

PARDIS DABASHI
pdabashi@brynmawr.edu
Bryn Mawr College
Department of Literatures in English
Film Studies Program
Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and North African Studies Program
101 N. Merion Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA 19101-2899

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor of Literatures in English; affiliated with Film Studies Program; and Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and North African Studies Program (MECANA). Bryn Mawr College. 2022-Present.
Assistant Professor of English. University of Nevada, Reno. 2019-2022

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English, Boston University, 2019
B.A., English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, 2008
Certificate in Theater Training, l'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, 2009

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming November 2023)

It is widely understood that the modernist novel sought to escape what Virginia Woolf called the “tyranny” of plot. Yet even as twentieth-century writers pushed against the constraints of Victorian, plot-driven novels, plot kept its hold through the influence of another medium: cinema. Focusing on the novels of Nella Larsen, Djuna Barnes, and William Faulkner—writers known for their affinities for and connections to classical Hollywood—*Losing the Plot* links the moviegoing practices of these writers to the tensions between the formal properties of their novels and the characters in them. Even when they did not feature outright happy endings, classical Hollywood films often provided satisfying formal resolutions and promoted normative social and political values. Watching these films, modernist authors were reminded of what they were sacrificing—both formally and in the name of aesthetic experimentalism—by losing the plot.

Edited Volumes

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

Scholarly Journal Articles

“Persianate Worlds.” Forthcoming, *PMLA*, March 2024. Introduction to “The Persianate,” a “Theories and Methodologies” forum.

“The Persianate.” Editor and Coordinator. Special feature “Theories and Methodologies” forum (forthcoming, *PMLA*, March 2024). Contributors: Atefeh Akbari; Catherine Ambler; Atef Botros; David Brophy; Manu Chander; Aria Fani; Nicole Ferreira; Supriya Gandhi; Alexander Jabbari; Anahid Nersessian; Kevin Schwartz. Respondent: Nile Green.

- “‘There is No Gallery’: Race and the Politics of Space at the Capitol Theater.” Invited contribution to a special issue on Minority Women and Cinematic Spectatorship. *Early Popular Visual Culture* 21.2 (2023): 208-2022.
- “Cosmopolitan Secrets: The Racialist Affordances of Equivocation in Henry James’s *The American*.” *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies* 66.4 (Winter 2020): 620-649.
- “The Loose Garments of Argument.” *PMLA* 135.5 (2020): 946-955. Introduction to “Cultures of Argument,” a “Theories and Methodologies” forum.
- “Cultures of Argument.” Editor and Coordinator. *PMLA* special feature “Theories and Methodologies” section, 135.5 (2020): 946-1020. Contributors: Amanda Anderson; Michael Bérubé; Robert Chodat; Nijah Cunningham; Kathleen Fitzpatrick; Kyle Kaplan; Grace Lavery; Yoon Sun Lee; Erin Spampinato. Respondent: Heather Love.
- “Helga Crane’s Camera Obscura: Nella Larsen, Garbo’s Face, and the Modernist Longing for Plot.” Invited contribution to a special issue on “The Bildungsroman: Form and Transformations.” Guest-edited by John Frow, Melissa Hardie, and Vanessa Smith. *Textual Practice* 34.12 (2020): 2069-2089.
- “‘too soon too soon too soon’: Continuity, Blame, and the Limits of the Present in *As I Lay Dying*.” *Arizona Quarterly* 75.4 (Winter 2019): 107-130.
- “The Compsons Were Here: Indexicality, the Actuality, and the Crisis of Meaning in *The Sound and the Fury*,” *Modernism/modernity* 24.3 (September 2017): 527-548.
- “Literature, Lecoq and the ‘nouveau roman’.” *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq*, eds., Mark Evans and Rick Kemp (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016): 79-86.

Other Publications

- “Those Who Believe in the Unseen.” Forum response to Julie Beth Napolin, *The Fact of Resonance: Modernist Acoustics and Narrative Form* (New York: Fordham UP, 2020). *Syndicate* (forthcoming, 2023).
- Response to a Letter to the Editor about “Cultures of Argument” forum, written by Max Chapnick. *PMLA* 136.5 (October 2021): 809-812.
- Response to a Letter to the Editor about “Cultures of Argument” forum, written by Donald Lazere. *PMLA* 136.2 (March 2021): 322-323.
- “The Rise of the Absurdly Demanding Job Ad,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 4, 2020). Reprinted in July 24, 2020 hardcopy issue.
- “Dear Nella: What Did You See?” *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus 4.3 (November 2019).
- “Iraj Pezeshkzad’s *My Uncle Napoleon*,” B-sides Series, *Public Books* (July 4, 2019). Reprinted in *B-side Books: Essays on Forgotten Favorites*, ed. John Plotz (New York: Columbia UP, 2021). 174-178.
- “The Art of the High-Born: A Look Back at Bahman Farmanara’s *Prince Ehtejab*,” *Politics/Letters* #13 (September 2018).

