

RECEPTION OF DESTINY AND DEATH IN BEOWULF AND ESFANDIAR AS EPIC MYTHIC HEROES

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effect and status of destiny and death on epic-mythic heroes in the west and east literature. The objective of present study is to identify the causes and effective factors of density and then to determine the procedure of density occurrence in the involved characters. The proposed hypothesis of present study is to reach death as the final destination of most epic-mythic heroes' destinies. The borderless feature of myth is identified in the epic genre. The discussion of proposed materials and hypothesis are outlined through destiny occurrence steps then the destiny and its effective factors are highlighted. A universal form is recognized through introducing major traits of the selected epic-mythic heroes: Beowulf and Esfandiar. In conclusion, the results confirm the borderless currency of density and also no escape exists from the destiny and its involved characters even epic-mythic ones

KEYWORDS: Destiny, Death, Myth, Epic hero, Beowulf, Esfandiar

INTRODUCTION

Destiny is the development of events outside a person's control, regarded as predetermined by a supernatural power. (Oxford Dictionary, 2013) Destiny in term means sentence and the eternal judgment which arises directly from the will of God and no authority rises from man side. According to Greek mythology, the destiny has the subtle but awesome power of deciding a man's destiny. They assign a man to good or evil. Their most obvious choice is choosing how long a man lives. There are three destinies. Clotho, the spinner, who spins the thread of life. Lachesis, the measurer, who chooses the lot in life one will have and measures off how long it is to be. Atropos, she who cannot be turned, who at death with her shears cuts the thread of life. The destinies are old and predate the gods. It is not entirely clear how far their power extends. It is possible that they determine the destiny of the gods as well. In any case, not even the most powerful is willing to trifle with them.

Based on mythical beliefs, death is an unpleasant incident which creates in initiation. (Elide, 1998) From an anthropological perspective, death is an inevitable cycle of life, like many events such as birth, maturity, marriage and it is also a transient phase along with some crisis. Death can be accompanied with Rites of Passage which customs help men to pass these stages. Mithras, Manichaeism, Zoroastrian Mazdaki myths were shaped in order to prepare the acceptance of death and post-events of death the afterlife, like many religions. (Hinnells, 1997) Thus, the roots of death myth exist in people's culture even if the people change with passing time but these mythical beliefs and customs remain in spite of changes. There is a link between religions and culture with mythical beliefs.

Relationship between Destiny and Death

In the myths, to be or not to be and constant challenge of living with death makes a sense to heroes' behaviors and

actions. A hero is a person, who stands on the border of life and death. As soon as humans began to create myth on eternity and immortality, the power of death was accepted by men. Probably, human beings attempt to give meaning to the life through a discovery in the mystery of death. (Bierlein, 1994) Death and destiny are two inseparable elements which can be found in people's beliefs, cultures and religions.

The belief in destiny existed among Aryans¹ and they referred the destiny to supernatural forces. Such this belief can be found in the variety of religions and Gods e.g. Zurvanism, Mazdyasna (after Zoroastrian), Mithraism (Razi, 2005) The existence of a God can be observed in most ancient cultures and literature which pose a connection with death and time. Whether in west or east, time is considered as super power². (Gozashti et al., 2009) e.g. Zurvan³ appeared as the God of infinite (Zaehner, 1955) time in Iran; on the other hand, Chronos is the god of time in Greece. Zurvan is also the god of destiny, light and darkness in Indo-Iranian and Greco-Roman religion of Mithraism. The Middle Persian name derives from Avestan Zurvan-, "time" or "old age"(Zaehner,2008) In fact, Zurvan emerged as a God which creates good and evil forces in the universe.(Akbari Mafakher,2008). In Zurvanism, life is in time; death also grows in time; and the ultimate truth is Zurvan (Time). Each creature is limited in the earthy world. The end of life is the end of time which is interpreted as death. The reality of universe existence imposes on its contents compulsively. Here, the compulsion reveals his face because no escape exists from the death. Thus, it is unsurprising if Zurvan is taken as an effective factor of death because death is the hand of destiny and no protection can be found from death. (Jalali Moghdam, 1993)

