

How Does Mythical Folklore Create a Framework for Mental Health?

Maria Puglisi, Asia Reed, Christian Campos, & Kiara
Turner University of California, Merced

Authors note: Maria Puglisi, Asia Reed, Christian Campos, and Kiara Turner are undergraduate students at the University of California, Merced. Correspondence questions concerning research should be addressed to mpuglisi@ucmerced.edu, areed8@ucmerced.edu, ccamposmagana@ucmerced.edu, kturner7@ucmerced.edu.

Abstract

Our research found that the perception of cannibalism varied across cultures; it has been shown that in some cultures cannibalism can be interpreted as a mental health disorder. We reviewed a total of eight articles that explored cannibalism, antisocial personality disorder, family dysfunction, anger, population density, and cult members. The studies examined the association between mental health disorder and behavioral problems. For the purposes of this review, only one study on Christi Cleek fit the criteria, which were (a) cannibalism amongst individuals, (b) dynamics among cult members, and (c) possible mental health disorders such as antisocial personality disorder. The study was then synthesized with the Sawney Bean Clan case study, a semi-mythical folklore story that was based off an earlier tale on Christi Cleek. The results showed that anger in community members, family dysfunction, and cult behavior could have a possible correlation that is associated with a mental health disorder such as antisocial personality disorder.

Keywords: cannibalism, anger, cult members, population density, cults, antisocial personality disorder, family dysfunction, food shortage, incest

How Does Mythical Folklore Create a Framework for Mental Health?

Folklore is an oral representation of culture and tradition that reflects the moral values of a culture and society. By conveying certain messages in various forms (like folktales or myths across generations), they can provide a deeper insight to daily life and societal norms (Mechling, 2006; Noyes, 2012). The focus of this literature analysis is to discuss how folklore created a framework to analyze mental health and illnesses. Folklore may shed light on how mental health and illnesses were perceived within

earlier generations before society took interest in mental health. Folktales of the Sawney Bean Clan and Cristi Cleek are used here as examples to help understand how mental health was perceived around the time these folktales were created, in lieu of documentation and medical focus on mental health. This connects early folklore's portrayal of actions and behaviors to the development of the psychological sciences arising from a contemporary curiosity of why these behaviors happen

Background

The folktale, "The Sawney Bean Clan" focuses on a man named Alexander "Sawney" Bean, who lived with his family in Scotland sometime between the 14th- and 17th-century. This tale begins to depict "Sawney" Bean as a Scottish trader, who relocated multiple times across Scotland (Alexander "Sawney" Bean: Biography on undiscovered Scotland, 2017; Johnson, 2017). By the end of the 14th century, it has been said that Bean was forced to flee his hometown and go into hiding in a cave off the coast of what is currently known as South Ayrshire, Scotland—all after marrying an alleged witch. Soon after, they started a family, which eventually grew into 48 people—consisting of 14 children, 18 grandsons, and 14 granddaughters all born due to sibling incest (Alexander "Sawney" Bean: Biography on Undiscovered Scotland,

2017; Gunn 1999; Johnson, 2017). While cut from society, Bean was not able to maintain an income and provide for his family from his trade profession, leading him to rob and murder travelers that passed by their cave, which was located nearby a popular location for arriving traders and travelers of the time. In addition to robbery and murder, the Bean family used the bodies of their victims for necrophilic acts as well as a source of food to support themselves without being discovered, which soon caused a widespread fear among the people who passed by (Gunn, 1999). Although the Bean family perfected the methodology of cannibalism and murder in a span of 25 years, according to the tale, a search group, led personally by King James I of Scotland, discovered them and sentenced them to death (Alexander "Sawney" Bean: Biography on

Undiscovered Scotland, 2017; Gunn, 1999; Johnson, 2017).

The details of the Sawney Bean Clan folktale derived from an earlier Scottish tale of Christie Cleek, also known as Andrew Christie. According to his story, he was born in Perth, Scotland in the mid-14th century and later driven to murder and cannibalism during the famine in the British Isles (Morrison, n.d.; *Posts about Christie Cleek on the Haunted Palace*, 2013). Christie Cleek and his family, similar to the Beans, lived in

hiding, feasting on human bodies and spreading fear among the people. The main difference between these two folktales, is that after the famine ceased, everyone in the family was killed for their crimes except Christie himself -- he escaped and was never found (Morrison, n.d.; *Posts about Christie Cleek on The Haunted Palace*, 2013). This particular story appears to be historically plausible due to documentation proof from the 1400's (*Posts about Christie Cleek on The Haunted Palace*, 2013).

