

Julia TOTH-CZIFRA, 2012



Dear Duke of Arenberg,
Dear General Assembly,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an exceptional moment for me, standing here in front of you at the famous University of Göttingen, which has a great, rich and fascinating history so please overlook my embarrassment.

After I received the first notice about the prize, the only thing I was sure of that I would love to travel to Göttingen by train. Travelling by train means a concentrated, intensified journey for me, like a moving study in which I have no other task than to look, to see, to learn and to make Europe my own.

Spending a semester in Leiden as an Erasmus exchange student was quite similar to travelling by train. Being there was like owning a moving room, an amazingly equipped, fabulous study where I received every conceivable help to work and to become absorbed in my research. But, at the same time, my room, my imaginary study was moving, bringing me

around all those wondrous scholars: my professors, and all the libraries, collections, concert halls, and texts, of course, lots of texts, and my only task was to collect as much knowledge as possible.

In his novel *Esti Kornél* the Hungarian writer Dezső Kosztolányi stated: to travel is to be. One might say then: to be a European is to travel constantly, and yet, while travelling, always to be at home. A never-ending journey at home.

Thus, the Coimbra Group and the Arenberg Foundation fulfil the noblest duty: they make travelling possible in its literal and figurative sense, as well, and the member universities help young scholars to learn how to return, again and again, and how to return properly, with due respect, to these ever-new, but still, always already familiar cultural spaces. This is one of the greatest values, the greatest assets to transmit. I am deeply grateful for that.

Dear Duke of Arenberg, dear Coimbra Group. I am honoured that you decided it was me who deserved Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize this year. I hope I can earn your trust by becoming a both physically and spiritually inexhaustible, respectful and committed traveller of Europe and European culture.

Thank you very much.