Death and Destiny in Mythic Epic

Epic possesses a mythic infrastructure. In ancient mythologies; many attempts have been done to unlock the mystery of life and death. (Shamisa, 2004) An epic hero is a main character in an epic whose legendary or heroic actions are central to his/her culture, race, or nation. (21st century Lexicon, 2014) The main character in an epic poem--typically one who embodies the values of his or her culture. For instance, Odysseus is the epic hero in the Greek epic called The Odyssey--in which he embodies the cleverness and fast-thinking Greek culture admired. Aeneas is the epic hero in the Roman epic The Aeneid--in which he embodies the pietas, patriotism, and the four cardinal virtues the Romans admired. If we stretch the term epic more broadly beyond the strict confines of the Greco-Roman tradition, we might read Beowulf as loosely as an epic hero of Beowulf and Moses as the epic hero of Exodus e.g. Esfandiar as a great epic-hero in Shahnameh, Persian epic.(Literary Terms and Definitions,2014)

The principal objective of present study is to investigate the causes and effects of destiny and death on epic-mythic heroes in the west and east literature. Next, this study attempts to compare and determine the procedure of destiny occurrence in the involved characters. This paper also evaluates the form and function of two ancient literature with a focus on the texts meaning which shaped by cultural myths. Destiny is examined as cultural belief in literature. A proposed hypothesis is no escape from destiny and death even for epic heroes .Further, a question is examined whether the borderless feature of myth in epic as a literary genre.

Beowulf and Esfandiar are selected as mythic-epic heroes in this study. Both heroes belong to ancient literature

¹The term "Aryan" has been replaced in most cases by the terms "Indo-Iranian" and "Indo-European", and "Aryan" is now mostly limited to its appearance in the term "Indo-Aryan" for Indic languages and their speakers (Encyclopædia Britannica,2014)

² Note: It can be claimed the first selected Godness was the God of Time by people.

³Note: The history of believing in Zurvan refers to Achaemenian Dynasty but its roots arise from religious concepts before Zarathustra.

from west (Britain) and east (Persia) respectively. Further, their epic expression and fame continues up to today world then they became symbolic characters in cultural and literary values. The role of destiny in epic works is considerable because the destiny tied with people's culture in the society. Thus, the frequency of destiny usage in the literary works increased during medieval era particularly in the epic genre.

This paper is organized as follows: First, epic heroes are studied in details. The characteristics of these epic-mythic heroes are evaluated. The causes and factors of density are discussed then the procedure of density occurrence on involved characters is determined. The results are discussed next, followed by the literary and cultural mythology is highlighted. The limitations of this research are outlined and future research directions are provided in conclusion.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Destiny and death in epic stories play an important role in Beowulf and Shahnameh. The epic heroes endeavor to encounter their imminent destiny or escape from this destiny in spite of their awareness and authority on their own destiny. However, their attempts lead to other incidents which have already been marked. Despite of epic stories and Greek tragedies, Gods sometimes come in the middle of battle and human lives to reach their own wants but the destiny goes forward through the story elements and heroes' acts in Shahnameh. Perdition and foreseeing by astrologists enter the stories in the best way in Shahnameh and the spirit of the stories can be shaped along with destiny. Destiny covers the realistic eyes of epic heroes then the heroes step into altar and trap into the tragedy thus, the inability of human being versus destiny picture effectively. (Mehraki and Bahrami Rahnama, 2011) Beowulf and Esfandiar have the features of idealist heroes; however, they are not free from human weaknesses e.g. both heroes have aspired to throne although both received an awareness to abandon throne. One of the most common types of weaknesses in the Greek tragedies is Hubris (pride). Being cocky and over-confident makes the heroes not consider inner heart calls and the heavenly signs and warnings then the heroes divert from moral codes. (Shamisa, 2004) However, heroes' victory in the battles is indebted wisdom, power, glory and divine quality (Far (r)). Farr equals destiny. (Fakhre-eslam and Arabiani, 2010) Whoever gains Farr, will obtain glory and kingship.

The remarkable elements of glory, courage, fame, kingship, and destiny are observed in Beowulf even in Esfandiar. Beowulf was from Anglo-Saxons who lived in and ruled England from the fifth century AD until the Norman Conquest. They were a people who valued courage and leadership. They lived under kings who were "keepers of gold" and were guarded by their loyal thanes (knights). They were a Pagan culture until the Normandy conquistadors came. They believed in destiny and believed the only way to live forever was if a man had fame. In the Anglo-Saxon book, Beowulf, there was a combination of many different people. The characters in Beowulf are defined by their status. Their status was in form of their fame and accomplishments. Beowulf was a very famous warrior, who sails to the Danes to kill a monster who is murdering their people. Beowulf kills Grendal, Grendal's mother and a dragon throughout the entirety of the story.

