

PARDIS DABASHI  
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Bryn Mawr College  
Department of Literatures in English  
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## EMPLOYMENT

Bryn Mawr College

Assistant Professor of English, 2022-present

Affiliated Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies Program; Comparative Literature Program; and Film Studies Program.

University of Nevada, Reno

Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies, 2019-2022

## EDUCATION

Ph.D., English, Boston University, 2019

B.A., English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, 2008

Certificate in Theater Training, *École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*, 2009

## PUBLICATIONS

Books:

*Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel* (University of Chicago Press, November 2023). Studies the status of plot in literary modernism and classical Hollywood cinema. Discovers that the plots of classical Hollywood melodrama became an object of fantasy and desire for literary modernists otherwise committed to an aesthetics of fragmentation and rupture. Argues for the necessity of a combination of archival research and speculative historiographical methods when analyzing the affects of aesthetic form and cinematic spectatorship.

Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize, 2024.

*Reading and Revelation: Islam and the Experience of Criticism* (in progress). Studies the history and consequences of the exclusion of Islam from the methodological landscape of Euro-American criticism and theory, relative to the acknowledged influence of Judaism and Christianity. Puts Islamic philosophy and theology into conversation with Enlightenment theories of interpretive dispute in order to offer a theory of critical experience—be that of assent or dissent—that escapes the scope of reason. Looks to early and medieval Islamic education and cultures of formal dispute for modes of argumentative engagement committed to the value of rigorous disagreement even as they abide by principles of charity. (Solicited by the University of Chicago Press)

Edited Volumes

*The New William Faulkner Studies*, co-editor with Sarah Gleeson-White (Cambridge UP, 2022).

Articles, Book Chapters, and Other Publications

Close Reading and the General: Qolamhossein Yousefi on Ahmad Shamlu. In *Close Reading for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Dan Sinykin and Johanna Winant. (In production, under contract with

Princeton UP; forthcoming October 2025).

ÒPersianate Words and Worlds.Ó Guest column. PMLA 139.2 (March 2024): 193-199. Introduction to ÒThe Persianate,Ó a ÒTheories and MethodologiesÓ forum.

ÒThe Persianate.Ó Editor and Coordinator. PMLA special feature ÒTheories and MethodologiesÓ forum, 139.2 (March 2024): 299-367. Contributors: Atefeh Akbari; Catherine Ambler; David Brophy; Manu Chander; Aria Fani; Nicole Ferreira; Supriya Gandhi; Alexander Jabbari; Anahid Nersessian; Kevin Schwartz. Respondent: Nile Green.

ÒÒThere is No GalleryÓ: Race and the Politics of Space at the Capitol Theater.Ó *Visual Culture* 21.2 (2023): 208-2022.

Response to a Letter to the Editor about ÒCultures of ArgumentÓ forum, written by Max Chapnick. PMLA 136.5 (October 2021): 809-812.

Response to a Letter to the Editor about ÒCultures of ArgumentÓ forum, written by Donald Lazere. PMLA 136.2 (March 2021): 322-323.

ÒCosmopolitan Secrets: The Racialist Affordances of Equivocation in Henry JamesÓs *The American*.Ó *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 66.4 (Winter 2020): 620-649.

ÒThe Rise of the Absurdly Demanding Job Ad,Ó *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 4, 2020).

ÒThe Loose Garments of Argument.Ó PMLA 135.5 (2020): 946-955. Introduction to ÒCultures of Argument,Ó a ÒTheories and MethodologiesÓ forum.

ÒCultures of Argument.Ó Editor and Coordinator. PMLA special feature ÒTheories and MethodologiesÓ forum, 135.5 (2020): 946-1020. Contributors: Amanda Anderson; Michael BŽrubŽ; Robert Chodat; Nijah Cunningham; Kathleen Fitzpatrick; Kyle Kaplan; Grace Lavc T\* [(Ch)-1(ouyCh)-1(ouyCh)-

INVITED TALKS

ÒHumiliation and Mourning: On Revolution and Martyrology in Iranian New Wave Cinema.Ó Invited talk sponsored by

Formal response to Peter Gordon, "Precarious Happiness: Adorno on Negativity and Normativity." Event sponsored by the Program in Critical Theory, University of California, Berkeley. March 16, 2021.

Formal response to performances by ~~John~~ Johnson and Albert Lee. Black Studies Roundtable, Universities of Nevada. February 26, 2021.

