


Does the Genesis 4 narrative suggest some knowledge of psychopathy?

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The depiction of Cain and his descendants in the Genesis 4 narrative aligns with the key characteristics of psychopathy and its hereditary nature. The purpose of this study is to examine whether this narrative reflects our current understanding of psychopathy. Cleckley's description of the best-known traits of psychopathy includes a lack of conscience, empathy and social controls, which ultimately lead to deviant antisocial and criminal behaviour. These traits can be seen in Cain's murder of Abel, as well as in his reaction when confronted. They may have also been present in his descendants, such as Lamech and those involved in the implied prostitution of Naäma. In this study, the narrative characters are assessed using Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist: Shortened Version, which is examined within the context of Cleckley's observations and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition (DSM-V). The mark of Cain and the Kenites, as well as their nomadic existence at the fringe of the desert, are also explained, as well as how society safeguarded itself by setting strong boundaries.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The PSL-SV is proven to be an effective diagnostic model when applied to narrative characters in a literary text. Its effectiveness becomes apparent when considering the broader context of the DSM-V and Cleckley's description. Sufficient information about the text and relevant reference works is necessary to utilise this model successfully. This diagnostic approach can be useful for any discipline interpreting narrative texts, for example literary analysis of characters in novels, historical studies of texts about characters in history, and criminal investigation and law, when interpreting narrative accounts of witness statements.

Keywords: psychopath; psychopathy; Cain; Abel; Genesis 4; Kenites; Hare; murder; PCL-SV; nomadic.

An aetiological narrative about the Kenites¹

The study investigates whether the Genesis 4 narrative reveals knowledge of psychopathy as we understand it today and whether it also shows how Israelite society sought to protect itself from this danger. The vantage point used in this analysis is psychological hermeneutics, which is based on a specific model developed by the author. This model is designed to analyse psychopathy in narrative characters. This investigation recognises that other disciplines offer overlapping and supplementary insights such as a hermeneutic of vulnerability (Snyman 2015:633–65), a combination of psychoanalysis, critical men theory and critical autobiographical investigation (Culbertson 2006:1–11), honour, shame and social status society insights (Crook 2009:591–611), paradigmatic narrative analysis (Edenburg 2011:155–167; Peels 2008:172–193) and in-group and out-group investigations (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:373–374). The focus of this study, however, is solely on the identification of psychopathy markers and possible traces of social mechanisms for dealing with psychopathy.

In the story of Genesis 4, Cain is the main character and is portrayed as the Kenites' eponymous ancestor. They were a nomadic tribe of tent dwellers, herders, musicians, coppersmiths and metalworkers from the rocky region south of Tel Arad in the eastern Negev. The Kenites worshipped Yahweh before Israel did, but they were not included in the Israelite covenant (Mondriaan 2011:414–430). Initially, they may have been city dwellers who became a nomadic tribe mentioned several times in the Bible (Van Selms 1979:86). Some people hypothesise that the concept of the Sabbath and even the religion of Yahwism originated among them (De Vaux 1978:478–479; Mondriaan 2011:424–427). The Genesis 4 narrative has aetiological aims to explain the origin of the Kenites, their tribal mark (which was most probably a tattoo on the forehead),

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their religion and their nomadic lifestyle outside the borders of Israel, between desert and agrarian land although they were Yahweh worshippers like Israel (Day 2009:335–346; Von Rad 1984:102–113). Although the Kenites are mentioned in other parts of the Bible and several theories about them have been proposed (Day 2009:335–346), this study focusses only on the Genesis 4 narrative as a Kenite aetiology. Traits found in Cain seem to reappear in Lamech, according to his song of reprisal and also with the depiction of Naäma, a dancer and supposed prostitute (Van Selms 1979:87, 93). The story is based on very old mythical traditions and its historicity cannot be proven (Vriezen & Van der Woude 1980:153).

