

***The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *Shahnameh* by Firdausi: A Sadraic Interpretation of Free Will and Determinism**

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### Recommended Citation

Hanif, Mohsen; and Tadayoni, Masoud. "*The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *Shahnameh* by Firdausi: A Sadraic Interpretation of Free Will and Determinism." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 24.2 (2022): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3764>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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**CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture**

ISSN 1481-4374 <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>>  
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**Volume 24 Issue 2 (March 2022) Article 6**

**Mohsen Hanif and Masoud Tadayoni,**

**"*The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *Shahnameh* by Firdausi: A Sadraic Interpretation of Free Will and Determinism"**

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol24/iss2/6>>

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Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 24.2 (2022)**

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol24/iss2/>>

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**Abstract:** Fate, doom, and free will have always proved to be controversial terms among philosophers. The chief problem is whether a deterministic power prescribes the destiny of creatures or they possess pure free will in shaping their destinies. Mulla Sadra, a 17th century Iranian philosopher, believes in a blending of determinism and free will which he develops in the terms of *Qaza* and *Qadar* respectively. He introduces a model of fate through which determinism and free will equally participate. Using the human soul as a model, Mulla Sadra points out that people meet their fate through several factors, one of which is free will. However, he concludes that free will and deterministic factors altogether stand within the circle of an omnipotent being. This paper presents a comparative study of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and Abul-Qasem Firdausi's *Shahnameh*. Both Indo-European mythologies are engaged with the clash of determinism and free will in the fabric of their plots. The authors of this paper argue that each mythology demonstrates a distinct system of free will/determinism dichotomy based on the yardstick of Mulla Sadra's theorem. To achieve this goal, the representative characters in both works are analyzed in the context of factors and actions the characters are involved with. The determinative factors, which define actions as free or deterministic, help bring a comparison between the systems of fate in the two works.

**Mohsen HANIF and Masoud TADAYONI**

## **The *Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *Shahnameh* by Firdausi: A Sadraic Interpretation of Free Will and Determinism**

### **1. Introduction**

Although the literary types of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and Abul-Qasem Firdausi's *Shahnameh* are technically disparate, both heroic works represent comparable chains of events in which confusing admixture of will and external causes determine destinies of characters. Tolkien's legendarium, with respect to literary typology, is a collection of mythopoeic myths revised several times during its author's lifetime; on the other hand, the Iranian oral tales, which comprise a body of Persian mythology, are the chief materials whereby Firdausi compiled his masterpiece in late 10th century. Despite all these distinctions, the first perceptible feature which is common to both works is the concept of national epic. Firdausi and Tolkien establish national mythologies of Indo-European origin that begin with a divine creation and continue to final historical points. The legendary worlds are represented through supernatural elements, heroic deeds, and fairy romances. More importantly, a subtle deterministic theme runs through the storylines of both mythic collections. *Shahnameh* portrays a macrocosmic world in which the ancient Persian schools of thought as well as the Islamic beliefs of the era blend into each other. Although *Shahnameh* presents distinctive exegesis of creation, the main settings of the tales are no more than Iran and a few neighboring lands such as Turan and China.

This nationalist sentiment in the center of *Shahnameh* that distinguishes it (Hanif and Rezaei 49). Tolkien, however, creates a secondary world on the basis of a Romantic system of rules. Chris Seaman admits "that Tolkien is in fundamental agreement with the Romantic tradition as to the general character of association and its subsidiary status within the artistic process as a whole" (78). Although Tolkien's secondary world is not explicitly instituted in actual England, he proclaims his purpose as "to restore to the English an epic tradition and present them with a mythology of their own" (*Letters* 231). Moreover, he asserts that "the theatre of my tale is this earth, the one in which we now live, but the historical period is imaginary" (239). An amalgam of Norse, Greek, and Biblical elements brings about a cultural reflection that links to the internal imagination of the author.

Despite Tolkien's subjective depiction of the world, he seeks a philosophical truthfulness to the world. In a letter to the publisher, Milton Waldman, Tolkien suggests that "myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world" (*Letters* 144). Apart from the reflective moral truths of the works, there cannot be found any explicit layout of systematic fate truths throughout the works. Even though streaks of a strong belief in determinism are evident in the tales, free will plays a pivotal role in the choices made by characters, and this poses a paradox which has engaged scholars such as Steven Mark Deyo, Verlyn Flieger, and Masoumeh Karimian. In other words, ignoring systems of fate in both works has led to the dispersion of ideas over the issue of free will/determinism dichotomy.