The dragon is the poem's most potent symbol, embodying the idea of Wyrd, or destiny which imbues the story with an atmosphere of doom and death. Whereas Beowulf is essentially invulnerable to Grendel and his mother, he is in danger from the beginning against the dragon. As Beowulf feels his own death approaching, the dragon emerges from the earth, creating the feeling that the inevitable clash will result in Beowulf's death. The poet emphasizes Beowulf's reluctance to meet death, to "give ground like that and go / unwillingly to inhabit another home / in a place beyond" (Beowulf, 2588–2590). This poetic evocation of death as constituting movement from one realm to another—from the earthly realm to the spiritual one—reveals the influence of Christian ideology on the generally pagan Beowulf. It is also

poignant from the perspective of the warrior ethos, in which leaving one's homeland, the anchor of one's entire identity, is a very serious and significant undertaking. In fact, destiny is a principal element in epic, heroes. The great characters play important roles hence a supernatural force should be used for tightening epic heroes. Then, destiny is the most powerful force in epic. All epic heroes defeat destiny. (Zaehner, 1959) Every time Beowulf receives more fame and more glory by killing dragon. Beowulf became a king. He was a great king who received honor and loyalty from his men. Although, during the fight with the dragon Beowulf's men run away and as a result Beowulf dies. The original book of Beowulf claims that Beowulf had destiny against him in his last battle against the dragon, but also says that Beowulf had Christian morals. By having two conflicting religions (paganism and Christianity) it makes the story more interesting. This book is composed of four main characteristics: fame, kingship, destiny, and God, which play essential roles throughout the book.

In Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxons longed for fame. To them fame meant immortality. For example, the narrator says, "But Beowulf longing only for fame, leaped into battle" (Raffel 1529). To Beowulf the only reason to risk his life is a battle, is so he can have his moments of fame, hence immortality. Even if a character gains fame, they will always be fighting to receive more. After Beowulf becomes king one of his servants says, "Beloved Beowulf, remember how a man boasted, once, that nothing in the world would ever destroy the fame: you fight to keep in now, be strong and brave, my noble king, protecting life and fame together" (Beowulf, 2586). So even though Beowulf had fame, he had to keep fighting and being successful in order to protect and keep his fame. Once an Anglo-Saxon had enough fame his name was known throughout the world. The narrator explains this by saying, "Now the Lord of all life, Ruler of glory, blessed them with a prince, Beowulf, whose power and fame soon spread throughout the world" (Beowulf,16). Beowulf had accumulated so much fame that throughout the world people knew of him and his accomplishments. Fame was so very important to the Anglo-Saxon's that they would give up their lives and the lives of others if only to receive it for a minute. All human's destiny end to death, the only thing keeps a man immortal is fame. Heroes can be immortal through their fame for fighting against evil.

The Anglo-Saxon's beliefs were Pagan. They didn't believe in a god, they thought when a man dies he/she is just dead. They believe that they cannot control their own destiny. In Beowulf, they say, "Destiny will unwind as it must" (Beowulf, 455). Destiny will go however it wants, if it is the destiny to be eaten by a monster, and then nothing a man can do will change that. They believe that destiny saves lives. Ongetho had been stabbed in the head, but "destiny let him recover, live on" (Beowulf, 2975-2977). Ongetho should have died right then, but destiny had other plans for him. In this story the scop speaks of destiny as a person or a thing. "Destiny has swept our race away, taken warriors in their strength and led them to death that was waiting" (Beowulf, 2184-2816). He spoke of destiny as a noun; he says that destiny is responsible for death.

The time that this story was originally told was of the Anglo-Saxons, who didn't believe in God. However the original author of this book was Christian and lent many of his Christian thoughts to this book. For example the book says about Grendal, "By God punished forever for crime for Abel's death" (Beowulf, 107). The author is referring to a part in the Christian's bible where Cain had killed his brother Abel. Even Beowulf, who was supposed to be a pagan, had Christian morals. The scop says, "Beowulf's sorrow beat at his heart; he accused himself of breaking God's law" (Beowulf, 2327-2329). Beowulf was an Anglo-Saxon pagan, so why would it matter to him what "God's laws" were? This book has conflicting beliefs, at one point they say destiny is in control of everything and in another, God is in control. When they were pagan and then they converted to Christianity in both periods, they were submissive to destiny. In pagan status, they

believe the end of all density is death and no one can do anything against it. As they became Christian, they believe their destiny is under the control of God and they are unable to do versus their destiny.