This article treats the story as a narrative and its characters are analysed according to Grivel's (1978:49) classification of actors in his literary theory. Cain is the *antagonist* (aggressor, malafide) and Abel is the *protagonist* (the hero; so designated by Yahweh accepting his sacrifice). Yahweh represents the *patriarchal power* administering norms and punishment. Eve is a *secondary character*, necessary for the characterisation by naming. The story is told by a third-person omniscient narrator. The story unfolds rapidly in five *sequences* or episodes moving from the birth and naming episode to the narrative about their sacrifices (adulthood), the aftermath dialogue, the murder episode and the final banishment dialogue. These scenes are followed by a narrative about Cain's descendants. Locations implied are a birthplace for the first episode (squatting outside, in secluded natural surroundings (Anonymous 2005) or an abode without men being present (Rathkamp 2017); the sanctuary is the location for both the sacrifice and the aftermath dialogue episodes (Van Selms 1979:80–82), somewhere outside in a secluded field (in natural surroundings) is the location for the murder scene and finally the sanctuary is again the scene for the final episode (Wenham 1987:105). Characterisation begins with the new-borns' naming and is developed by the characters' actions and the dialogues between Cain and Yahweh. Yahweh's unqualified rejection of Cain's sacrifice sets the plot in motion. Conflict arises between Cain and Yahweh, climaxing in Abel's murder. The conflict is resolved with Cain's banishment and Yahweh's merciful protection. The characters are typical (flat): villain, victim and law enforcement and a mother with uncanny insight about her new-born sons. There are some developments and surprises with both the characters of Cain and Yahweh; hence, their characters become a bit more rounded.

The ancient Middle Eastern societies were characterised as high-context societies, where a great deal of information was assumed to be commonly understood and therefore not explicitly explained (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:11–12). To help current low-context readers better appreciate the intrigue of a narrative, it is important to explicitly express implied information, particularly when it comes to character development. For example, no mention is made of a second conception regarding Abel. It seems Cain and Abel were twins (contra Wenham 1987:102), with Cain being the first

born (Byron 2011:11–37; Van Selms 1979:80). The mother generally names the newborn. The name denotes the essence of a person and therefore has a special meaning (Byrne 2009:334–346; De Vaux 1978:43). Cain's name means 'spear' or 'reed' (Mondriaan 2011:417) and regarding the latter may also suggest 'hollowness' (Hicks 1962:482) in contrast with Abel whose name means 'breath, breeze, futility', suggesting the terrible future outcome. This is underlined by his mother adding nothing to explain Abel's name, implying that the name or character means nothing and will amount to nothing (Antic 2006:207), in contrast with the etymology she gives for Cain (Vermeulen 2014:30–31). Eve's etymology is poetic rather than intrinsically correct and although rather obscure seems to compare her achievement with Yahweh's creation (Wenham 1987:100–101). It may even be interpreted as a boast that her 'creation' (Van der Wolde 1991:27) approximates the divine power to create a 'man', rather than referring to the help of Yahweh. It is a proud claim: 'I have created a man!' (Westermann 1974:395–397). Abel's name, on the other hand, is suppressed and he is more often referred to as Cain's brother, even at his birth. The contrast is accentuated by Eve stating that she gave birth to a man (Gn 4:1) and his brother (Gn 4:2) (Van der Wolde 1991:27). While Eve celebrated joyfully with the birth of Cain, no mention is made of any joy with Abel's birth (Blenkinsopp 2011:84). He is a silent character who speaks no word and disappears from the scene like a breath, as suggested by his name (Antic 2006:207). After his death, he is more vocal than when he was alive: his spilt blood cries out (Van der Wolde 1991:37).