Steven Mark Deyo asserts that in Tolkien's legendarium, all free folks "stand united to serve the wyrd of Ilúvatar" and so their will is subordinate to the will of the Omnipotent (62). Verlyn Flieger, in contrast, contends that Tolkien concedes each part of the fate/free will dichotomy "to a different group existing in the same world in the same time" (153). According to her, fate and free will are the determiners of the destinies of Elves and Men, respectively. The first problem of this claim is that Flieger takes determinism for fate. An autonomous figure is able to construct his fate through his will; in addition, there appear in stories examples of both races that deal with free will and determinism equally; unsurprisingly, Flieger concludes that a paradoxical conception of fate is beheld in several tales, e.g., the tale of Túrin Turambar (168-170). Also, to justify the contradiction within the pandects of Tolkien's universe, Richard J. Whitt introduces three types of fate: fate as the sense of death, fate as the result of one's free actions, and independent fate (120-122). He points out that "on many occasions, fate and doom appear to be operating as agents independent of any other power" throughout Tolkien's mythology (120). He ascribes a sort of Germanic essence to the independent fate by insisting on the Norse inspirational background of the mythology (118). Whitt's claim that fate acts volitionally in some particular cases – as in the tragic death of Beleg – violates the presence of a coherent philosophical system; moreover, along with previous scholars, Whitt ignores the semantic distinction between fate and determinism.

For a better understanding of the reflective fatalism in *Shahnameh*, as a primary mythology, a brief glance at pre-Islamic Persian culture is necessary. Zoroastrian hymns of the Gathas posit the potency of pure free will in ancient Iran: "of these two spirits he chose who is evil, the worst things working; But

Right chose the spirit bounteous, clothing-on the firm stones of heaven, (Choosing) those who content Ahura with deeds essentially pure" (Mills 44). In the middle of the Parthian period – or from the 1st century C.E. onwards – and later, during the Sassanid dynasty (224 C.E.-651 C.E.), the neoteric cult of Zurvanism permeated the social strata of Persian folk. The adherents of this branch of Zoroastrianism believe in Zurvan, God of fate, and "the ultimate source of both good and evil, the Father of the brothers Ohrmazd and Ahriman" (Hinnells 71). In view of that, it is argued that the Islamic beliefs reflected in Firdausi's magnum opus and the period in which he composed *Shahnameh* mostly conform to the Zurvanistic view of fate rather than the early Zoroastrianism – the believers of pure will. Masoumeh Karimian argues that "Firdausi draws on Zurvanism in his depiction of determinism and fatalism" (111). Zahra Farajnezhad Farhang and Mohammad Bazargan hold an identical claim in attaching the same viewpoint to the deterministic quality of *Shahnameh* (154). In view of this, a same confusion of fate and determinism as discussed in the earlier scholarship on *The Silmarillion* is noticeable in the studies on *Shahnameh*. Therefore, to demystify the different fundamental systems of free will/determinism dichotomy in both mythologies, a philosophical yardstick should be utilized.

Sadr ad-Din Shirazi, 17th century Iranian philosopher, widely known as Mulla Sadra, introduces a theory of fate which is the fruit of his panentheistic viewpoint towards the universe. Having rejected the viewpoints of determinists and followers of pure free will, Mulla Sadra carefully develops a theory of "Amr beyn al-Amrein." The theory of "Amr beyn al-Amrein" refutes the extremist views of free will/determinism dichotomy by arguing that a crossbred of determinism and free will forms the destinies of individuals (Shirazi, *Asfar* 6:323). To support his view, Mulla Sadra takes *Nafs* (the human soul) as a paradigm in which the source of actions is considered to be both *Nafs* and the five senses (*Asfar* 6:326). For instance, if an eye sees a landscape, the operator of the action is simultaneously the eye (the sense) and the harmonized soul (*Nafs*) in which the will of the eye is exercised. Mulla Sadra's paradigm embraces the polar free will/determinism dichotomy, and lets the notions of "justice" and "unity of Divine Actions" coexist. The former posits that each willful action of an individual is subject to atonement; the latter holds that although human beings are responsible for their actions, the actions originate from the Self-existent Omnipotent who does not compel individuals but submits to their will (even if evil) and in this way institutes a just order (Shirazi, *Asfar* 6:320). Therefore, deterministic factors along with free will partake in causing actions and conducts.

