



## Analysis of Utilizing Indigenous and Regional Cultural Sources in Creative Literary Works: A case Study of “Ahl-e Hava” and “Tars-o Larz” by Gholamhossein Sa’edi

Hoda Arabzadeh<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Regional culture, encompassing the collective beliefs, thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and interactions among members of any indigenous community, is recognized as a rich source in the production of literary works. This common ground has led prominent writers such as Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Gholamhossein Sa'edi to delve into the study, research, and scrutiny of the culture prevalent in various regions of Iran, especially lesser-known areas. The author of this study aims to investigate how indigenous and regional cultural elements are employed in the production of literary works based on two works by Gholamhossein Sa'edi, "Ahle Hawa" and "Tars-o-Larz."

The methodology employed in this study is comparative-analytical. The results of the investigation indicate that Sa'edi, in writing "Tars-o-Larz," deliberately incorporates numerous instances and narrative elements such as time, place, characters, and plot twists derived from the collective indigenous and regional beliefs of the southern people. For instance, the concept of time in "Tars-o-Larz" aligns with non-calendar-based and mythological folk beliefs.

**Keywords:** folk culture, regional and indigenous culture, Gholamhossein Sa'edi, "Ahle Hawa", "Tars-o-Larz".

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor of Persian Language and Literature Department, University of Velayat, Iranshahr, Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran; . ORCID ID:0000-0001-5658-8390; Email: [hodaarabzadeh@yahoo.com](mailto:hodaarabzadeh@yahoo.com)



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*Extended Abstract***1. Introduction**

In recent decades, the concept of popular culture has attracted the attention of researchers and scholars in the field of humanities studies, becoming an arena for interdisciplinary discussions. Initially situated within the realm of sociology/anthropology as a sub-discipline of anthropology, popular culture gained increasing significance following the emergence of broader social discussions under the umbrella term "cultural anthropology". This expansion encompassed a wide range of topics from ancient myths to modern mass media. Thus, what is gathered under the label of folklore, including stories, wisdom, and beliefs, is considered part of popular culture. Additionally, topics such as mass media, which address the culture of the masses in the sense of the collective culture of the people, are recognized as another aspect of popular culture.

Furthermore, attention to the cultural elements and characteristics of different regions has opened another dimension in the studies related to popular culture. Literary works centered around this field are categorized as regional, rural, or indigenous literature. From the early years of the 1960s onwards, indigenous and regional cultures began to manifest in the narrative works of several writers. Mir Abedini attributed this approach to the writers' inclination to explore alternative ways of life in unfamiliar regions of the country. Writers such as Daneshvar, Chubak, Ahmad Mahmoud, Najaf Daryabandari, and Naser Taqva'i, during this period, selected remote and primarily southern regions as the geographical settings for their stories.

In the 1960s, due to the intellectual and cultural circumstances, there was a tendency towards studying and documenting the characteristics of life in remote regions. Some writers turned to writing social monographs as a result. Sa'edi after two experiences in this field, published "Ahl-e Hava" in 1966 under the auspices of the Institute of Social Studies and Research (Motale'at va tahghighat-e ejtema'i). "Ahl-e Hava" is a work in the field of popular culture studies, focusing on the general culture of the people in the southern regions of Iran. In a map provided at the beginning of the book, the cities along the coastline of the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf are specified.

By studying "Tars-o larz" one can discern why Sa'edi, instead of his familiar homeland, chooses the southern climate for writing "Ahl-e Hava". The specific geography of the southern coasts of Iran and the

strange beliefs and customs of the people in these regions convinced Sa'edi to choose it as the setting for his "Tars-o larz" stories.

The beliefs and convictions of the residents of the southern coasts are influenced by the region's nature, the sea, and migrants from Africa, India, and the Arabian Peninsula who, along with trade and commerce, have also contributed to the exchange of their beliefs and customs with the people of these regions. Among these beliefs is the belief in a strange force referred to as "wind". Sa'edi chooses the title "Ahl-e Hava" (People of the Wind) to refer to individuals scattered in various regions of the southern coasts of Iran, who have become related to the winds. The beliefs of "Ahl-e Hava" have led to the creation of two works by Sa'edi, one with the "Ahl-e-Hava" and the other "Tars-o-Larz".

#### Research Question:

Can a presumed connection be established between Sa'edi's creative works such as his collections of stories and his social monographs, and by identifying examples from these monographs as primary sources, be considered as the primary source of Sa'edi's creative works?

## 2. Literature Review

Sa'edi, as a prolific writer with a brilliant track record in various fields, has garnered significant attention from researchers.

2.1. A wealth of information regarding Sa'edi's life, activities, and critics' views is available in publications such as Dastgheib's (1977) critique of Ghulamhossein Sa'edi's works (naghd-e asar-e Ghulamhossein Sa'edi), Mojabi's (1999) biography of Ghulamhossein Sa'edi (shenakhtname Ghulamhossein Sa'edi), Saif al-Dini's (1999) Bakhtaknegar-e Qom and Shiri (2014) Hamsaye-e Hedayat.