The narrator inserts the theme of their different vocations directly after the birth scene forming a chiasmic alternation between the brothers: Cain is born, Abel is born; Abel is a shepherd, Cain is a farmer. The same chiasmic pattern is repeated with the narrative of their sacrifices and Yahweh's diverse reaction, setting the brothers in opposition (Vermeulen 2014:37) and suggesting a reversal of order as theme: preference for the younger in opposition to the firstborn (Boloje 2021). The implied location of the second episode is the sanctuary (Van Selms 1979:80–82) with Cain being the first mentioned to sacrifice. The sacrifices were representative of their occupations (Byron 2008:5). Abel follows the initiative of his brother and sacrifices the blood and fat of the first born of his herd (Byron 2008:3–8; Wenham 1987:104). The meat was normally given to the priest, but in this case, both brothers acted as priests in their absence (Van Selms 1979:80). Yahweh accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's without explanation although commentators have speculated much about it (Byron 2008:3–22; Vermeulen 2014:32). The uncertainty implies the question: What does Yahweh know about Cain's character and the attitude behind his sacrifice that the reader does not? Suspicion is alerted. Cain ignores Yahweh's counsel and kills Abel in a premeditated way (Wenham 1987:105). When confronted by Yahweh, he answers with a blatant lie (Boloje 2021) and an impertinent witticism (Von Rad 1984:106). Cain is banished from the soil to lead an unstable and fugitive life away from Yahweh (Boloje 2021). The soil holds sacred significance, as cultivated land is regarded here as the realm of worship and

divine favour, a place where one can be intimately connected to Yahweh (Von Rad 1984:106–107). Cain protests Yahweh's mercifully insufficient punishment (Vermeulen 2014:32) as too severe and fears being murdered himself when his crime becomes known. He receives Yahweh's mark of protection and a warning to all possible enemies of Yahweh's sevenfold revenge. Cain leaves the presence of Yahweh at the sanctuary to live in Nod (suggesting the Hebrew stem 'nad' meaning 'fugitive') (Antic 2006:206; Von Rad 1984:102–113). The desert edge became the refuge of the disgraced outcasts and outlaws (De Vaux 1978:13–14) and Nod was symbolic of it (Antic 2006:206).

The narrative suggests that some of Cain's descendants inherited his propensity for violence and antisocial behaviour, such as Lamech singing his song of retribution to his wives and those implied in the supposed prostitution of Naäma (Van Selms 1979:87, 93). The nomadic lifestyle and tribal mark of the Kenites suggest that they were stigmatised (Mondriaan 2011:423) and therefore excluded from society, possibly because they posed a serious danger to society.

In order to study whether the Genesis 4 narrative reveals knowledge of psychopathy and ways to safeguard against it, significant diagnostic aspects of psychopathy will be discussed, especially from the DSM-V (APA 2013) and Cleckley's descriptions of psychopaths (Cleckley [1941] 1976). Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist: Shortened Version (PCL:SV) (Babiak & Hare 2006:23–28) will then be applied to the narrative character of Cain. The initial broader preliminary outline is necessary because concerns were raised that the PCL is a broad classification that does not take into consideration aspects such as class and ethnicity and also does not predict violence well (Fallon 2014:16).

Psychopathy

One of the experts in the field of psychopathy chose the most outstanding trait of psychopaths for the title of his famous book, 'Without a conscience: The disturbing world of the psychopaths among us' (Hare 1993). Hare (1993) describes psychopaths as:

[S]ocial predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plough their way through life, leaving a broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets. Completely lacking in conscience and in feeling for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret. (p. xi)

'Their hallmark is a stunning lack of conscience; their game is self-gratification at the other's expense' (Hare 1993:1). The psychopath is the image of a self-centred, callous and remorseless person profoundly lacking in empathy and the ability to form warm emotional relationships with others, a person who functions without the restraints of conscience and a person without the very qualities that allow people to live in social harmony (Hare 1993:2). 'Psychopathy is a neuropsychiatric disorder marked by deficient emotional responses, lack of empathy, and poor behavioural controls,

commonly resulting in persistent antisocial deviance and criminal behaviour' (Anderson & Kiehl 2014)'. Psychopaths are identified by their chronic emotional detachment, cortical under-arousal, minimal anxiety, failures of internalisation, grandiose self-structure, primitive object relations, sadistic superego precursors, narcissistically defined affects and modes of aggression (Meloy 2007:335–346).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th Edition of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-V) gives the following diagnostic criteria: A pervasive pattern of disregard for the violation of other's rights since age 15 as indicated by three or more of the following: Unlawful behaviour leading to an arrest, deceitfulness (repeated lying, using aliases, conning others and manipulation), impulsivity or failure to plan ahead, irritability and aggressiveness (e.g. repeated assaults and fights); reckless disregard for the safety of self or others; consistent irresponsibility; failure to sustain consistent work behaviour or honour financial obligations and lack of remorse for misdeeds. For diagnosis, they must be 18 years old, have conduct disorder since 15 years of age and not be in the course of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Specific behaviours typical of conduct disorder include aggression towards people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft and serious violation of rules (APA 2013:659).