In Mulla Sadra's view of the cause and effect relationship, each action is the effect of a perfect cause; Mulla Sadra defines perfect cause as "a cause which is independent of other causes" (*Asfar* 2:161); modifying the Aristotelian four causes, Mulla Sadra defines all types of matter, form, agent, and purpose as imperfect causes that altogether constitute the perfect cause of an occurrence (*Asfar* 2:161). Considering the tragedy of Oedipus Rex, to illustrate the problem, if Oedipus had not heard of his doom from a carouser, he would not have left his adopted family and consequently would not have fallen to his fatal doom. The confrontation between Oedipus and the carouser acts as an imperfect cause whereby his tragic doom becomes true. Although this confrontation is not a sufficient reason of the doom, it surely is a necessary cause which is singly imperfect, and requires other causes to reach the effect. Figuratively speaking, perfect cause is the gunpowder which needs all of its ingredients (imperfect causes) to explode. Whether Oedipus' will takes part in his fate is a challenging question among scholars. Advocates of Ash'arism suppose that causes-and-effects do not concur with the human will. Unlike Ash'arites, Mulla Sadra considers the role of free will as significant as other causes. On the other hand, in contrast to Mu'tazilites, free will, to Mulla Sadra, does not monopolize imperfect causes (*Asfar* 6:318). Fate, to Mulla Sadra, is the perfect cause of an occurrence that emerges from imperfect causes of either human basis or divine nature.

Imperfect causes surrounding the befalling actions are, then, divided into two categories of internal and external. While external causes are beyond the knowledge of mankind, internal causes emanate from human free will. Since Mulla Sadra presumes determinism and free will as the two cornerstones of a system of fate, imperfect causes of both types are factors whereby the mythologies reveal their systematic frameworks of free will/determinism dichotomy. In this article, we argue that both mythological frameworks, namely, *The Silmarillion* and *Shahnameh*, demonstrate coherent but distinctive systems of fate in light of Mulla Sadra's theory of the free will/determinism dichotomy. Both systems exhibit a fusion of free will and determinism in their infrastructures. To prove this, the representative characters of pertinently-selected tales in both works are dissected in the context of actions and consequences, i.e., cause-and-effect relationships and intrinsic and extrinsic imperfect causes – as factors of free will and determinism – will be scrutinized.

## **2. Discussion**

### **2.1 The System of Fate in *Shahnameh***

In the beginning of the tale of "Rostam and Sohrab," the narrator attempts to establish a just fundament for the doom represented in the Persian epic world: "Where is the evil if we all must die? / Why clamour and appeal from what is right?" (Firdausi 2:119). The supposition of justice is futile, unless characters carry the burden of responsibility in the context of their free will. Concerning the responsibility of mankind and its connection to free will in Mulla Sadra's theosophy, Batool Taherian Dehkordi *et al* say: "The Omnipotent creator is the cause of all effects, and man as a created effect is posterior to its cause. This creature (man) is created based on his free will, hence, according to the mastery of Self-existent and the legal guidance (*hidayat-e tashri'i*), the Omnipotent is the rightful judge for mankind's actions and responsibility is indispensable in this issue" (91). Legal guidance implies a set of religious and moral rules that lead mankind towards felicity. Sohrab's deviation from such rules makes him a potential case for an atonement.

Mulla Sadra acknowledges the capability of the Omnipotent "to reveal to the creatures in a single instant the final outcome of all the particular details of their actions, the sum total of the results of their various good and bad acts" (*Throne* 208). The possibility of such atonement relies on existence of an almighty power such as the aforementioned Zurvan – or as Firdausi calls it Yazdan – in *Shahnameh*. Nonetheless, the incorporation of responsibility in the notion of "justice" is not necessarily bound to the relativity of the Omnipotent and the creatures, but to the interaction of individuals with each other. Although Mulla Sadra ascertains the just restitution of actions, cruelties of third persons are not always thwarted by God in the world. For God's intervention violates the role of coherent free will. In Ibrahim Kalin's words, "Sadra needs to articulate such an internal coherence because he wants not only to show God's inherent wisdom and infinite mercy but also to relativize all coercion and corruption" (190). Then, dissident conducts of third persons as imperfect causes play an authoritative role in shifting one's path of fate.