The story of Beowulf and Esfandiar are composed of three main traits: fame, kingship, and destiny. The characters are based on their ratio of these three traits. Fame was highly desired for the need of the epic heroes' want to live forever. Destiny also played a role in everything the Anglo-Saxons ever did, be it a battle or what they were going to have for dinner or party. For Beowulf and Esfandiar, kingship was the bases of the community; if the community had a terrible king, they will have terrible living conditions. For Esfandiar, he wants kingship on the purpose of religion (Zoroastrian) and society both. Zurvanism is a now-extinct branch of Zoroastrianism. Nyberg (1931) and Zaehner (1955, conclusion) propose that Zurvan existed as a pre-Zoroastrian divinity that was incorporated into Zoroastrianism. Zurvanism is one of the ancient religions in Iran which affect Persian literature particularly Epic genre. Zurvanism is a religion based on absolute power of destiny. In Zurvanian ideology, destiny is an absolute ruler. Life begins with God's want and Zuravan has full control on the destiny. (Dolatabadi, 2000) In such this world, human wishes destroy and the wisdom of such this world has to admit everything by nature and forget wishing any change. (Khalili, 2005) However, time and destiny deities are personifications of time, often in the sense of human lifetime and human destiny, in polytheistic religions. In monotheism, Time can still be personified, as in Father Time in European folklore or Zurvan in Persian (Zoroastrian) tradition. In the book of Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Bible, the terms 'iddan "time" vs. zĕman "season" expresses a contrast similar to that of Greek Chronos vs. Kairos. Although the protagonist, Esfandiar in shahnameh received warn and was aware of his destiny, but he could not change his destiny. Destiny belief in Zurvan is highlighted specially in the battle of Rostam and Esfandiar. Rostam admitted his destiny intentionally and steered to the death. This is the painful epic which a man sacrifices himself wisely for immortality. (Meskob, 1963) The same trend appears in the battle of Beowulf and Grendel. Beowulf received a warn of failed destiny via old king but he could not take old king's advice and he had to admit his known destiny, death. Death emerges in any destiny even for epic-mythic heroes' such as Beowulf and Rostam in Greek mythology and Persian mythology.

In Persian mythology, believing in Death is also one of the many beliefs of Zurvan. Zurvan, as the ultimate source of the destiny of the world, has ordained the law and order of all matters and there is no way of escaping those general principles. There is a beginning and ending for every phenomenon and should be passed through the specified path and reach the final destination. Such orders are also applicable to human beings.

Death is the end point of every life. The manifestation of death in Shahnameh is quite synonymous with those evidenced in Zurvan doctrine to the extent that the invalidity of the world and carpe diem has been discussed in Shahnameh. Christianity was what the characters in this story based their morals on, even though the original story had nothing to do with God. The society today still lives on most of these same characteristics. In the society today fame is the highest of goals, we as a society put fame and being known above decency and morals. The king (president) is usually looked upon to give out rewards and orders as the kings in the time of the Anglo-Saxons. A country is also divided up between atheist (modern day pagans) and Christians. We have become a country whose heroes are no longer the people who are courageous or even a decent person. The heroes have become the people who have achieved fame and even fortune. The heroes no longer have to make a difference in the world. The heroes only have to act in a few movies or play a good game of football or baseball. To Esfandiar in Persian epic, kingship is one of the ends; however, fame is still a core both epic-mythic heroes: Esfandiar and Beowulf. As a result, all features and function of selected epic heroes are

extraordinary and supernatural. The peculiarity of national epic requires such these qualities for a hero. According to Menok I Xrat ⁴ (Translated by Nyberg, 1929), the predetermined destiny occurrence is divided into four following stages (Figure.1):

First: Fortune or Luck: Determining the primary share which was allocated to each human being Second: Moment: The moment when the potential allocated share actualizes Third: Final Decision: Full actualization of destiny Fourth: Death



Figure 1: Destiny Process

The figure 2 shows the fate what role plays in the destiny of epic heroes. The authors claim some of these fate elements can be found and matched in each epic story. After designing fate elements diagram, the researchers attempt to develop and extend these designed elements and determined factors in the selected epic works i.e Shahnameh and Beowulf.