Hervey Cleckley, who did ground-breaking work observing and describing the traits of psychopaths, hypothesises that the main difference from others is their 'persistent lack of the ability to become aware of what the most important experiences of life mean to others' and describes that as the common substance of emotion or purpose from which various loyalties, goals, fidelities, commitments and responsibilities of people are formed (Cleckley [1941] 1976:371). He agrees with Jenkins that psychopaths show a defect of personality with a set of defences evolved around that defect. The defect relates to the most central element of the human personality: its social nature. Psychopaths are basically asocial or antisocial and do not achieve the developed nature of homo domesticus (Jenkins 1960). However, this serious defect is disguised behind a convincing mask of sanity. Psychopaths seem to present normal in psychological testing and there they reveal logical thought processes and mimic all the appropriate verbal and facial expressions, tones of voice and behaviour people expect from others. Only in time do they reveal their human incompleteness as subtly structured reflex machines mimicking the human personality perfectly: they do not grasp emotionally the major concepts of meaning or feeling when expressing personal experiences (Cleckley [1941] 1976:368–376).

Cleckley identified 16 major characteristics of psychopathy: superficial charm, good intelligence, absence of delusions and irrational thinking, absence of nervousness and psychoneurotic behaviour, unreliability, untruthfulness, insincerity, lack of remorse or shame, inadequately motivated antisocial behaviour, poor judgement and failure to learn from experience, pathologic egocentricity, incapacity for

love, poverty in major affective reactions, specific loss of insight, unresponsiveness in general interpersonal relations, fantastic and uninviting behaviour, suicide rarely carried out and failure to follow any life plan (Barlow & Durand 2005:434; Sue, Sue & Sue 1994:265–267).

Psychopathy cannot develop from environmental factors alone (Babiak & Hare 2006):

The elements needed for the development of psychopathy – such as a profound inability to experience empathy and the complete range of emotions, including fear – are provided in part by nature and possibly by some unknown biological influences on the development of the foetus and neonate. (p. 24)

The outcome is a brain deficiency that was revealed by fMRI experiments: psychopaths processed emotional material as if it were neutral content. Emotional material should lead to increased activity in the limbic regions of the brain. Emotional material should lead to increased activity in the limbic regions of the brain. Instead, in the case of psychopaths, the researchers stimulated the brain regions associated with comprehension and language production. Psychopaths process emotional stimuli cognitively and linguistically. It is as if they know the words but not the music. The result is a cold and empty core, making them effective human predators. They are callously indifferent about the effect of their behaviour on others and would frequently blame their victims for it or feign remorse and lie (Babiak & Hare 2006:26, 55, 184). The hereditary nature of psychopathy is well documented by James Fallon's own fMRI scan showing his psychopathy and by his family history revealing several murderous ancestors but also shows the influence of environmental factors on the development or inhibiting of psychopathy (Fallon 2014). Adoption studies indicate that both genetic and environmental factors contribute to the risk of developing psychopathy. This disorder is associated with low socioeconomic status and in settings where antisocial behaviour may be part of a protective survival strategy. Prevalence is higher in adverse socioeconomic and sociocultural circumstances such as poverty and migration (APA 2013:661–662; Barlow & Durand 2005:438).

