Award in 1998. Since leaving Romania in 1987, Müller has nevertheless established herself as an important figure in German literary and intellectual life, and her works have been translated into more than twenty languages.

A major factor in Müller’s work that has its origins in her traumatic experiences in Ceaușescu’s Romania is the aversion she shows to all forms of authoritarian and totalitarian rule. Despite the undeniable importance of the political dimension, it would be one-sided to concentrate only on this part of Müller’s writing. In fact, the reader is enriched by the precise observation and the unflinching honesty in the portrayals of the surroundings and the self, conveyed by the author’s consummate artistry. The defining feature of her work is the way she has developed an original and powerful style out of writing on the basis of her biographical experiences. Moreover, Müller insists on the tragic ambivalence of writing, trying to explore the possibilities of fiction, to challenge the tradition that governs it, to renew our faith in man’s imagination.



Paola Bozzi is Professor of German Culture at the University of Milan. She received her Ph.D. in Modern German Literature at the Humboldt University in Berlin, 1996. Her research interests and publications include German literary and cultural studies of the 18th and 20th century, modernity and postmodernity, philosophy and literature, gender studies, media aesthetics and culture. She wrote a monograph (*Der fremde Blick. Zum Werk Herta Müllers*, 2005) and many articles on Herta Müller’s work. Her recent books are *Vilém Flusser. Dal soggetto al progetto: libertà e cultura dei media* (2007) and *"Durch fabelhaftes Denken": Evolution, Gedankenexperiment, Science und Fiction. Vilém Flusser, Louis Bec und der Vampyroteuthis infernalis* (2008). Professor Bozzi is spending a semester of research at the University of California, Riverside.