⁴ DĀDESTĀN Ī MĒNŪG Ī XRAD (Judgments of the Spirit of Wisdom), a Zoroastrian Pahlavi book in sixty-three chapters (a preamble and sixty-two questions and answers), in which a symbolic character called Dānāg (lit., “knowing, wise”) poses questions to the personified Spirit of Wisdom (Mēnōg Ī xrad), who is extolled in the preamble and identified in two places (2.95, 57.4) with innate wisdom (āsn xrad). The book, like most Pahlavi books, is based on oral tradition and has no known author. (*Encyclopædia Iranica*)

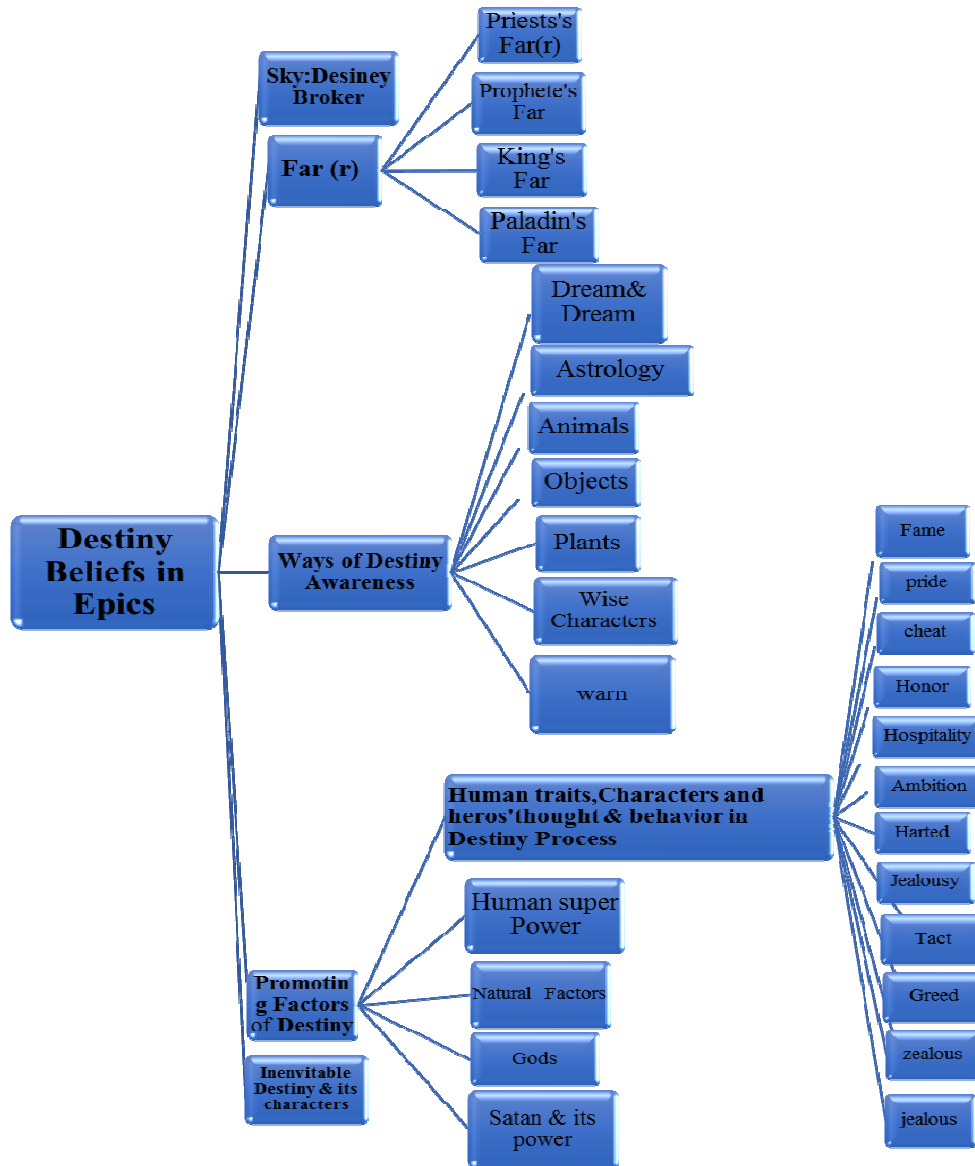


Figure 2: Destiny Procedure in Epics

In the battle of Esfandiar and Rustam, these following fate elements involved in the story:

Sky: Destiny Mediator

In Persian traditions, it is proposed people’s destiny is related to the sky e.g. sun, moon, and stars are important in fortune telling for astrologers. In fact, sky is a mediator of destiny e.g. Jamasp observed Esfandiar’s fortune.

Kingship Force ⁵

Kingship force or Far(r) understood as a divine mystical force or power projected upon and aiding the appointed. The neuter noun thus also connotes "(divine) royal glory," reflecting the perceived divine empowerment of kings. Epic heroes usually receive such this divine force from God to become a king.

