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American Studies in Shiraz

This paper critically engages with the discipline of American Studies in the context of postrevolutionary Iran. On the one hand, the study of American culture from the Middle Eastern perspective is an inherently *comparative* project. On the other hand, given the neocolonial origins of American literary and cultural studies in mid twentieth – century Iran, and the postcolonial subversion of the practice in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, American Studies is in dire need of a new paradigm in contemporary Iran. This paper begins with a conversation with Brian T. Edwards’ essay “American Studies in Tehran” (2007), a self – reflective account of the author’s visiting professorship at Tehran University. Embracing Edwards’ transnational remapping of American Studies, and articulating the urgency of further decentering the discipline from the Iranian centre to its periphery, I will propose an *American Studies in Shiraz* whereby the transnational, comparative, and decolonial study of global American culture will lead to “rethinking comparativism” (as proposed by Spivak) in Iranian academia. This paper, therefore, concludes by reflecting on what the panel hosts describe as the “disciplinary adjustments [...] needed for the practice of Comparative Literature in the Iranian context.”