August 8, 2022

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to recommend Niyosha Keyzad for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Under the supervision of Professor Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, Niyosha is completing an important dissertation on Iranian diasporan return narratives. This fellowship would provide Niyosha a relief from teaching and would thus enable her to complete her dissertation.

I have been a member of Niyosha’s PhD committee since 2021. I regard her dissertation, “Between Myth and Memory: Transformation, Healing and Adventure through Diasporic Pilgramage in Iranian Women’s Return Narratives” as a significant contribution to Iranian studies. She has coined the term *diasporic pilgrimage* and has identified this as a subgenre of Iranian literature through her analysis of four post-revolution diasporic Iranian return narratives, Gelareh Asayesh’s *Saffron Sky* (1999), Tara Bahrahmpour’s *To See and See Again* (1999), Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis II: The Story of a Return* (2004), and Parnaz Foroutan’s *Home is A Stranger*

(2020). In Niyosha’s study, *diasporic return* is defined as a round trip that begins and ends in diaspora, but

with a renewed connection with the ancestral land.

Niyosha completed nearly a full draft of the dissertation under her previous supervisor, and she is now revising it

under Professor Tavakoli-Targhi’s supervision. I am confident that with the assistance of the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Fellowship, Niyosha will produce a polished and publishable dissertation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Karina Vernon

Assistant Professor of English

University of Toronto Scarborough

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