Book Reviews

- Review of Octavio González, *Misfit Modernism: Queer Forms of Double Exile in the Twentieth-Century Novel*. In *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* (forthcoming December 2023).
- Review of Sarah Keller, *Anxious Cinephilia: Pleasure and Peril at the Movies*. In *Modernism/modernity* 29.4 (November 2022): 896-899.
- Review of Daniel Morgan, *The Lure of the Image: Epistemic Fantasies of the Moving Camera*. In *Film Quarterly* 76.1 (Fall 2022): 101-102.
- Review of Malcom Turvey, *Play Time: Jacques Tati and Comedic Modernism*. *Modernism/modernity* 28.3

(September 2021): 585-587.

Editorial Work

Co-editor, with Alix Beeston, of [Visualities](#), a forum discussing modernist visual cultures, on *Modernism/modernity* Print+.

INVITED TALKS

“Feuding Views: On the Epistemology of Critical Disagreement.” Invited talk and seminar sponsored by the Critical Speaker Series, UNC-Chapel Hill. October 11-12, 2023.

Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by the Center for Visual Culture, Bryn Mawr College. November 15, 2023.

Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by the Novel Theory Symposium, Harvard University. Respondent: Paul Saint-Amour. October 23, 2023.

Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by Film and Media Studies (FAMS) speaker series, Lafayette College. October 19, 2023.

Book Talk on *Losing the Plot: Film and Feeling in the Modern Novel*. Invited talk sponsored by Junior Faculty conveners, Bryn Mawr College. September 11, 2023.

“Nella Larsen and Greta Garbo: On (In)Consequence.” Invited talk sponsored by the Modernist and Contemporary Literatures Reading Group, University of Pennsylvania. November 18, 2022.

“Critical Argument and the Academic Job Market.” Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, University of California, Riverside. October 13, 2022.

“Critical Argument and the Academic Job Market.” Invited talk sponsored by the English Department, Fordham University. October 3, 2022.

“Watching Dietrich: On Silence, Restraint, and the Modernist Longing for Plot.” Invited talk sponsored by the Eugene Lang College of the Liberal arts, The New School. May 4, 2022.

Formal response to Rivky Mondal, “Tact in Henry James and Nella Larsen.” Event sponsored by the 20th/21st Century Workshop in the Department of English, University of Chicago. April 25, 2022.

“Knowledge, Belief, Conviction, Conversion: What is Aesthetic Criticism?” Invited talk sponsored by the Trans Area Literature Collective, Vanderbilt University. April 7, 2022.

“*Passing* and *Passing*: Visual Indeterminacy in the work of Nella Larsen and Rebecca Hall.” Invited talk sponsored by the Art History and Visual Culture Studies Forum, University of Nevada, Reno. February 2022.

Invited roundtable participant for “The State of Modernist Studies Now” event sponsored by the Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University. November 12, 2021.

“Evidence, Causality, and the Writing of Colonial Violence in Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American*.” Invited talk at the Brandeis Novel Symposium, Brandeis University. October 22, 2021.

“Cultures of Argument.” Invited talk sponsored by the Philosophy and Literature Initiative, Stanford University. April 8, 2021.

Formal response to Peter Gordon, “A 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 Javon 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

- “The Persian Modernist Novel and the Problem of the Golestān Palace Library and Archive.”
Biannual Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Madison, WI. May, 2023.
- “Knowledge and Belief 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.
- “Ambivalence and Autotheory.” Invited roundtable participant. Modernist Studies Association Annual
Conference. Chicago, IL, November 2021. Cancelled due to Covid.
- “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.”
The Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. Conference Theme: Faulkner’s Families.
Oxford, MS, July 2019.
- “The Art of the High-Born: Stillness and Denial in Bahman Farmanara’s *Prince Ehtejab*.” Annual
Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Seattle, March 2019.
- “A Case for the Modest (Young) Critic.” MLA. Chicago, IL, January 2019.
- “Nella Goes to the Movies: Classical Hollywood *Bildung*.” “Bildungsroman: Form and Transformations,”
international conference sponsored by the University of Sydney. Sydney, AU, November 2018.
- “The Ache of Departure: The End of the *Bildungsroman* and the Coming of Classical Film.”
Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Columbus, OH, November 2018.
- “Demolition of a Wall: Irreversibility and Plot in Early Film.” Invited roundtable participant. Biannual
Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Cornell University, May 2018.
- “Towards a Theory of Middlebrow Critique: From Jane Austen (Adaptations) to Busby Berkeley.”
Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Toronto, March 2018.
- “We’re in the Money: On Busby Berkeley’s Auteurism. Seminar presentation. Annual Conference of the
American Comparative Literature Association. University of California, Los Angeles, March
2018.
- “The Public’s Optical Unconscious: The Cinematic Demise of the Rational Public Sphere in Theodore
Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy* and Fritz Lang’s *M*.” Modernist Studies Association Annual
Conference. Amsterdam, NL, August 2017.
- “The Art of Asphyxiation: The Suffocating Beauty of Max Ophuls’ Narrative.” Annual International
Conference on Narrative. Lexington, KY, March 2017.
- “What Does This Mean for Women?” Invited roundtable participant. Boston University Center for the
Humanities, November 2016.
- “Monster Time: The Temporality of Spectacle in Tod Browning’s *Freaks*.” Film and History Annual
Conference. Milwaukee, WI, October 2016.
- “‘too soon too soon too soon’: The Present Tense and the Problem of the Event in William Faulkner’s *As
I Lay Dying*.” Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Hartford, CT, March