"Cuteness and Work: Gremlins and Late Capitalism." Invited talk sponsored by ETH Zürich. June 9, 2020.

## CONFERENCES and COLLOQUIA

"Reading for the Plotters in Surah Yusuf." Seminar presentation. Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. Zoom. May 2025.

"On Certainty and Doubt: Islam and the Speculative Turn in Black Feminist Film and Media Historiography." Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Chicago, IL. April 2025.

Invited speaker at the Modernist Studies Association annual conference. Roundtable for First Book Prize shortlisted authors. Chicago, IL. November 9, 2024.

Invited plenary speaker at the Modernist Studies Association annual conference. Roundtable on the topic of Passing (Rebecca Hall, 2021). Chicago, IL. November 10, 2024.

"Monarchy, Modernity, and Religion in Iranian New Wave Cinema." Invited roundtable participant. Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Chicago, IL. November 8, 2024.

"Qur'anic Signs and Critical Evidence." Princeton Islamic Studies Conference on the topic of "Muslim Debates and Contestations." Princeton University, April 5, 2024.

"Qur'anic Revelation and the Limits of Critical Argument." MLA. Philadelphia, PA. January 2024.

"Persian Modernism and the Problem of the Golestan Palace Library and Archive." Biannual Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Madison, WI. May, 2023.

"Knowledge and Faith in Film Criticism." Roundtable participant. Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Denver, CO. April 2023.

"Cultures of Argument and Collaboration." Invited roundtable participant. MLA. Washington, D.C., January 2022.

"Recite!": Reading Criticism and Theory Closely." Roundtable participant. Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP) Annual Conference. Zoom conference. October 2021.

"Nella Larsen/Garbo's Passing." Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. (Zoom.) March 21, 2020.

"Modernist Plot as Media History." Roundtable Presenter. Prose Fiction Session. MLA. (Zoom.) January 2021.

"Nella Larsen, Garbo's Face, and the Whispers of the Archive." "Audience Lost: Minority Women and Spectatorship" conference sponsored by Ghent University. Ghent, BE, November 2019.

"Cultures of Argument and Academic Precarity." Invited roundtable participant. Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Toronto, CA, October 2019.

"Scenes of Embarrassment in the Aristocratic Families of William Faulkner and Bahman Farmanara."

- Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Cornell University, May 2018.
- ÒTowards a Theory of Middlebrow Critique: From Jane Austen (Adaptations) to Busby Berkeley.Ó Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Toronto, March 2018.
- ÒWeÕre in the Money: On Busby BerkeleyÕs Auto-Seminar presentation. Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. University of California, Los Angeles, March 2018.
- ÒThe PublicÕs Optical Unconscious: The Cinematic Demise of the Rational Public Sphere in Theodore DreiserÕs American Tragedy and Fritz LangÕs.Ó Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Amsterdam, NL, August 2017.
- ÒThe Art of Asphyxiation: The Suffocating Beauty of Max OphulsÕ Narrative.Ó Annual International Conference on Narrative. Lexington, KY, March 2017.
- ÒWhat Does This Mean for Women?Ó Invited roundtable participant. Boston University Center for the Humanities, November 2016.
- ÒMonster Time: The Temporality of Spectacle in Tod BrowningÕs.Ó Film and History Annual Conference. Milwaukee, WI, October 2016.
- ÒÔtoo soon too soon too soonÕ: The Present Tense and the Problem of the Event in William FaulknerÕs I Lay Dying.Ó Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Hartford, CT, March 2016.
- ÒThe Compsons Were Here: Indexicality, the Actuality, and the Crisis of Meaning in The Sound and the Fury.Ó ÓLiterature and Crisis,Ó conference sponsored by Florida International University. Miami, FL, April 2015.

Organizer: Seminars / Panels/Symposia

Organizer, ÓAesthetic Approaches the QurÕan and IslamÓ Seminar at the Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association Zoom. May 2025.

Organizer, ÓPersianate Words and Worlds.Ó Symposium at Bryn Mawr College. Confirmed participants: Aria Fani, Samuel Hodgkinson, Supriya Gandhi, Atefeh Akbari, Alexander Jabbari, Catherine Ambler, Nicole Ferreira, Manu Chander, Anahid Nersessian, Guangtian Ha. Keynote speaker: Mana Kia. April 18-19, 2024.

Organizer, ÓCriticism and Theology.Ó Special Session at the MLA Conference. Philadelphia, January 2024.

Columbus, OH, November 2018.  
Co-organizer with Rebecca Kastleman, "Modernist Ensembles: Collaboration and Interdependence in Theater and Film." Seminar at the Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. UCLA, March 2018.