Firdausi begins the narrative of Sohrab by pointing that in search for his lost horse, Rostam is haphazardly taken to the land of Samangan (2:121-122). As a matter of fact, Rostam has no knowledge of what is about to happen as a result of his unsought trip: encountering Tahmineh, the princess of Samangan; their expedient matrimony and birth of Sohrab; and finally the breakaway between the father and the son. Obviously, these are prerequisites of a tragic fate, while they are not conclusive. Two decisions, however, change the ordinary line of Sohrab's life. First, overconfident as a result of being Rostam's son, he arrogantly craves for a victorious hegemony over the Iranian armies (Firdausi 2:129); Sohrab reveals his tragic flaw and takes the first step to his downfall. Secondly, the ambitious will of Afrasiab, the king of Turan, prevents Sohrab from recognizing his father in the battlefield: "The father must not recognise his son / By any ties of instinct, love, or race" (Firdausi 2:129).

Whereas Afrasiab's plot reflects the will of a third person, it is an imperfect factor as to Sohrab's fate, and plays a significant role in it. If the entire aforementioned prerequisites along with the ambitious will of the hero became true, it would not certainly lead to the tragic destiny of Sohrab without the dire deception of the king. Thus, the realm of decision-makings and free will is not confined to pure actions of a falling protagonist; but it encircles interposing desires of all free characters.

Accordingly, we see that the chief burden of responsibility is on Sohrab himself and the cunning king. Be that as it may, "Rostam and Sohrab" is not the sole archetype of a falling fate in *Shahnameh*. The tale of "Rostam and Esfandiar" represents similar course of events. A passion for dominion propels Esfandiar to stand against the hero of the people, Rostam. Gashtasp – the king of Iran and father to Esfandiar – lures Esfandiar to his abyss (Firdausi 5:170-175). Although scholars suggest diverse causes for this fate, e.g., religious conflicts between Rostam and Gashtasp, imperfect causes do not take precedence over the typical will of individuals (Ghazanfari 156). One is easily able to check the conformity of the protagonists in the two tales in this way: first, the protagonist willingly desires a promotion in order. Second, a plot much the same as in classical tragedies, is forced upon the hero by the third persons. These two prevalent motifs are enough to catch the sense of what Firdausi has in mind as a justice-created world.

Apart from the characters' intentions, there occur in both stories several singular incidents that are hardly connected to the will of individuals. In the story of "Rostam and Sohrab," Rostam's horse, Rakhsh, is lost beyond and over the borders of the enemy, and as discussed, this leads to the perfect cause. Similarly in "Rostam and Esfandiar," Seemorgh – the legendary bird – reveals to Rostam that Esfandiar's eyes are vulnerable and his body is not impregnable (Firdausi 5:235-240). The point is that Seemorgh does not regularly reveal itself to characters and would only help Zal, Rostam's father, in very rare circumstances. Mostafa Rahimi claims that such coincidences are of accidental nature, and "hold a place out of human's comprehension" (193). At the initial lines of "Rostam and Sohrab," Firdausi describes the unknown conditions as inextricable mysteries (2:119). Mohammad-Ali Eslami Nodooshan also states that in the tale of "Rostam and Sohrab," "all puppets of the fate either from Iran or Turan, knowingly or

unknowingly, collaborate to create this tragedy" (350). Although justification of these cases are beyond a discursive mind, they cannot be easily rendered based on accidentalism.

In similar situations of conundrum, imputing a deterministic characteristic to the plotline is negligence of the notion of "justice." Concerning the essential facets of fate – or a more elucidated perception of free will and determinism – Islamic theosophists have elaborated on two distinguished terms of *Qaza* and *Qadar*. Mulla Sadra defines *Qaza* as an immutable quintessence whereby creatures are subject to the will of God, and it is not subordinated to place and time (*Asfar* 6:242). For instance, when Gashtasp solicits his astrologer's idea as for his son's future, he is making a shortcut to see *Qaza*. On the other hand, Mulla Sadra describes *Qadar* as: "Inscription of partial cognizable aspects of creatures in the world of ideas according to personal & external matters which due to causes and reasons occur and require specific time and place, or in other words happen in the context of phenomenal system of the universe" (*Asfar* 6:242). Since the Omnipotent entails actions of mankind, *Qadar* justifies the concepts of "unity of Divine Actions" and "justice." While *Qadar* records actions through decision-makings, *Qaza* is a tablet on which the rules of the world beyond the boundaries of space and time are scripted. Thus, free choices of the heroes, and free tricks of third persons are all examples of *Qadar*. Indecipherable events could be considered padlocks of *Qaza* to which actions act as keys. Due to this fact, singular occurrences cannot be symptoms of pure determinism, but the igniting points of volitions by which actions come to pass.