Review of Literature:

Cross-Cultural Cannibalism throughout Human History

“Cross-Cultural Cannibalism throughout Human History” is a literature review that focuses on the written history of cannibalistic behavior of humans among various generations and cultures, and utilizes previous scientific studies on the evolutionary history of the human species regarding cannibalistic behavior as a possible explanation for such behavior. An article chosen for this literature review, for example, focuses on how the war and colonization in South America influenced the cannibalistic behaviors of its people during that period (Cochran, M., & Rucas, S., 2012). Another study chosen for this particular literature review discussed the behaviors of human ancestors such as chimpanzees. This research examined chimpanzees and monitored their eating habits to determine if they exhibited signs of cannibalism (Cochran, M., & Rucas, S., 2012).

Furthermore, “Cross-Cultural Cannibalism throughout Human History” also focused on the Donner Party incident and Andean Plane Crash in order to illustrate other instances of cannibalism to deepen the understanding of cannibalistic tendencies among humans (Cochran, M., & Rucas, S., 2012).

Cannibalism is defined as the ritualistic eating of human flesh by another human being (Cochran, & Rucas, 2012). In the study mentioned above, the authors emphasized a clear distinction between cannibalism and survival cannibalism: Where survival cannibalism is only practiced to provide nutrition during times of need, cannibalism is practiced. Cannibalism was taboo across most cultures (Cochran & Rucas, 2012). With this in mind, the focus of this study was to analyze the behaviors of chimpanzees

in order to understand the rise or prevalence of cannibalistic behaviors within different societies (Cochran & Rucas, 2012).

The events described in the Sawney Bean Clan folktale in comparison to the examples given in the study “Cross-Cultural Cannibalism throughout Human History,” such as the events of the Donner Party or the experiences of the Andean Plane Crash victims, gave probable evidence to explain cannibalistic actions among groups of individuals (Cochran &

Rucas, 2012). The ability to look at such events helps portray a better picture of cannibalism amongst people in terms of survival instinct. What if the events and actions of the Sawney Bean Clan, Donner Party, and Andean Plane Crash triggered a reaction inciting mental health crisis in community individuals, causing them to commit acts of cannibalism? The Donner Party and the Andean Plane Crash give some insight to what may have happened within the Sawney Bean Clan (Cochran & Rucas, 2012; Morrison, n.d.).

Chronic Anger as a Precursor to Adult Antisocial Personality Features: The Moderating Influence of Cognitive Control

According to Hawes and Perlman’s study on “Chronic Anger as a Precursor to Adult Antisocial Personality Features”, anger is an early symptom of antisocial personality disorder. There were no research studies prior to this study that provided any evidence that youth with persistent anger issues have a higher risk of showing antisocial personality disorder in adulthood. Furthermore, there was no evidence that cognitive control abilities help prevent youth with antisocial personality from developing criminal minds. Thus, this study observed the anger development among 503 boys using annual exams from childhood to middle school adolescence. The results showed five different trajectories of anger: childhood onset, childhood-limited, adolescent-onset, moderate, and low.

Anger is a common emotional trait experienced by every human being. It is

an emotional trait that young adults may develop into antisocial personality disorder as they enter adulthood, although there is no solid research that demonstrates this particular mode of development. Anger can be used as substantial evidence and a solid base for the antisocial personality disability disorder. Hawes and Perlman’s study focuses on observing the time frame during which anger primarily develops, so it can be managed. The different time periods measured can reveal when anger evolves to antisocial personality disorder or if it evolves to another disorder such as schizophrenia or if the subject simply experiences the emotion like any other individual. Finally, it can reveal the time frame in which anger has a greater impact in the lives of the subjects being observed. Managing these anger issues at an early age can help prevent antisocial personality disorder and lower crime that is caused by anger related motives.

