



Tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab: First Example Introducing the Science of Mytho-Pathology

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

It may not seem reasonable to look for diseases in myths. Although myths have their own principles, they do not necessarily follow the rules of the real world. Therefore, diseases and pathologies of myths like diseases of hero or their traumas during battles are not so genuine. However, the major point is that according to some theories of mythology (1), myths can root in realities and if we are after origins of creating a myth and finding out if it has a real source, mytho-pathology (the term is a combination of “mythology” and “pathology”) comes into the picture. If a myth has a real source and a pathology (by pathology, we are referring to the exact concept of “pathology” as a branch of medicine) occurs in the interim, it should follow scientific rules. To my knowledge, no similar studies have been done in the field and the present short report can be the first description of the science of mytho-pathology.

I picked the tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab as well as the details of Sohrab’s kill by his father; yet, I am aware that various myths of different nations have the same potential for research.

The story of Rostam and Sohrab is one of the top tragedies of the Persian literature described by Ferdowsi (2) in the best possible manner. This is the story of a son killed by his father who was the mightiest of Iranian paladins. This myth is so well-described that illustrates our most delicate psychological properties and raises the question of

whether or not there would be a possibility that such a tragedy happened in the real world.

The author does not possess the competency to discuss mythical origins and structural details of this tragedy but the details of the murder happening in this story can be the theme of the present study. When Rostam survives death by trickery once, he manages to beat Sohrab and stab him in the flank. The first important question is whether the manner of Sohrab’s death has a role in the formation of this myth. The answer is: ripping off Sohrab’s flank is totally well-matched with the development of the tragedy. After reading the story, we find that the murder should have been performed in the manner that the victim, i.e. Sohrab, did not die right away and could have enough time to converse with Rostam and cause this great tragedy. Organs causing immediate death following injury are trachea, aorta and heart. In case of damaging the respiratory center, brain injury can also cause immediate death. Hence, ripping off Sohrab’s flank by Rostam’s stab causing gradual bleeding is the best form of death for devising a tragedy; in the mean time, the time interval between injury and death of Sohrab can also be scientifically justified. In other words, if the event had taken place in the real world, Sohrab should have been killed in this manner.

I assume that the present study can clearly indicate that this tragedy pathologically has the potential of

having been occurred in reality. And this is an example of a science that I call “mytho-pathology”.

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References

1. Anonymous. *Myth*. Available from: www.britannica.com
2. Ferdowsi A (1993). *Shabnameh*. Sokhan Publisher, Iran, pp.:359-420.