As the Genesis 4 narrative contains a violent murder, the aspect of violence should be investigated more closely. Violent behaviour is not perceived as a homogenous phenomenon. It varies according to social, biological and psychological factors present at the moment of the violent act. The nature of the violence also varies and research has shown the usefulness of distinguishing between affective and predatory violent behaviour. Affective violence occurs when there are high levels of autonomic arousal, which is characterised by anger and/or fear and this type of violence is a response to a perceived, imminent threat. Affective violence can be described as impulsive, reactive, hostile, emotional and expressive. Its evolutionary basis is self-protection. Predatory violence is not preceded by autonomic arousal and is characterised by the absence of emotion or threat: it is cognitively planned, instrumental, premeditated, proactive and cold-blooded. Its evolutionary basis is hunting (Meloy

2006:539–540). Research shows that psychopathic inmates engage in more predatory and affective types of violence than non-psychopathic inmates. Psychopaths do seem to have the predisposition to commit predatory violence because of their low levels of autonomic arousal and reactivity, their disidentification with the victim, their perceived malevolence in others, their emotional detachment and their lack of empathy. They seem to be hardwired to be the consummate predators although they also commit acts of affective violence (Meloy 2006:542).

Psychopaths flourish in and choose their victims from within a trusting environment such as religious and other affinity groups and business corporations, where people tend to view members as being as dependable as themselves. Such people share traits such as need-affiliation, agreeableness and socialisation to get along with others and cooperate. On the surface, psychopaths can easily come across as agreeable and friendly. They will masterly craft a fiction about themselves that fills the requirements of the group and mimic the good performers without them in fact performing. They build personal relationships with the important people in the group for their protection later. They follow a three-part plan of assessment, manipulation and abandonment. During the assessment phase, they study and assess peoples' functioning within the group to apply the roles of patrons, pawns and patsies for the drama they are writing (Babiak & Hare 2006:111–141).

Diagnostic model: Cain measured by the Hare Psychopathy Checklist: Short Version

Robert Hare has devised a checklist for the diagnosis of psychopathy, which has evolved into the Hare Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (PCL-R) with 20 characteristics and a PCL:SV with 12 characteristics spread over four domains (Babiak & Hare 2006:23–28).

The PCL is a reliable and valid measure of psychopathy and is a standardised and normed instrument developed especially for use with psychopaths. Such an instrument is necessitated by the fact that the psychopathic personality is a more severe and biologically predisposed variant of the antisocial personality disorder as diagnosed in the DSM-V. Specifically because of the widespread acceptance and use of the PCL, research on psychopathy and predatory violence is booming (Meloy 2006:542). The PCL:SV will be used to investigate whether the character Cain in Gen. 4 can be viewed as a psychopath.

When a subject is tested with Hare's PCL:SV, two points are added when a person definitely has a given trait and one point if a trait applies only partially. If a trait does not apply, nothing is added. When there is no information about a trait, no score can be applied. A person's score can thus range from 0 to 24. The general population scores less than 3 on the test, and the average for criminals is around 13. A cut score of 18 is typically used to diagnose psychopathy (Babiak & Hare 2006:24–29).

The characterisation of Cain in the narrative is the basis for measuring psychopathy. The scoring is shown by trait and the total of each domain is given in Box 1.

Interpersonal domain

It seems as if Cain does not have nor accept Yahweh's insight into his own character and disregards Yahweh's warning at the sanctuary. Sin is metaphorically portrayed as a predator that patiently waits for Cain at the door of the sanctuary. It represents an external force that Cain is expected to conquer but is ultimately unable to do so. Cain is able to defer from violence at the sanctuary because Yahweh is present. After suppressing his anger and envy, he commits pre-meditated, cold-hearted murder: Deceitfully, he speaks to Abel to come away to a secluded ploughing field. He kills his brother whose life belongs to Yahweh and desecrates the land with his blood. It is murder for God's sake: Revenge against God for the rejection of Cain's sacrifice, which may have been viewed as a rejection of Cain himself. The implication here is that Cain's act of fratricide is actually his way of punishing God for rejecting him. Cain is acting on a grand scale. It is an act of instrumental and predatory violence. Although no reason is given for the rejection of Cain's sacrifice, the characterisation by naming already suggested this outcome, as well as Yahweh's warning. The narrative implies Yahweh knew Cain's nature and therefore rejected his sacrifice. Killing Abel can also be interpreted as Cain offering a blood sacrifice to Yahweh, but with a devious twist: sacrificing what is forbidden – a human life, specifically a life honoured as acceptable by Yahweh. When confronted, he lies impertinently as if his lie and crime will remain secret. Cain's character is thus depicted as highly superficial, grandiose and deceitful. These traits will overlap when discussing other domains and traits. A score of 6 is given.