In comparison to the Sawney Bean clan case study, Hawes and Perlman's study analyzed the different possibilities of how anger influences the development of antisocial personality disorder—which is a possible leading factor of cannibalistic actions among humans. According to the research findings, individuals with poor cognitive control and childhood-onset of anger have a higher risk of developing antisocial personality disorder as adults (Hawes &

Perlman, 2016). The Sawney Bean Clan folktale provides a substantial framework of evidence for the onset of antisocial personality disorder due to the cannibalistic actions of an individual. The actions of Sawney Bean that developed throughout the story, such as cannibalism and practice of incest, demonstrated that his antisocial personality increased and developed from his childhood (Dunn, 1999).

Between Belief and Delusion: Cult Members and the Insanity Plea

In the study “Between Belief and Delusion: Cult Members and the Insanity Plea,” Holoyda and Newman addressed how and why cult members plea insanity during trial. Holoyda and Newman suggested a few potential influences of why cult members go onto trial and plead insanity: For example, cult members are influenced by pure delusion, actual belief, or religious convictions. This article suggests that a court faces possible problems, because if cult members claim to act the way they do because of religious beliefs, then their conviction might be seen as based on religious values. Another focus of this article is manipulation, especially seen in leading members who have great influence on the behaviors of the rest of the cult. A result of this study has shown that although mental health professionals may diagnose the individuals focused in this study with any psychiatric diagnoses, their testimony of pleading not guilty did not promote to be successful—may not be

used to absolve their responsibility for their involvement in murder.

Although, an increase of diagnosis and attention of dissociative disorders among cult members may have a significant impact on the assessment of cult members from forensic evaluators.

Cult members are individuals who are controlled through manipulation by a single leader and potentially meet the criteria of a certain dissociative disorder (if they meet most criteria of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual 5 (DSM-5)). With this understanding, if members are caught partaking in a severe crime that would go to trial, they may plea “not guilty” through insanity; for example, if the members' participation in crimes such as murder would be influenced by the instilled, false, belief system that was engrained by their cult involvement. Since the orders given by the leaders became part of the members' beliefs and basis for their daily life, it may be relevant in the courtroom to consider

them as psychotic.

This article relates to the Sawney Bean clan because the family could be seen as a type of cult. Over time, myths were told that created the story of the Sawney Bean Clan. As legend has it, the family acted in cannibalistic ways, which ultimately masks a mental disorder. The article argues that these out of the ordinary behaviors committed by cult members or members part of a clan can

be because of delusional symptoms. A cult can be made up of family members, because regardless of the relation, when a leading member has manipulation and control over a group of people and their actions, they can be viewed as a cult. In particular cases, such as Sawney Bean and his family, the cult leader may drive the group to become involved in murderous behaviors.

High Population Density and Egg Cannibalism Reduce the Efficiency of Mass- Rearing in *Euscepes postfasciatus*

According to “High Population Density and Egg Cannibalism Reduce the Efficiency of Mass-Rearing in *Euscepes postfasciatus*,” the sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) has been one of the major crops grown in developing countries (Kuriwada., et al., 2014). It has been found in multiple studies that there has been a considerable presence of two West Indian sweet potato weevils: *Euscepes postfasciatus* and *Cylas formicarius*, are a type of small beetles that typically have their larvae develop into seeds or various parts of a plant, which together prevented farmers from growing sweet potato’s on the tropical and subtropical regions of developing countries, causing widespread famine among most of the population in these regions (Kuriwada., et al., 2014). In this study, the researchers, due to ethical reasons of testing on human subjects, focused on the influence of dietary intake on the population density of sweat potato weevil eggs in order to provide information to aid in establishing a more effective artificial mass-rearing system —

a known method of controlling the growth of malicious insects (Kuriwada., et al., 2014). The improvement of the artificial mass-rearing would provide a better understanding in the control of these insects and aid the improvement of crop growth—avoiding another widespread famine.

This study was conducted by testing six different sized groups of eggs of sweet potato weevils. Each group was provided a specific dietary restriction by being feed an artificial diet and having a record kept for number of eggs collected that had been cannibalized in a few small-scale laboratory experiments (Kuriwada., et al., 2014). Each group was observed between restriction treatments (containing artificial diet or sweet potato roots diet or no diet) and found to show that high population density potentially promotes egg cannibalism by adult insects (Kuriwada., et al., 2014). The results of the insect’s cannibalistic behavior was then linked

to human behavior — where the cannibalistic behavior of individuals in South Pacific islands was due to high population density and low food availability (shortage of sweet potatoes) at the time.