The appearance of fate in elements of *Qaza* and *Qadar* is not limited exclusively to tragic fates. The Over-emphasis of the tragic results of *Qaza* and *Qadar* as manifestations of deterministic fates may prevent us from acknowledging the auspicious aspects of *Qaza* and *Qadar*. For instance, in the story of "Zal and Rudabeh," the two mentioned tools of *Qadar* cooperate to attain a fate different from "Rostam and Sohrab." First, Zal leaves his hometown to procure a game with his kinsmen (Firdausi 1:256). Similar to Rostam, an indecipherable force drives him to the whereabouts of Kabul where he meets the city's king, Mehrab; the starting sparkle of *Qaza* is done, and rest of the scenario is advanced through conscious will of characters. Mutual love of Zal and Mehrab's daughter, Rudabeh, leads to their tryst. Although they are from opposing nationalities, political status, and family history, their willing desire for each other is unquenchable. Moreover, the consequence of third persons' will is not against them.

Although Manuchehr and Mehrab – who are the monarchs of Iran and Kabul, respectively – oppose the marriage, the lovers have the support of other characters; upon the fathomless conflict between the lovers' backgrounds, Sam (Zal's father) is initially pessimistic about the marriage and says: "Like fire and water, are opposed completely? / Such surely on the Judgment Day will be / The warfare of Zahhak and Faridun" (Firdausi 1:278). Since the lineage of Mehrab goes back to Zahhak – who was the demonic invader of Iran for ages – Sam is afraid of a likely evil outcome in this affair. Subsequently, Sam calls for the aid of astrologers, and he is told that the ending is not benign (Firdausi 1:278-280). Once more a porthole is opened to a character to see the features of *Qaza* beyond time. Unlike Gashtasp, Sam does not abuse his timeless knowledge to plot against his son. Eventually, volitions functioning as imperfect causes bring the lovers relief from the fear of a romantic tragedy.

The habit of seeing *Qaza* through forecasters is an inseparable characteristic of Persian myths. Hussein Mansourian and Leyla Tavakolrad believe that the iteration of soothsaying in tales suggests "the interposition of stars in fates of men according to God's volition" (152). The idea of interposition is at first in conflict with Firdausi's conception of "justice" in the commencement of "Rostam and Sohrab." If the execution of actions are purely interposed by God, the stature of an individual is reduced to a puppet. Secondly, Mulla Sadra's definition of *Qaza* connotes that while the Omnipotent is aware of the two infinite bounds of time, he does not compel creatures to accord with his precognition; *Qaza* is not the happening of matters, but the knowledge of possibilities; or simply put, the Omnipotent knows the exact details of actions and results, and this knowledge is kept in *Qaza*. However, individuals themselves adapt *Qaza* to *Qadar*, and bring about their overlap. So, fortunetelling is only a metaphorical access to the treasury of *Qaza*. In the cosmology of *Shahnameh*, overlapping of *Qaza* and *Qadar* is done through character's actions as expounded by Mulla Sadra.

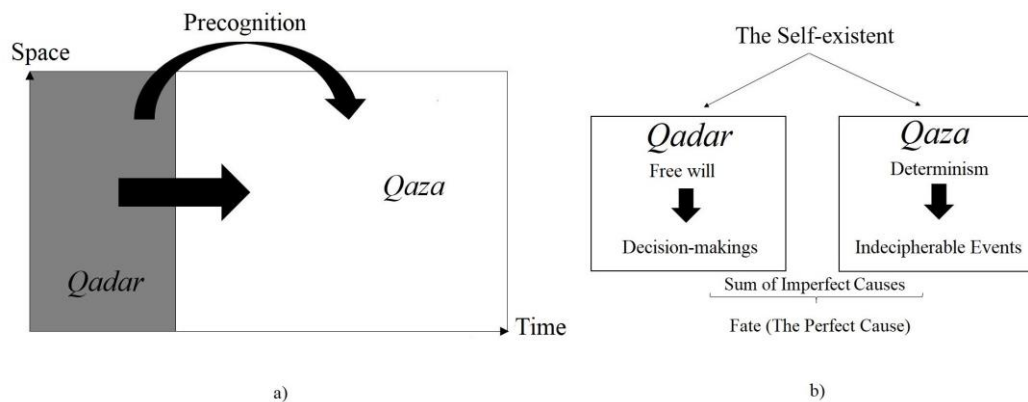


Figure 1: a) Coordination of *Qaza* and *Qadar* in the cosmology of *Shahnameh*. *Qadar* is scripted on the tablet of *Qaza* through time and space. The two-dimensional scale of space-time is a simple tool of representing the created universe. b) The system of fate in *Shahnameh* based on Mulla Sadra's theory. Elements of *Qaza* and *Qadar* cooperate in a development of one's fate. Both *Qaza* and *Qadar* originate from the Self-existent and directly influence creatures.