2.1.1. Numerous studies have examined various aspects of Sa'edi's works, ranging from psychoanalytic analysis to sociological investigations in fields such as popular culture. Some of these works include: Mahnaz Babaei Nasrabad's (2011) thesis titled "Investigating Folk Culture in Ghulamhossein Sa'edi's Short Stories," Zahra Mohammadi's (2020) thesis on "Analyzing Ghulamhossein Sa'edi's "Tars-o-Larz" Story Collection from an Analytical Psychology Perspective," and Salehi Mazandarani and Nasrin Gabanchi's (2016) critique of the psychological aspects of beliefs and behaviors in Ghulamhossein Sa'edi's Azadaran-e Bayal Story Collection, where they delve into symbols, dreams, magic, and metamorphosis to analyze some of the common folk beliefs depicted in Sa'edi's works.

2.1.1.1. Furthermore, Alboughbish and Golbabaie (2018) in "Critique of Environmentalism in Ghulamhossein Sa'adi's Short Stories" They have approached the critique of environmentalism in Ghulamhossein Sa'adi's short stories with a relatively more recent perspective regarding the relationship between the environment and narrative in Sa'adi's "Afitgah" story. An example of sources that have addressed Saadi's monographs is Shahshahani (1992) in "The First monographs in Farsi2."

No particular and comparative study has been conducted on the analysis of the "Ahl-e Hava" and "Tars-o-Larz" phenomenon.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is comparative-analytical. Based on this approach, the author first delves into the definition of "Ahl-e Hava". Subsequently, considering the adaptable discussions in "Tars-o-Larz" and "Ahl-e Hava", the author introduces topics as the focal points of investigation in "Ahl-e Hava". Then, from this perspective, the author proceeds to examine the narrative of "Tars-o-Larz".

### 4. Results

In the present study, two works by Sa'edi, "Ahl-e Hava" and "Tars-o-Larz", were examined using a comparative-analytical approach. The author, at first, addresses various aspects of "Ahl-e Hava" such as different types of winds, afflictions, treatment methods, siyah (Black) as different roles and terminologies, and interpretations of the most important subjects related to "Tars-o-Larz". Then, examples such as the narrative space including geography, time, and characters like Salem Ahmad, Abduljawad's wife, and kid are highlighted to analyze and decipher some of the ambiguities in the narrative of "Tars-o-Larz" through comparison with "Ahl-e Hava". In the final analysis, the author summarizes their viewpoints on these matters, including the dominant atmosphere in the narrative, the relationship between characters and concepts such as the masses and identity, and the relationship between belief and social system with an active audience.

If we intend to provide an interpretation of the overall narrative space based on the first, third, and fourth stories of "Tars-o-Larz," we must refer to the ritualistic and mythological aspect of time in these stories. The temporal sequence in these three stories is based on daily times, without manifestation of historical time and appearance. It seems that Sa'edi has designed the time of "Tars-o-Larz" based on the quality of

time in the ritualistic beliefs of "Ahl-e Hava". The insistence and emphasis on starting each section of these stories with reference to daily times cannot be considered coincidental. Alongside the temporal characteristics in the narrative of "Tars-o-Larz," contemplation on the features of place and geography of the story also indicates the dominance of mythical place in the story. Abadi is an identityless, abandoned, and desolate place. Except for some areas with specific names such as Lake Ayub, Gurzeh, and Beit al-Muqaddas (Jerusalem), we are not faced with a name that indicates a specific geography; it's as if we are returning to a prehistoric period where names for places have not yet emerged. This method used by Sa'edi, namely ambiguity in the spatial and geographical situation, is contrary to the approach of most Iranian regionalist authors. This is because emphasizing the geography of the region by mentioning specific names is a common technique among these authors; however, Sa'edi has experimented with a different approach with a specific intention.

Natural elements such as the sea and the wind play an active role in evoking geographical settings, seemingly unlike passive and impersonal characters devoid of identity. In the narrative, these elements, embodied as dynamic characters, drive the storyline forward. The implementation of this technique appears to be resourceful, innovative, and creative on the part of the author. One hypothesis raised by the author when encountering the residents of Abadi is that the mass functions as a singular entity. In the narrative progression, the process of identity and individuality of characters does not materialize, and this mass appears as an anonymous population in the story. There is no diversity in opinions and beliefs; it seems as if all individuals are summarized as one entity without a distinct identity. This particularly holds true in the case of the Siyah.

Through affliction, Ahl-e Hava establish bonds and form a society. It seems that the beliefs are what bring the residents together; however, this bond undergoes transformation when it deviates from its usual order. Among Ahl-e Hava, healers play a crucial role in maintaining the bonds within the community, and when they skillfully identify the wind and effectively manage it, they contribute to establishing order and preserving connections based on specific beliefs and laws. However, in the case of "Tars-o-Larz," apparent healers such as Zahid and Isaac the Wise do not take preemptive action. Thus, considering the narrative progression, it can be hypothesized that the central belief that brought the residents together as a mass has now dissipated, consequently, the fate awaiting them is nothing but chaos and destruction.

Based on the author's experience of initially reading "Tars-o-Larz," and then studying "Ahl-e Hava", followed by a rereading of "Tars-o-Larz," it is concluded that if the audience reads these two works as complementary to each other, they become active readers who better comprehend the connections and relationships between the two works.

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