Affective domain

When Cain is confronted about his crime, it is the character of Yahweh who is overcome with astonishment and empathy for Abel. Cain at first tries to lie his way out and never shows any remorse (Van Selms 1979:84). The murder seems trivial to him, so he protests against the punishment, which he considers excessively severe, despite the fact that his own life is spared. Yahweh mercifully does not punish

Box 1: Cain's scoring on the psychopathy checklist (shortened version) according to the domains and traits of the psychopath.

Interpersonal: 6	Affective: 6
The person is:	The person:
Superficial (2)	Lacks remorse (2)
Grandiose (2)	Lacks empathy (2)
Deceitful (2)	Does not accept responsibility (2)
Lifestyle: 3	Antisocial: 2
The person:	The person has a history of:
Is impulsive (1)	Poor behavioural controls (score 1)
Lacks goals (1)	Adolescent antisocial behaviour (score 0)
Is irresponsible (1)	Adult antisocial behaviour (score 1)

Source: Babiak, P. & Hare, R.D., 2006, Snakes in suits: When psychopaths go to work, p. 27, Harper Collins, New York, NY

Kain according to *lex talionis*. He shows no empathy for his brother whom he does not ever mention, as if all is about himself. He is depicted as refusing to accept any responsibility, whether he is warned or confronted with his crime. Again, a score of 6 is given.

Lifestyle

The narrative depicts the two lifestyles that were prevalent in Old Testament agrarian society: farming the land and shepherding. These two lifestyles can be described as two cultures developing two cults, as depicted by Cain and Abel having their own altars (Von Rad 1984:104). Primitive agrarian practices (Noth 1977:163–164) did not progress beyond subsistence farming (Richardson, 1962:56). As a result, neither of these lifestyles required advanced planning skills. However, impulsivity, irresponsibility and poor goal-setting would have been inhibiting factors. Cain seems to have planned the murder, as it occurred in a secluded field after he called Abel away. The act of killing, as well as the subsequent actions of hiding the body and lying about it, all had a common short-term objective: to eliminate a present issue, which was Abel's favour with Yahweh and later, Abel's lifeless body. No prior planning was made for potential complications, and the possibility of being discovered is not mentioned at all. This shows some impulsivity, irresponsibility and a lack of long-term goals although farming would require a certain extent of those skills. A score of 3 is given.

Antisocial domain

The text does not reveal a previous history of poor behavioural controls other than the murder being committed. It is not certain whether the crime occurs in adolescence or adulthood. Cain's conceiving his first son is mentioned after his departure to Nod. This does not alter the scoring of 1 for antisocial behaviour, whether in adolescence or adulthood. A score of 2 is given.

Preliminary conclusion

With a total score of 17, it seems the depiction of Cain's character comes very close to what we know to be a psychopath. The problem is that no extensive previous history of behaviour is given so that the history of antisocial behaviour can be more thoroughly scored. The text may add some further motivation, for instance the possible meanings of Cain's name: 'spear' or 'reed' (Mondriaan 2011:417) suggesting violence; or 'hollow' (Hicks 1962:482) suggesting the idea of a hollow person, empty, without a core, contrasting psychopaths with how people generally are (Babiak & Hare 2006:26, 55, 184). Another possibility with some irony to it is from the Arabic stem that means 'smith', implying a metal worker who hammers iron (as punishment for Cain beating his brother to death, also of Cain never again utilising metal agrarian implements but making them for other farmers such as he once was).