## 2.2 The System of Fate in *The Silmarillion*

In Tolkien's legendarium, roots of fundamental notions trace back to his internal conception of an ideal universe wherein entities are optimally arranged in relation to one another. To achieve a bright sense of "justice" in Tolkien's mythology, however, an explanation as to the responsibility of characters in his fictional world is needed. In his notes on W. H. Auden's review of *The Lord of the Rings*, and elaborating on the concept of personal responsibility in his tales, Tolkien writes:

A man is both a seed and in some degree also a gardener, for good or ill. I am impressed by the degree in which the development of "character" can be a product of conscious intention, the will to modify innate tendencies in desired directions; in some cases the change can be great and permanent. I have known one or two men and women who could be described as "self-made" in this respect with at least as much partial truth as "self-made" can be applied to those whose affluence or position can be said to have been achieved largely by their own will and efforts with little or no help from inherited wealth or social position. (*Letters* 240)

Accordingly, the consequences of actions in *The Silmarillion* – either tragic or not – could be linked with decision-making.

The story "Of Beren and Lúthien" presents a non-tragic type of process in which factors of fate are much the same in "Zal and Rudabeh." Wandering along the borders of Doriath, Beren astonishingly enters the forest, and meets Lúthien, daughter of the king (Tolkien, *Silm* 164). The indecipherable point here is that he easily treads in the forest of Doriath to which no one was allowed to regularly pass the Girdle; the magical curse which was put on the surroundings of the forest by Melian the queen to prevent adversaries from entering it. He shares his wonder with Thingol, the king, as he says, "My fate O King, led me hither, through perils such few even of the Elves would dare" (Tolkien, *Silm* 166). Beren uses the word, fate, for he is unable to decipher the enigma of his coming to Doriath. Indecipherable instances recur through the progress of the plot; leaving their kinsmen, Celegorm and Curufin amazingly see Beren and Lúthien in their path (Tolkien, *Silm* 177). Their confrontation and strife endow Beren with a dagger which becomes beneficial to him in future affairs. For the dagger assists Beren in taking out a silmaril from Morgoth's crown. When he is tempted to take out the second one, the dagger surprisingly breaks apart and transforms the storyline. In a richer level than *Shahnameh*, indecipherable events, acting as imperfect causes, passively transform the plot.

To apprehend the active aspect of transformation in plot towards one's upcoming fate, surveying decision-making process in aforesaid cases is necessary. When Beren is entangled in Lúthien's love, Thingol strikes a bargain with Beren. In exchange for Thingol's daughter, Beren accepts to abduct one of the Silmarils from Morgoth's den, though he knows that there could be no return (Tolkien, *Silm* 168). Whereas an indecipherable incident – or as he calls it fate – drives Beren to a new way, it is his free choices which knead the paste of his life. The role of free will is illuminated when Beren is unsure whether he should let Lúthien accompany him or not. Huan exhorts him: "you can turn from your fate and lead her into exile, seeking peace in vain while your life lasts" (179). Turning from the fate, therefore, is

remarked as a possibility among choices. As Keith W. Jensen points out, "without the freedom of choice, and the ability to make good choices, the doom of Beren and Lúthien would have been quite different" (109). The lovers are so resolute in their love that no third person is able to stop them. With this being the case, singular events are no more than padlocks of fates. Or riddles that are improvised by a divine author of *Qaza* before the creation of time, and are solved by *Qadar* in specific points of time. In this level of survey, elements of *Qaza* and *Qadar* are identical to those of *Shahnameh*.

The tragedy represented in the chapter, "Of Túrin Turambar," however, is where the system of fate in Tolkien's cosmology differs from Firdausi's. Similar to "Of Beren and Lúthien", the story of Túrin can be potentially studied in the context of imperfect causes. In a similar fashion, the characters demonstrate free will in their interactions with each other. In order to save her son, Morwen volitionally sends Túrin to Doriath and this is a turning point in his life (Tolkien, *Silm* 198). When Túrin is interrogated for the death of Saeros, he declines to plea the king for mercy (200); even when the king sends Beleg to return him peacefully to Doriath, he rejects the offer out of pride (201). Jesse Mitchel asserts that Túrin's "adoption of predatory criminality and aimless aggression is an expression of rebellion against the forces of Good" (93). Although Túrin is a sworn enemy of Morgoth, his rebellious conducts prevents him from taking an effective action against Morgoth's plans. For instance, later becoming the chief counsellor of Orodreth, the king of Nargothrond, he proposes constructing a bridge over the river. The bridge reveals the city to the enemy troops, and causes subsequent miseries (Tolkien, *Silm* 211). Even in the cases of Túrin's marriage to his sister, and murdering Beleg which are done in ignorance, free will – or *Qadar* as epitomizes free will – establishes the fate.