⁵ Far(r) is an Avestan language word for a Zoroastrian concept literally denoting "glory" or "splendor"

In short, happiness and prosperity mean "luck" to the country and people which depend on the king's e splendor (Far(r)). Far(r) exists from the beginning of life and splendor. Thus his fate is sealed and the close link fortune and splendor can be understood. (Ringgren, 1952)

The Ways of Destiny Awareness: Astrology, Warning, Wise animal (Simurgh in Shahnameh)

Astrology, warning, and wise animal (Simurgh in Shahnameh) are the ways to be aware of Esfandiar's destiny.

C.1. Astrology: Jamasp predicted the destiny and death of Esfandiar via astrolabe.

C.2. Warning: Two major warnings received from Queen Katayon (Esfandiar's mother) and sat camel on the way of Iranian army.

C.3. Wise Animal: Simurgh appeared as symbol of destiny and fate. She revealed the death secret of Esfandiar and was effective on Esfandiar's destiny.

Promoting Factors of Destiny

In Beowulf and Esfandiar stories, four major elements of destiny are involved including ambition, pride, prejudice, jealousy, tact, fame, and greed. Ambition and pride are important elements which determine the route of destiny. Although Beowulf has received warning from the old king that he has to avoid not getting close dragon but he went to her for gaining power and wealth. The same thing happened to Esfandiar. Greed is recognized as demon which can be found in Esfandiar's character and he is interested in his father's promises and the throne. The authors recognize three more factors in destiny in the selected story of Shanameh. Two reasons were found why Esfandiar attempts to imprison Rustam: 1. being jealous of Rustam because he is the most famous paladin 2. being zealous in Rustam's imprisonment because he has never strained off before his father, King Goshtasp. Another promoting factor of destiny is tact. Rustam used his tact and requested Esfandiar give him a chance to select one in present dilemma (death or imprisonment) in fact Rustam took an advantage of this situation in order to consulate with Zal and Simurgh for survival.

Inevitable Destiny and its Involved Characters (Esfandiar and Beowulf)

Although, epic heroes knows about their future destiny or get warning of that but no control on upcoming destiny occurs. Esfandiar received warning indirectly and Beowulf got alters from old king directly. After Esfandiar's death, the story can be summarized in three sentences: King Goshtasp remains on the throne till last days of his life; although, his young son, Esfandiar loves kingship but he can't experience the kingship even for one day. Rustam does not know that he should be happy for his survival or feel sorry; death is the only point where reaches conquerors and losers together. (Islami Nadoshan, 2008)

DISCUSSIONS

Beowulf is a legendary Geatish hero and kills monsters and dragons (Figure 5) and later turned king in the epic poem named after him, one of the oldest surviving pieces of literature in the English language. Beowulf is the conventional title (Robinson, 2001) of an Old English epic poem consisting of 3182 alliterative long lines, set in Scandinavia, commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature to the fact that it is the oldest surviving epic poem of Old English and also the earliest vernacular English literature⁶. (2014) The full poem survives in the manuscript known as

⁶ <http://historymedren.about.com/od/beowulf/p/beowulf.htm> Retrieved 15 July 2014

the Nowell Codex, located in the British Library. Written in England, its composition by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet[a] is dated between the 8th (Tolkien, 1958; Heatt, 1983) and the early 11th century. (Chase, 1997) In 1731, the manuscript was badly damaged by a fire that swept through Ashburnham House in London that had a collection of medieval manuscripts assembled by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton. The poem's existence for its first seven centuries or so made no impression on writers and scholars, and besides a brief mention in a 1705 catalogue by Humfrey Wanley it was not studied until the end of the 18th century, and not published in its entirety until Johan Bülow funded the 1815 Latin translation, prepared by the Icelandic-Danish scholar Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin. (Mitchell and Robinson, 2001) After a heated debate with Thorkelin, Bülow offered to support a new translation by N. F. S. Grundtvig — this time into Danish. The result, *Bjovulfs Drape* (1820), was the first modern language translation of Beowulf. In the poem, Beowulf, a hero of the Geats in Scandinavia, comes to the aid of Hroðgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall (in Heorot) has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. After Beowulf slays him, Grendel's mother attacks the hall and is then also defeated. Victorious, Beowulf goes home to Geatland in Sweden and later becomes king of the Geats. After a period of fifty years has passed, Beowulf defeats a dragon, but is fatally wounded in the battle. After his death, his attendants bury him in a tumulus, a burial mound, in Geatland.