Hereditary traits unmasked

The mark given to Cain became the tribal mark of the Kenites as if they all needed protection. Was there another reason? Were Cain's traits hereditary? There is no textual reason given why his descendants would need such a mark, yet the story of the fratricide is given as the explanation for the mark. It seems that the mark in time may have become a symbol marking traits of psychopathy in some of Cain's descendants, for instance, in Lamech (Cain's great-great-grandson). His song of wrath (Gn 4:23–25) shows his willingness and boast to resort to extreme and disproportionate violence for the smallest sleight. He is not satisfied with Yahweh's promise of sevenfold killings of a perpetrator's clansmen. He insists on seventy and usurps Yahweh's sole right to revenge. His grandiosity, impulsivity, irresponsibility, lack of empathy and remorse suggest hereditary traits of Cain. His song depicts his victims as weak and to be easily overcome and destroyed. Just like Abel, they represent futility compared to Lamech. His name means 'strong young man' suggesting the physical and mental power to exert violent revenge. His strength is further demonstrated by his polygamy, the first mentioned in the Bible, suggesting disregard for the socially accepted institution of monogamic marriage (Van Selms 1979:86). The song's ongoing transmission suggests that, at least in the Lamech clan, the song had an important place and probably reveals much about the central role of violence and revenge in their self-understanding.

The Kenites, who lived at the border of the southern desert, are described as four groups: nomadic herdsmen, travelling musicians, smiths and dancing girls.

Naäma, meaning 'lovely one,' represents the final group and they entertained through dancing and were also believed to engage in prostitution (Van Selms 1979:87, 93). In this case, it may not necessarily be Naäma showing psychopathy. In their patriarchal social structure, women were considered the property of the men in their lives – whether it be their fathers, husbands or brothers, with whom they often lived out of necessity (De Vaux 1978:20–21; Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:424). Most probably, they were coerced into prostitution or it might have been one of the tribe's survival strategies to use the daughters as prostitutes. In such a scenario, a male family member or the male tribal hierarchy would have played or delegated the role of a pimp. Such a role, which disregards the rights of others, suggests psychopathic traits. These traits may include not conforming to social norms, deceit and conning others, violence, disregard for the safety of others, lack of remorse, manipulation, contempt for the suffering of others, arrogance and exploiting sexual relationships with inflated self-appraisal (APA 2013:659–661). The survival and needs of the tribe took precedence over those of the family, and clan members accepted their duties as if they were familial obligations and the clansmen referred to each other as 'brothers' (De Vaux 1978:21). Such a blood bond protects psychopathic behaviour as the clan and family will always stand united against enemies (Fallon 2014:217).

This correlates with the ancient Mediterranean collectivistic personality of being embedded in the kinship group or clan and in this sense being 'dyadic' or 'other-oriented' namely towards their tribe as their in-group (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:373–374; 343–344).

It seems that the Cain narrative suggests that the banishment to a nomadic life on the outskirts of the desert and the tribal mark of the Kenites might have served as Israelite society's means of protection against the danger that their prevalent hereditary psychopathic traits posed to society, the sanctity of life and arable land. They were forced to live in isolation even though not all descendants of psychopaths inherit their traits (APA 2013). According to the Genesis 4 aetiological narrative, however, the tribal mark became a mark of protection by Yahweh and explains the Kenite religion. The combination of the sign and banishment suggests a necessary balance: one cannot succeed without the other; neither the sign alone nor banishment alone would guarantee their safety, only the combination.

Using Cleckley's metaphor for psychopathy as having the mask of sanity (Cleckley [1941] 1976), one might say that the mark of Cain and their ostracism was the unmasking of the hereditary psychopathy that could lurk in a tribe like the Kenites and as such served as a warning sign to all sides to keep their distance.

Conclusion

The study suggests that what we call psychopathy was already known in Israelite society and that they devised ways to safeguard society against its dangers.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications

The PSL-SV is shown to be an effective diagnostic model for application to narrative characters in a literary text when used against the broader background of the DSM-V and Cleckley's description, given that enough information can be gained from the text and reference works about the text. This diagnostic approach can be useful for any discipline interpreting narrative texts, for example literary analysis of characters in novels, historical studies of texts about characters in history, and criminal investigation and law, when interpreting narratives in witness statements.

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