In contrast to the tragedies of *Shahnameh*, the tale of Túrin Turambar introduces unique indecipherable events. They were named indecipherable for there could be found no explicit explanation for the justification of such events. However, the epithet becomes oxymoronic when the story of Túrin is set forth. When Beleg releases Túrin from the captivity of a host of Orcs, Túrin awakes in shock, and kills Beleg out of consternation (Tolkien, *Silm* 208). Besides his sudden rage, signs of a mysterious curse appear in this sorrowful deed. It seems that the cursed sword of Eöl, steers its bearer towards certain directions. For when Beleg attempts to unchain Túrin, the sword pricks Túrin's body, and leaves him awestricken. Melian's warning that "there is malice in this sword" unfolds the existence of a curse (202). Anglachel does not logically possess a will of its own, but carries a curse that shrouds Túrin's free will in darkness. Glaurung acts likewise when he puts a spell on Túrin: "As thralls thy mother and thy sister live in Dor-lómin, in misery and want. Thou arrayed as a prince, but they go in rags; and for thee they yearn, but thou carest not for that. Glad may thy father be to learn that he hath such a son; as learns he shall" (213). Glaurung revolutionizes Túrin's decision-makings, the same as Anglachel did when Beleg was killed. Since no account of free will is given to us for dragons' actions, likely an external malediction rather than a third person's deceit ensnares Túrin in this case.

The evidence regarding the curse of Túrin is available in the conversation between Húrin and Morgoth expressed in the extended version of the tale, *Narn i Chîn Húrin*. Morgoth says that "the shadow of my thought shall lie upon them wherever they go, and my hate shall pursue them to the ends of the world" (Tolkien, *Children* 63). Accordingly, Morgoth's claim connotes that an ominous *Qaza* overshadows Túrin's *Qadar*; and whatever step he takes, his fall is inevitable. As moaning dirge of Nienor over her brother's dead body implies the same when she describes Túrin, "master of doom by doom mastered" (Tolkien, *Silm* 223). Indecipherable turns into decipherable when the reason beyond all the miseries is revealed to be a curse. Beren knows that a force has influenced his decision-makings but is not sure of its source. Túrin, on the other hand, is not doubtful of Morgoth's curse but tries to evade it in vain. Jensen concludes that the difference between fate-related outcomes of Beren and Túrin depends on "the idea of hope" (110). However, a more precise observation would be that different fates arise from distinctions in types of *Qaza* applied to characters. While Beren walks in a just causality, Túrin is entangled in an unjust *Qaza*. For Beren's heroic martyrdom is the cost of a glorious reward. He is killed to humiliate Morgoth, and his renowned fame gives a huge uplift to the forces of Good.

In contrast, Túrin's suicide is not inspiring at all. His death is beyond the pattern of tragic hubris. He and his family are victims of injustice. It might be credible that in Tolkien's apocalyptic conception of the Final Battle, Túrin is resurrected to kill Morgoth and retaliate the unjust cruelty of Morgoth's curse (Tolkien, *Shaping* 73). It is unlikely of a just Omnipotent to let Túrin walk in darkness whereas Beren victoriously deal with the same enemy. Plurality of *Qaza* in Tolkien's legendarium is not exclusive to the mentioned tales. Fëanor's lust for the Silmarils brings him and his kindred a downfall by far severer than Túrin's plague. For the great Valar altogether declare the cursed *Qaza* applied to Fëanor's fate. Mandos describes this *Qaza* when he says, "to evil end shall all things turn that they begin well" (Tolkien, *Silm* 88). Although this curse is attributed to the Valar, it is Morgoth who causes the calamitous *Qaza* upon Fëanor's family. In all examples, a discrete *Qaza* is originated from extraterrestrial power of a Vala. In



the first chapter of *The Silmarillion*, the Valar – which among other primary angelic spirits were called the Ainur – cooperate in the timeless symphony of Eru (Ilúvatar). Tolkien describes the Ainur as executants “whose function is to exercise delegated authority in their spheres (of rule and government, not creation, making or re-making)” (*Letters* 146).

