**BOWDOIN PRIZES 2018-2019**

TRANSLATIONS AND DISSERTATIONS IN GREEK AND LATIN

**TWO UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES**

(A) A Prize is offered for translation into Classical Greek.
(B) A Prize is offered for translation into Classical Latin.

(A) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Greek** of a passage from *On Beauty and Being Just*, by Elaine Scarry.

(B) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Latin** of a passage from *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape*, by Predrag Matvejević.

Copies of these passages are available in the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall.

**TWO GRADUATE PRIZES**

(A) A Prize is offered for an original essay in Classical Greek.
(B) A Prize is offered for an original essay in Classical Latin.

Essays offered in competition for these prizes may be on any subject chosen by the competitor, and must contain at least 1,000 words. Parts of doctoral dissertations are eligible. Essays presented for other prizes are not admissible.

**RULES**

All submissions must be made under a **pseudonym** and must conform to the requirements and general rules as stipulated on the website of the Prize Office <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>. Only the pseudonym should appear on the translation. Your name should be submitted in a sealed envelope with the pseudonym written on the outside.

**DEADLINE**

All translations and essays in Classical Greek or Classical Latin must be submitted on or before **Wednesday, May 1, at the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall, no later than 5:00 p.m.**

Further details on this and other prizes may be found on the website of the Prize Office <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>. Questions about the Bowdoin Prizes in Classical Greek and Latin may be directed to the Department of the Classics.

The political critique of beauty is composed of two distinct arguments. The first urges that beauty, by preoccupying our attention, distracts attention from wrong social arrangements. It makes us inattentive, and therefore eventually indifferent, to the project of bringing about arrangements that are just. The second argument holds that when we stare at something beautiful, make it an object of sustained regard, our act is destructive to the object. This argument is most often prompted when the gaze is directed toward a human face or form, but the case presumably applies equally when the beautiful thing is a mourning dove, or a trellis spilling over with sweet pea, or a book whose pages are being folded back for the first time. The complaint has given rise to a generalized discrediting of the act of “looking,” which is charged with “reifying” the very object that appears to be the subject of admiration.

Whatever merit either of these arguments has in and of itself, it is clear at the outset that they are unlikely both to be true since they fundamentally contradict one another. The first assumes that if our “gaze” could just be coaxed over in one direction and made to latch onto a specific object (an injustice in need of remedy or repair), that object would benefit from our generous attention. The second assumes that generous attention is inconceivable, and that any object receiving sustained attention will somehow suffer from the act of human regard. Because the two complaints so fundamentally contradict one another, evidence that can be brought forward on behalf of the first tends to call into question the accuracy of the second; and conversely, evidence that can be summoned up on behalf of the second works to undermine the first.

If, for example, an opponent of beauty eventually persuades us that a human face or form or a bird or trellis of sweet pea normally suffers from being looked at, then when the second opponent of beauty complains that beauty has caused us to turn away from social injustice, we will have to feel relieved that whatever harm the principals are now suffering is at least not being compounded by our scrutiny of them. If instead we are persuaded that beauty has distracted us from suffering, and that our attention to that suffering will help reduce the harm, we will have to assume that human perception, far from poisoning each object it turns toward, is instead fully capable of being benign.
No one writes about the Mediterranean or sails it without personal involvement. The city where I was born is located fifty kilometers from the Adriatic. Thanks to its location and the river that runs through it, it has taken on certain Mediterranean traits. Slightly farther upstream, the Mediterranean traits disperse and the mainland takes over.

I am particularly interested in Mediterranean rivers and borders and the connections between them. I cannot explain why at some points the coastal area is so narrow and ends so abruptly and major transformations occur at such a stretch from the sea. Cross a mountain and the bond with the sea is broken: land turns into hinterland and grows coarser, harder of access; people practice different customs, sing different songs (Balkan gange, for example), play different games (stone throwing or number guessing), thus appearing alien to their maritime neighbors... In other areas analogous obstacles notwithstanding, there is still a Mediterranean element molding land, customs, and people...

Mediterranean rivers flow down to the sea in their own ways; some are quite ceremonious, even smug about doing their duty, others seem caught off guard and flow along abashed, confused; there are those that are haughty and resolute and those that are timid or resigned; there are those that do not care to mix their waters with the waters of others and those that are only too eager to take part in affairs of the sea, set up an alliance with it. Nor does the sea accept them all uniformly or the coast suffer them to leave it in one and the same way. Some rivers tend to linger by the sea, forcing it to yield some of its territory; others plunge deep into the karst to emerge either at the coast itself or in the cold springs at rock bottom. Estuaries are of a dual nature: they let the rivers flow into the sea, and they let the sea make its way inland. The riddle of their reciprocity makes itself felt here and there in their deltas. When swimmers from nearby rivers swim in the Mediterranean, they claim they can recognize the water of their rivers in it.

I have frequented the beds and streams of numerous Mediterranean rivers; I have bathed in them; I have smelled the vegetation along their banks, comparing it with that of their upper and lower basins. Mouths of rivers are characterized by various kinds of reeds (cattails, bulrush, sedge). Large rivers have a special type of reed that flourishes where fresh and salt water come together. I have in mind rivers like the Ebro, the Rhône, the Po, the Neretva, the Menderes, the Orontes, the Don, and especially the Nile, where reeds are possibly more imposing than anywhere in the world. (Nor should believers in the Scriptures forget that papyrus is a variety of river reed.) Conifers have different aromas near a river and farther away. They can do without water for long periods, their sap growing thicker, their bark harder. Smells tell a great deal about regions along the Mediterranean: what conifers they support, how they lie, whether they line river banks or the coast.