Population density is defined as the number of people within a given area (Kuriawada, et al, 2014). The information gathered in this article helped give a better understanding that population density is correlated with the act of cannibalism. It also showed some insight into the actions across cultures to cross-reference the amounted differences between people in regards to cannibalism. The article also talks about artificial diets; this is defined as eating any substance that is edible and provides nutritional value (Cochran & Rucas, 2012). This may aid in answering the question of whether the lack of available food can lead to cannibalism and if cannibalism can or cannot be connected to mental health disorder. This can help aid researchers in the direction of answering the question: What lead to the

rise of cannibalism?

In comparison to the Sawney Bean Clan the population density among this Clan was not as significant in contrast to West India. The Sawney Bean Clan was located in a cave in the mountains of Scotland, where natural foods, such as animals and plants, was available, whereas in West India, the population density as well as the geological location was far greater than that of the clan. When the sweet potato famine hit West India, people resulted to eggs and other animals. This was not the case for the Sawney Bean Clan. The Clan would reside in the mountains of Scotland and would capture and eat passing travelers and traders. Both events were similar in the fact that there was a shortage of food. However, the important difference is that the Sawney Bean Clan performed cannibalistic acts. The findings of both events raise the question of why a shortage of food can lead some people to perform cannibalistic acts and not others.

Cannibalism

The article, “Cannibalism,” submitted to the *Cannibalism Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, by David Lester, John White, and Brandi Giordano, examined various qualities, for example, the behaviors and characteristics of 345 serial killers and compiled these qualities into a 73- variable dataset. By using this dataset of qualities, the researchers Lester et al., compared these qualities to various serial killers who partook in cannibalism, necrophilia, and those who engage in both

or neither. The results determined that 31 of the 345 serial killers ate parts of their victims, whereas 49 had sexual intercourse with their victims. Of the 31 serial killers that engaged in cannibalistic actions, 18 of them also had sex with their victims. These serial killers that participated in cannibalism and necrophilia showed signs of deviance in their behavior as well as psychological deficits. According to the results, there was a strong association within the given

dataset between cannibalism and necrophilia. This was found due to an analysis on the similarities of characteristics necrophiliacs may have to cannibals.

Cannibalism was described as seven different types that depend on the different situations in which cannibalism was present. For instance, one of them was for medical purposes such as drinking human blood for epilepsy. In regards to criminals, cannibalism was more common due to revenge or delusions. Cannibalism is an uncommon behavior making it difficult to conduct research on. Based on recent criminal cases that involve cannibalism, most show to have had early trauma, especially in relation to the mother of the individual (speculating that breast feeding itself is a cannibalistic phase all humans experience with sadistic overtones) leading to the different types of cannibalistic behaviors. According to a recent study previously mentioned in this paper, criminal cannibals were identified to have: a particular kind of lust for cannibalistic behaviors which results in an intense desire or need to participate in the act, a need for revenge, and delusional characteristics. Results of this study found that those who portray cannibalistic characteristics of lust and delusion were more likely to eat their victims uncooked, while the ones with

the revenge characteristic were more likely to partake in cannibalistic behaviors under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In comparison to the Sawney Bean clan case study, the article, “Cannibalism,” analyzes the scenario in which cannibalism is present and Sawney Bean involves himself in one if not many of those scenarios. Sawney Bean practiced cannibalism not only to survive but also as a means of pleasure to satisfy his needs — for he would sexually assault women while deceased (Dunn, 1999). Furthermore, Sawney also removed specific body parts of women to keep as trophies, a display of antisocial personality disorder by not considering the moral values of humanity or moral values of a higher power such as a God (Dunn, 1999). The article described several types of reasons for why cannibalism is practiced and one of them was to avoid starvation, which provides a good explanation for why Sawney practiced cannibalism (Lester & White, 2015). Moreover, another scenario described during the research was that cannibalism was practiced due to the influence of psychosis and delusion (Lester & White, 2015). Sawney Bean appears to have been suffering from delusional effects because he grew up in a working class family but decided to run away and live the life of a criminal.