Esfandiar is a legendary Iranian religious hero, it means divine creature. He was the son and the crown prince of the Kayanian King Goshtasp (from Middle Persian Wishtasp from Avestan language Vishtaspa) and brother of the saintly Pashotan (Middle Persian Peshotan, Avestan Peshotan). The “Esfandiar” of legend is best known from the tragic story of a battle with Rustam, as described in Ferdowsi’s epic *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings). It is one of the longest episodes in the epic, and one of its literary highlights. According to the epic poem -the *Shahnameh*, Esfandiar as the Crown Prince of ancient Persia and paladin; two features which have never combined together in only one character. His short life is full of glory and conquest like Achilles and other Greek epic heroes. Esfandiar can be similar to Siegfried, Balder and Achilles as west epic heroes due to such the features of propriety, death in youth, kingship and vulnerability of one part of the body. (Dadadvar, 2005) Esfandiar supported the prophet Zartosht, enabling him to spread the religion of Zoroastrianism in the land. He also fought against many apostates and enemies of Zartosht to do so. In return, Zartosht gave Esfandiar armor from heaven that made him invincible. Zartosht blessed the prince and declared that anyone who would spill the blood of Esfandiar would suffer a cursed life of bad omens until the day he died; and even after death would be condemned to hell. That's why in the famous story of Rustam’s fight against Esfandiar, a Simurgh warned Rustam before helping him to defeat the Prince that prince Esfandiar was a blessed divine prince. He told Rustam that there would be no shame in surrendering to him. Thus, Beowulf and Esfandiar are both considered as epic heroes to pose some certain characteristics. The authors recommended the following traits for an epic hero⁷. An epic hero:

- excels in skill, strength, and courage
- succeeds in war and adventure
- Values honor and glory
- Usually has a guide
- Battles demons or monsters

[Online] available:⁷ <http://quizlet.com/12321584/13-characteristics-of-an-epic-hero-flash-cards/> (12 July,2014)

- Is generous to his followers but ruthless to enemies
- Is a man of action
- Accepts challenges and sometimes invites problems
- Sometimes make rash decisions and takes unnecessary risks
- Meets monsters and temptations
- Encounters women who tempt him
- Descends into darkness (often the underworld)
- Achieves his goal

Effects of the Destiny on Epic-Mythic Heroes: Beowulf and Esfandiar

Beowulf and Esfandiar live successfully and proudly but they also undergo their bitter destiny, unhappy destiny like common people.

The story of Esfandiar and Rustam's battle

Esfandiar is an Iranian hero and an invulnerable prince. He is the son of Goshtasb, the Kiani king. Goshtasb who was crowned when his father Lohrasb was still alive, repeatedly promises handing over the kingdom to his son, but does not keep his promise. The first time was when Goshtasb wants to send him to fight Arjasp, king of the Turanians, because of revenge for zarir. Goshtasb promises to leave him the crown if he wins the battle. After that Goshtasb promises him the throne if Esfandiar spreads Zoroastrianism in the world and brings infidels into this religion. Esfandiar spreads Zoroastrianism all over the world, but again Goshtasb fails to carry out his promise. He not only does not bestow the crown upon him but also orders to jail him in Gunbadan fortress because a person called "Gorazm" speaks ill about Esfandiar. Arjasp attacks Iran. Goshtasb is unable to confront him, therefore, he asks Esfandiar, who is imprisoned, to stand against Turanians, and he accepts. After defeating them, Esfandiar goes to Royin fortress according to the Kayanian king's wish. He rescues his sisters who had been imprisoned there. He takes a lot of risks to save them and passes the Seven Trials, but once again the king reneges on his promise and resorts to another trick so he consults with his minister, Jamasp, to know about Esfandiar's destiny. Jamasp, who is an astronomer⁸ and predictor, predicts death of Esfandiar.