#### FELLOWSHIPS and HONORS

Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize, 2024 (Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel)  
National Humanities Center Fellowship, 2024-2025, Alternate  
Regional Scholar, Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2022-Present  
W.M. Keck Foundation Fellowship at the Huntington Library, Spring 2021  
Boston University Center for the Humanities, Dissertation Fellow, Spring 2019  
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Competition, 2018-19, Honorable Mention  
AAUW Dissertation Fellowship Competition, 2018-19, Alternate  
John W. Hunt Memorial Scholarship, William Faulkner Society, Summer 2017  
Summa Cum Laude, Course in French Civilization, Paris-Sorbonne University, June 2011

#### PUBLIC EVENTS:

Lecture on *The Scarlet Empress* (Josef von Sternberg, 1934). The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 30, 2023.  
Lecture on *Brainwashed* (Nina Menkes, 2022), The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 16, 2022.

#### MEDIA APPEARANCES:

Interview with Kaveh Akbar, New York Times bestselling author of *Martyr!*, on podcast "Novel Dialogue." October 24, 2024.  
Interview with Emma Wilson of *The History of Literature Podcast*, about *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. January 22, 2024.  
Interview with Kim Adams of humanities podcast, "High Theory," about *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. January 5, 2024.  
Interview with Shirin Jaafari of *PRX* and *GBH* "The World," about the death of Iranian author, Iraj Pezeshkzad. January 14, 2022.  
Interview with John Plotz of humanities podcast, "Recall This Book," about Iraj Pezeshkzad's novel *My Uncle Napoleon*. June 14, 2021.  
Interview with Kim Adams of humanities podcast, "High Theory," about Theodor Adorno's concept of the "autonomous work of art." August 30, 2020.

#### TEACHING

Bryn Mawr (2022-present)  
Iranian Cinema: Before and After the Revolution  
Aesthetic Approaches to the Qur'an (to be taught in 2025-6 AY)  
Form and Aesthetics Across Time and Media (Co-taught graduate seminar)  
Global Cinema  
Methods of Literary Study

Global Cinema (upper-division undergraduate/graduate)  
Horror: Text and Screen (upper-division undergraduate/graduate)  
A Star is Born: Race, Gender, and Celebrity (undergraduate)  
Introduction to Theory and Criticism (undergraduate)  
US American Literature, 1900 to the Present: The Aesthetics of Empire (undergraduate)  
The Modernist American Novel: Form, History, and Politics (graduate)

#### SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

National Endowment for the Humanities (Documentary Film & Media Arts), Peer-review Panelist, Spring 2024  
GS Prose Fiction Forum Executive Committee Representative at MLA Delegate Assembly, (January 2022-2025)  
Modernist Studies Association, Program Chair (October 2022-October 2024)  
External Honors Examiner, Swarthmore College, Spring 2023  
Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Program Committee Member, Fall 2022  
National Endowment for the Humanities (American Literature), Peer-review Panelist, Summer 2021  
Peer review: Feminist Media Histories; Film Quarterly; Modernism/modernity; Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism; Early Popular Visual Culture; Johns Hopkins University Press; MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States; Comparative Literature and Culture; College English

#### External Ph.D. Advising:

ETH Zürich, Dissertation, second reader: Sebastien Fanzun (Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft, defended 2022)

#### INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Search Committee, Assistant or Associate Professor position in African American and/or African Diasporic Literatures and Cultures, Bryn Mawr College, 2023-2024  
Flexner Lecture Series Planning Committee, Bryn Mawr College, 2022

Cinema and Media Studies Committee, University of Nevada, 2019-2022  
Literature Committee, University of Nevada, 2019-2022  
Visiting Speakers Committee, University of Nevada, 2020-2022  
Graduate Committee, University of Nevada, 2020-2022  
Search Committee, Teaching Assistant Professor position in Cinema and Media Studies, University of Nevada, 2019-2020

#### Ph.D. Advising, University of Nevada, Reno:

Dissertation committee, reading member: Lee Olsen (English, defended 2020)

#### LANGUAGES

Persian: fluency speaking and reading; Arabic: research reading; French: fluency speaking and reading; German: some speaking and reading; Italian: some speaking and reading.

#### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Modern Language Association; American Comparative Literature Association; Modernist Studies Association; Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Middle Eastern Studies Association; Association for the Study of Persianate Societies; Iranian Studies Association;

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Available upon request.