Second-Generation Adult Former Cult Group Members’ Recovery Experiences: Implications for Counseling

This article by Matthews and Salazar

(2013) looks at the experiences of former

cult members' recovery processes and how they deal with psychological challenges and face difficulties when trying to conform back into society. Many studies focusing on cults, mainly focus on first-generation cult members, here second-generation cult members are observed. This particular study shows that the cult leader has control over the members' lives, and affects their decisions (Matthews & Salazar, 2013). Within a cult group, there is manipulation, abuse, and exploitation of the cult members and familial cults are no exception (Matthews & Salazar, 2013). The study conducted by Matthews and Salazar in 2013, focused on the results of volunteers who went through a screening questionnaire to check if they met the criteria, according to Singer — an expert in cult research, for being part of a religious cult (Matthews & Salazar, 2013). The data retrieved showed that the manipulation techniques that are used within cults can lead its members to experience feelings of low self-esteem and powerlessness (Matthews & Salazar, 2013).

Cults, according to this study, are defined as a type of movement of people that involve seven specific criteria such as having the group be organized around the members' devotion to its appointed leader. With these criteria, it provides insight on the qualities of the group, such as manipulation, abuse, and exploitation

of the cult members, with familial cults capable of being held in this same manner (Matthews & Salazar, 2013). Also, the appointed leader of cults portrays qualities of control over the members' lives as well as having a significant influence on members' personal decisions. This makes it difficult for the members to enter back into society without being psychologically affected by the reigns of the cult (Matthews & Salazar, 2013). The Matthews et al. article about cult members relates to Sawney Bean and his family.

Although Sawney Bean's family was known as his 'clan' (hence the name "Sawney Bean Clan"), they were considered similar to the definition of a cult. His members were born into the clan and knew no other way of life. They were raised in a way where murder and cannibalism was the norm. In relation to the Sawney Bean Clan, the article states that brainwashing is a manipulation technique used by leaders and that is what Sawney Bean used to control his family (Gunn, 1999). He brainwashed them into thinking that cannibalistic rituals are acceptable methods of survival. As legend has it, Sawney Bean's family had no outside influence, aside from the teachings of the father, who taught them murder and cannibalism (Gunn, 1999).

Identifying Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder using Resting-State fMRI

Researchers Yan Tang, et al. focused their study on “Identifying Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder using Resting-State fMRI,” to improve the understanding of how neural connections are created within the brain among patients with antisocial personality disorder. There was significant focus given to see if there is a causal link between patients with abnormal behavior and a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder (Tang et al., 2013). The results not only give insight into the pathological mechanisms of this complex mental disorder from a resting-state functional integration viewpoint, but also provide evidence of functional disconnection (Tang et al., 2013). The data showed that there were overlapped regions between functional and structural brain abnormalities among individuals with antisocial personality disorder. It was also shown that the functional abnormalities data that overlapped could have also been related to the structural abnormalities (Tang et al., 2013). More research will be done on this matter in the future.

Antisocial personality disorder was the main focus of this study and its symptoms include, but are not limited to: The inability to conform to social norms through unlawful behaviors; deceitfulness, shown by repeated lying; irritability and aggressiveness; a strong disregard for the safety of others and of themselves; consistent irresponsibility, indicated by the repeated failure to sustain work or to

fulfill financial obligations; as well as the lack of remorse. Therefore, one purpose of this study was to focus on the data shown in the abnormal resting-state functional connectivity patterns of antisocial personality disorder as well as find data to aid in identifying individuals with antisocial personality disorder by using resting-state fMRI (rs-fMRI) data (Tang et al., 2013).

In respect to the folklore story of the Sawney Bean clan, the Tang et al. study could give a clear understanding of the functional abnormalities of the brain of Sawney Bean. In understanding whether there was something wrong would clarify the reasoning of the behaviors of Sawney Bean. Although his behaviors are considered uncommon, the understanding of why it still happens would be beneficial for future occurrences. According to Tang et al.’s study, there has been increased recognition that there is a close link between antisocial personality disorder and criminal behavior due to the defining criteria according to the DSM-IV (which was the most current diagnostic reference at the time of the study) (Tang et al., 2013). The characteristics of the Sawney Bean Clan folklore is a perfect framework to connect with the content of the study (Tang et al., 2013) to show the influence of environmental factors on human behavior and whether abnormal behavior could induce antisocial personality disorder and survival cannibalism.