Esfandiar by Rustam in Zabolestan. Knowing about this event, Goshtasb asks Esfandiar to go to Zabol and bring Rustam bound. Esfandiar rejects at first but accepts after discussing it with his father and prepares himself to go to Zabolestan. His mother, Katayun repeatedly tries to dissuade him from his decision but the Kayanian prince does not pay any attention to his mother's words. In spite of his mother's warn, Esfandiar moved to Zabolestan. In the dilemma of Zabolestan, a camel sat on the way of Esfandiar and Iranian army. They tried to move the camel which blocked way but it did not move at all. Esfandiar considered the camel as bad luck and then he killed it. But the camel was not bad luck. In

⁸Astrological Beliefs and fortune telling are common among the Zoroastrian, Mithras and Zuravonian priests. These priests believe everything depends on "Luck and Destiny". Birth and death depend on God, heavens and stars. That means when someone is born, the time of his/her death is determined from the stars. It is an inevitable matter therefore these predicted events occur exactly. (Razi, 2005)

fact, it was warn to Esfandiar in order to not step in Zabolestan. Rustam warned him repeatedly not to fight in Zabolestan, but he refrains and finally war breaks out between them. Rustam becomes wounded and helpless. Zal, Rustam's father, asks Simurgh, benevolent and mythical flying creature, to help him and Simurgh shows Rustam how to kill Esfandiar, and teaches him how to make an arrow to hit the eyes of Esfandiar, his weak spot, but suggest not to do that and tries make him cancel the battle. If these words do not work, you can continue the flight. Thus Esfandiar is killed by Rustam. On the other side, Simurgh in shahanameh is a symbol of fate to Rustam because she is only way to let Rustam know about his final density and she is a symbol of death to Esfandiar because she reveals the secret of Esfandiar's death and weak spot so that Rusam could kill Esfandiar. In the battle of Rustam and Esfandiar, Simurgh told Rustam as follows:

Said the Simurgh to him: "I will declare
 In love to thee the secret of the sky
 Whoe'er shall shed that hero's blood will be
 Himself pursued by fortune. Furthermore
 Throughout his life he will abide in travail,
 Find no escape therefrom, and lose his treasures,
 Be luckless in this world and afterward
 In pain and anguish. If thou art content
 With this, and present triumph o'er thy foe,
 I will reveal to thee this night a wonder,
 And bar for thee the lip from evil words."
 "I am content," he said to her, "and now
 Say what thou wilt. We leave the world behind
 As our memorial and pass away,
 And there is nothing left of any man,
 Save the report of him. If I shall die
 With fair fame all is well with me, but fame
 I must have for the body is for death."

In the end Esfandiar confesses that it was the false promise of his father Goshtasp who did not want to part with his throne, and the Arrow of Simurgh that killed him; and Rustam is not guilty in this, but his real murderer who should be cursed and blamed is Goshtasp. Although, Rustam received this warm and he knew his destiny and destiny in the end but he could not admit the shame of dragging captivity and saved his dignity. However, Esfandiar is killed by Rustam. Below lines remark how the Simurgh succored Rustam in his battle with Esfandiar:

This fosterling of bane. Aim at his eyes,
 Straight, with both hands as one that worshipping
 The tamarisk, and Destiny will bear
 The arrow thither straight. He will be blinded,
 And fortune rage at him."
 Then the Simurgh,
 Embracing Zal as woof embraceth warp
 In bidding him farewell, took flight content,
 While Rustam, when he saw her in the air,
 Took order to prepare a goodly fire,
 And straightened out thereby the tamarisk wood.
 He fitted arrow-heads upon the shaft,
 And fixed the feathers to the finished haft

Finally, Esfandiar's destiny happened exactly according to Jamasp's perdition. Hence, an epic hero finds himself against the force of destiny and Gods' will.

CONCLUSIONS

Destiny is the general traditions and infrangible laws which rule over people. The impact of these traditions is final and investable on people's happiness and misery. The results of present paper confirm no escape exists from the destiny and its involved characters even for epic-mythic ones. The death is the ultimate point for the most heroes' destiny, no eternity exists to epic heroes, the only thing remains from these heroes is their effect on the culture and literature in all generations. These heroes know that they cannot change their destiny which leads to their death but they attempt to be immortal by their fame, glory, courage, and kingship. Some ways exist to become aware of their destiny including receiving warn from a wise character, dreaming, foreseeing, etc. An important point should be noted: In spite of heroes are aware of their own destiny or they have been aware of it, e.g. Katayon's warn to Esfandiar and King Hrothgar's warn to Beowulf, they can't fight against their destiny. Although cultures and literatures are apparently different from each other in the entire world but there are some in common. Such these common points in myth and culture adapt to each era and repeat in human collective memory and they covert to be main part of people's spirit and soul. A feature of borderless of myth in west and east epic was found in Beowulf and Shahnameh. This borderless currency of myth is considerable in these two different literatures in two different continents. Hence, the borderless currency of myth confirms in mythic-epic heroes in both west and east literature.

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