



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

2119 Tawes Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.405.3809 TEL
www.english.umd.edu

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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing in application for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies at the University of Toronto advertised on your website. I received my Ph.D. in Comparative Literature with distinction in May 2022 from the University of Maryland, College Park, where I completed my dissertation, *The Development of Theater in Post-Revolutionary Iran from 1979 to 1997*, under the direction of Professor Fatemeh Keshavaz-Karamustafa. My research interests include English and Middle Eastern literature and theater, Postmodern British drama, theater historiography, cultural studies, and literary translation. I obtained my first Ph.D. in English from the University of Tehran, with my dissertation titled *Speculative and Analytic Development of the Philosophy of History in British Historical Drama from the 1890s to 1960s*. In collaboration with my colleague Dr. Ali-Reza Mirsajadi, I am co-editing an anthology of Iranian plays titled *The Dance of Mares and Other Plays from Post-Revolutionary Iran*. This translation collection will appear from Seagull Books London Limited, Chicago University Press.

My research at the University of Maryland, College Park studies Iranian dramatic literature and theatrical productions in connection to their multi-layered spatial and discursive contexts during the most transformative times (1979 - 1997) in the history of contemporary Iran. It demonstrates Iranian drama and theater's historical and aesthetic development by examining the ways these cultural productions explored new styles and stories to negotiate with and reflect on the political, social, and cultural demands of the 1980s and 1990s. Grounded in post-positivist theater historiography, my revisionist historical narrative yields new insights into theatrical subjects, currents, and contexts to find ways that apply to an analytical history of drama writing. My research, in other words, not only reflects the trajectory of Persian dramatic productions in the troubled time of revolution and war but also rethinks the methods of theatrical historiography concerning dramatic literature. I conducted extensive archival research on this under-documented theatrical era and combined my findings with numerous interviews and field notes to make visible the unacknowledged spaces and lost voices within the Middle Eastern theatre historiography. My exploration of more than 200 plays and 2000 documents, from magazine excerpts to bulletins, posters, photos, reviews, interviews, and speeches, is valuable for furthering important conversations about Iranian theater.

Such an interdisciplinary approach informs my research, and my educational career as a teacher. I completed my first Ph.D. in English at the University of Tehran, Iran. My dissertation on British drama captured a comparative study of philosophical and dramatic texts in analytic conversation with each other. The study purported to construe a pattern of development in the selected British historical dramas in comparison to selected philosophical texts on history. From my translations of *Introduction to Modern European Philosophy* (2008), *Nietzsche, an Introduction* (2009), *The After-Dinner Joke* (2016 & 2018), and *Fen: A Play* (2019) *Three More Sleepless Nights* (2022), to my published article and columns, I adopt a comparative approach that connects various fields and disciplines. My published article in Persian, "A Study of One-

Thousand-and-One-Nights Plays of Rezā Kamāl Based on Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory" (2019) studies the representation of *One Thousand- and-One-Nights* folk tales in the early Iranian drama adaptations. The study employs western adaptation theories to analyze the theatrical affordances in these adaptation texts. My research goes beyond the limits of Iranian and Middle Eastern theatre and encompasses a unique theorization of Western theatre where performance, sociology, literary theories, and historical narratives intersect with one another to bring forth interdisciplinary reading of Western plays to a wide range of readers. My article in Persian on *Oleanna*, a play by David Mamet, examines the behavioral patterns of performance in the context of sociological and performance theories. Likewise, my comparative study of two plays by Federico García Lorca, the Spanish playwright, and poet, interrogates the collective patterns of human behavior in rural communities.

My comparative approach informs my teaching methods as well. I came to the US after a decade of teaching English and comparative literature to undergraduate and graduate students at universities in Tehran. The wide range of subjects I taught (from *Survey of English Literature* and *Literary Criticism* to *English Drama*, *Persian Literature*, *World Literature*, and *Postmodern British Plays*) made me adept at employing a variety of texts as well as instructional plans based on comparative readings. I brought my pedagogical practices to my classrooms at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I taught *Global Literature and Social Change*, *World Literature by Women*, *Introduction to Persian Literature in Translation*, and *Academic Writing*. In literature classes, I acquaint my students with various literary genres and writers from different ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual backgrounds. Inclusion and diversity are two primary features of my syllabi. Coming from a country/region that is mis/underrepresented in media, I have a strong commitment to teaching texts that define the rich cultural and literary heritage outside of western canons and of the underrepresented regions/cultures. In these classes, we also examine the credibility of western critical measurements (from feminism to poststructuralism, and postmodernism) in evaluating non-western literary productions.

I have attached my curriculum vitae, a synopsis of my monograph and research and the contact information of two references. I would be happy to provide other materials upon request. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Nahid Ahmadian