Sibling Incest: A Literature Review and a Clinical Study

The research on “Sibling Incest: A Literature Review and a Clinical Study” by Inga Tidefors et al., focuses on the dynamics and characteristics of adolescent incest connecting the results of previous research with data collected in clinical trials run by the researchers of this paper. The clinical trial explored the differences in the characteristics of a group of adolescent sibling incest offenders compared to a group of adolescent non-sibling offenders (Tidefors et al, 2010). Offending behavior, prior victimization, and family dysfunction were important variables regarding the comparisons of the two groups of adolescent sibling behaviors. In this study, results had shown that there were differences between adolescents that abused their siblings and those who abused non-siblings, in which there was a higher degree of family dysfunction as well as severe offending behavior in the sibling offender group in comparison to the other group (Tidefors et al, 2010).

Family dysfunction was one of the main focuses of this study; it consists of, but is not limited to: Physical abuse, psychological abuse, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and child removal (Tidefors et al, 2010). The differences between the groups that were mentioned in the study were that sibling offenders had a higher degree of family dysfunction due to: if they were ever in foster-care, a victim of psychological abuse, or experienced parental substance abuse (Tidefors et al, 2010). In both the sibling offender group and the non-

sibling offender group, a majority of the offenders had grown up in families where they had been the victims of psychological abuse (Tidefors et al, 2010). Moreover, studies had shown that a combination of different forms of family dysfunction, such as psychological abuse, parental neglect, and rejection, had a significant negative impact on children and because of these, the development of sibling incest was due to the compensation of the unfulfilled emotional needs for nurture and comfort from the parents (Tidefors et al, 2010). Parental rejection was also found to be more frequent in a sibling incest group than in a non-sibling incest group. Other studies show that a substantial proportion of parents of sibling incest offenders had been victims of sexual and/or physical abuse that could explain family dysfunction and lack of parental involvement (Tidefors et al, 2010). In comparison to the folklore story of the “Sawney Bean Clan,” this study “Sibling Incest: A Literature Review and a Clinical Study” by Inga Tidefors et al., (Tidefors et al, 2010), could aid in creating a clear theoretical framework to better understand the actions of Sawney Bean through his relationship with his family mentioned in the folklore stories. The incestual behaviors of the children of Sawney Bean, according to folklore, have shown evidence of significant parental and psychological abuse, in addition to other factors in regards to family dysfunction described in the sibling incest study

(Tidefors et al, 2010). Using the information presented in this article, the actions of Sawney Bean of cannibalism and sibling incest could show underlying features of family dysfunction, such as psychological abuse, parental neglect,

and potential rejection. In order to focus this more closely, there were a few studies that concentrated on the low percentage of incest arising from sexual assault among adolescents and why that is (Turner, 2008; Tidefors et al, 2010).

Methods

The researchers used different databases to gain sources on the topics of mental health and cannibalism. Researchers also used the services of a library session where they were taught which sites were academic and what types of keywords to use to search topics relevant to the study. Some keywords that researchers used to gather evidence were “cannibalism, mental health,” In addition to searching key words researchers also used sources such as pubmed, psychinfo. . . etc. These sources were used because they were most relevant to the topic of mental health. The skills taught during the library session further enhanced the process of gathering more information on how mental health is perceived and the outcomes of perception. Other methods also included the use of case studies in order to better understand the events the individuals participated in, their developmental history, and

treatment options for potential mental health diagnosis. Furthermore, an academic proposal was used to help give an overview of the researcher’s topic and give further insight to the “how,” “why,” and “what” needs to be done in the research study. Lastly, the hourglass research model was used to help aid researchers in the process of formatting and finding information based on the research. The hourglass model is structured in a way that the research begins with an initial interest the researcher wishes to study in which must later be narrowed down to a hypothesis or a focus question. Then, at the narrowest point of the research hourglass, the researcher provides their observations and data analysis based on their observations. With this information, it provides a conclusion and generalizes back to any questions stated in the beginning.