Although the Ainur were not able to create, they could freely put their personal cognition of order in the symphony. These rules do indeed govern the fatal development of the children of Ilúvatar. That is, indecipherable codes, curses, and enigmas are incarnations of the musical notes played by the Ainur. The dissonance of Melkor is materially executed when Húrin’s family is stuck in the curse; and the harmony of Manwë when Beren amazingly succeeds. In the case of Fëanor and his family, Fëanor is not cursed by the Valar but only prohibited from entering the blissful harmony of them – or *Qaza* of the Valar. Each of the Ainur practices a distinguished sub *Qaza* through their personal notes in the symphony; later creatures are, thus, not directly jointed to *Qaza* of the Self-existent Omnipotent, but a level intercepts them. However, the Ainur do not independently impose their rules. Ilúvatar proclaims that “no theme may be played that has not its uttermost in me” (Tolkien, *Silm* 17). The Music of the Ainur does not surpass the anatomy of Ilúvatar’s thought. The eternal margins of creation is not clear to them. For this reason, the pleasant end is not affected by Melkor’s dissonance. Frodo’s vision in the mirror of Galadriel is a precognition of Ilúvatar’s entire *Qaza* for “it shows things that were, and things that are, and things that may be” (Tolkien, *Lord* 352). A half-written book in which decision-makings depending on nature of the pages – which the Ainur have designed – sketch the future.

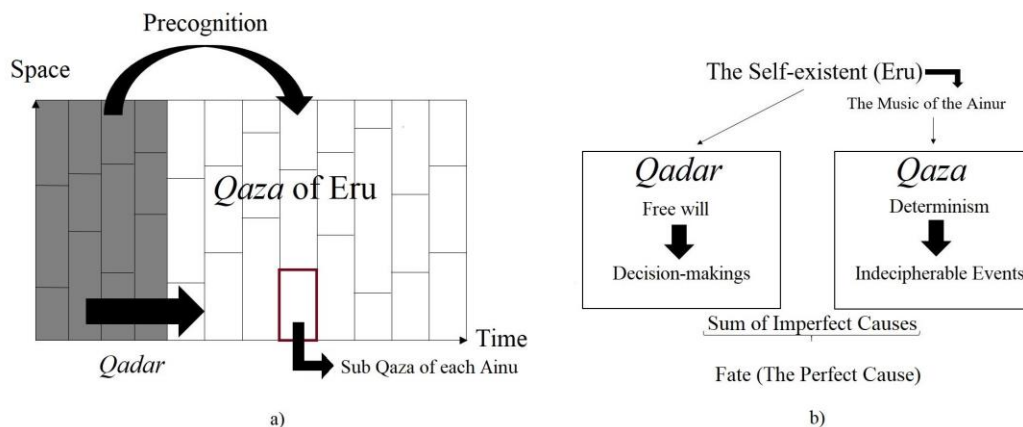


Figure 2: a) Coordination of *Qaza* and *Qadar* in the cosmology of *The Silmarillion*. *Qadar* is scripted on the reticular tablet of *Qaza* through time and space. The two dimensional scale of space-time is a simple tool of representing the created universe. b) The system of fate in *The Silmarillion* based on Mulla Sadra’s Theory. Elements of *Qaza* and *Qadar* cooperate in a development of one’s fate. While *Qadar* directly originates from the Self-existent, *Qaza* is founded by the subrogated Ainur within the span of Ilúvatar’s authority.

### 3. Conclusion

*Shahnameh* and *The Silmarillion* possess consistent systems of fate that measure coordinates of one’s fate. The coordinates of fate, according to Mulla Sadra, are free will and determinism. Mulla Sadra defines *Qaza* and *Qadar* as embodiments of determinism and free will; whereas *Qaza* includes timeless rules determined by an Omnipotent being, *Qadar* is the happening of actions through free will. Despite the deterministic perspective of scholars upon the works, elements of both coordinates – as imperfect causes – recur in the storylines. *Shahnameh* does not relinquish free will and the characters employ free will in the context of unknown rules; it is a sum of free will and determined rules that resolves the fate of a hero. *The Silmarillion*, unlike *Shahnameh*, does not represent an integrated just and fair *Qaza*; the task of organizing rules is assigned to the angelic spirits; the Ainur compose their personal notes, and in this way construct rules either just or unjust. Nonetheless, both mythological collections cherish determinism and free will in their grasp of fate. Fate, as Charles Dickens’ Scrooge enquires as to its nature, is a shadow that depending on type of *Qaza* and details of *Qadar* either will become true or may become so.

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