2016.

“The Compsos Were Here: Indexicality, the Actuality, and the Crisis of Meaning in *The Sound and the Fury*.” “Literature and Crisis,” conference sponsored by Florida International University. Miami, FL, April 2015.

Organizer: Seminars and Panels

Organizer, “Persian Novel/Iranian Archive.” Biannual Conference of the Society for Novel Studies. Madison, WI, May 2023.

Co-organizer with Kartik Nair and Nicholas Baer, “The State of Method in Cinema and Media Studies.” Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Denver, CO. April 2023.

Co-organizer with Alix Beeston. “The Modernist Scene.” Seminar at the Modernist Studies Association, “Between the Acts,” Zoom Event. April 11, 2022.

Co-leader with Laura Green (Northeastern), “Narrating Atrocity,” student seminar at the Brandeis Novel Symposium. Brandeis University. (Zoom.) October 22, 2021.

Co-organizer with Rivky Mondal, “Reciprocity and Criticism.” Roundtable at the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP) Annual Conference. Zoom conference. October 2021.

Co-organizer with Matthew Hart, “Modernism from the Standpoint of Labor.” Roundtable Special Event sponsored by the Modernist Studies Association. (Zoom.) November 10, 2020.

Co-organizer with Alix Beeston. “The Modernist Scene.” Seminar at the Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. Brooklyn, NY, October 2020. Postponed due to Covid-19. Rescheduled for MSA 2021.

Organizer, “Post-Critique and the Profession.” Special Session at the MLA Conference. Chicago, IL, January 2019.

Co-organizer with Alix Beeston, “The Pasts and Futures of Hollywood’s Golden Age: Reading Classical Cinema in Literary Modernism.” Panel at the Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference. 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

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:

Talk on *The Scarlet Empress* (Josef von Sternberg, 1934), The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 30, 2023.

Talk on *Brainwashed* (Nina Menkes, 2022), The Bryn Mawr Film Institute, November 16, 2022.

MEDIA APPEARANCES:

Interview with Shirin Jaafari of PRX’s and GBH’s “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 College, beginning Fall 2022-

Iranian Cinema (Fall 2023; cross-listed with Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and North African Studies; Comparative Literature; International Studies)

Literary Approaches to the Qur’an (Spring 2024; advanced seminar; cross-listed with Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and North African Studies; Comparative Literature; Religion)

Global Cinema (cross-listed with Comparative Literature)

Introduction to Film

Emily Balch Seminar, Topic: “Narratives of Passing”

A Star is Born: Race, Gender, and Celebrity (advanced seminar)

University of Nevada, 2019-2022

Global Cinema (Advanced undergraduate)

A Star is Born: Gender, Race, and Celebrity (Undergraduate)

Horror: Text and Screen (Undergraduate)

Text/Image/Form: Problems of Representation in Film and the Novel (Advanced undergraduate)

Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism (Undergraduate)

US American Literature, 1900 to the Present: The Aesthetics of Empire (Advanced undergraduate)

The Modernist American Novel (Graduate)

Boston University, 2017-2018

(Un)Telling Stories: Narrative and Spectacle in Film and the Novel (Undergraduate)

What Happens Next?: Plot Structure in the Novel (Undergraduate)

SUMMER WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

Cornell University: School of Criticism and Theory, 2018 Session

Dartmouth College: Futures of American Studies Institute, 2017 Session

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP and SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Visualities forum on *Modernism/modernity* Print+, co-editor with Alix Beeston, (2022-present)

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, Peer-review Panelist, Summer 2021

Topic Editor, *Literature*, Fall 2020—

Peer review: *Film Quarterly*; *College English*; *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*

External Ph.D. Advising:

Michigan State University, outside reader: Farzaneh Ebrahim Holasu (English department, expected 2025)

ETH Zürich, Dissertation, second reader: Sebastien Fanzum (Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft, defended

2022)

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

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, 2020)

LANGUAGES

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

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Available upon request.