Results

The main focus of the research was to provide insight on how folklore created a framework for mental health and illness. Our paper provides examples of folktales, such as the ones of the

Sawney Bean Clan and Christi Cleek, and connects them to current research to comprehend how mental health was perceived in folktales. Here, the similarities of behaviors between the

folktales of Sawney Bean and Christi Cleek will both provide adequate evidence on the creation of the preliminary framework of mental health. Both folklore stories used in this study included but were not limited to: Cannibalistic acts, sibling incest, family dysfunction, and isolation from society. A cultural-dependent correlation was found between population density and cannibalism that had shown that the lack of food available was a potential cause of cannibalism and could lead to a mental health disorder (Cochran & Rucas, 2012). Additionally, the question of why a shortage of food could lead some people to perform cannibalistic acts and not others had also showed insight to different cultural perspectives on the importance of nutritional value of certain foods to the individual (Cochran & Rucas, 2012). This may aid in answering the question of if the lack of food available can lead to cannibalism and whether it could be a potential connection to mental health disorders.

This finding, among others, provided a potential connection of certain psychological disorders to cannibalism that contributed to the development of antisocial personality disorder in its

specific stages of development (Lester et al. 2015). To know if Sawney Bean truly had ASPD, first we must diagnose Sawney Bean based on his behavioral evidence. According to Tang et al.'s interpretation of the symptoms of antisocial personality disorder, the individuals that committed only cannibalism had shown to have very severe psychological deficits and deviant behavior resulting in the acquisition of antisocial personality disorder.

Incestual behaviors among children provide clear evidence of significant parental and psychological abuse, in addition to other factors as regards family dysfunction described in the sibling incest study. The actions of Sawney Bean of cannibalism and sibling incest could show underlying features of family dysfunction, such as psychological abuse, parental neglect, and potential rejection, of the cannibalism and isolation (Turner, 2008; Tidefors et al, 2010). This has a significant negative impact on his children, which resulted in their incestual behaviors to compensate for unfulfilled emotional needs for comfort from their parents. This kind of background could aid in general descriptions of potential psychological disorders (Turner, 2008; Tidefors et al, 2010).

Discussion

Overall, mythical folklore tales, to a certain extent, create a framework for mental illness that illustrates the association of mental illness with the engagement of criminal actions such as

cannibalism. Mythical tales such as the Sawney Bean Clan tale create questions regarding the mental stability of humans and what motivated them to return to a primitive state where morals are

disregarded. According to the tale, Sawney did not have the economical need to engage in criminal behavior nor cannibalism, instead he felt he had the inner need that guided him to run away with a women and live in cave. He then began to rob people, perform sexual acts, and eat them (Gunn, 1999). The question that arises is: why did he do that if he did not need to? A possible explanation is that Sawney could have been suffering from antisocial social personality disorder.

Based on one of our articles that

By gathering data and analyzing facts, researchers found that through looking back in history; folklore(s) were useful and provided interest in the topic of mental health.

Folklore(s) did this by taking an event(s) that occurred and may or may not have altered facts and evidence to enhance the desired interest in such a topic. It is still not definitive whether the Sawney Bean Clan really killed and ate the bodies of wandering travelers. However, that is how the tale goes and without

focuses on fMRI imaging in patients with antisocial personality disorder, if the technology used was available during the time of Sawney Bean, it would have given a clear understanding of the functional abnormalities of the brain of Sawney Bean and to clarify the reasoning of the behaviors of Sawney Bean, such as cannibalism.

Although the actions of Sawney Bean and the rest of the family are considered uncommon, the understanding of why it still happens would be beneficial for future occurrences.

Conclusion

such speculation from mythical folklore(s), mental health may not have been as prominent in the field of psychology as it is today. Further research is needed on how folklores can shape and create a view on issues involving mental health. The ultimate result of this work would be to promote a more positive and welcoming outlook on mental health, catalyzing investment in research and changing the negative perspectives of the field of mental health psychology.

References

- Cochran, M., & Rucas, S. (2012). Cross-cultural cannibalism throughout human history. *California Polytechnic State University*, 1, 1-32. Doi: http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1107&context=soc_ssp.
- Gunn. (1999). *The Terrible Tale of Sawney Bean*. Retrieved from <http://skyelander.orgfree.com/sawney.html>.
- Hawes, S. W. &, Perlman, S. B., et al. (2016). Chronic anger as a precursor to adult antisocial personality features: The moderating influence of cognitive control. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 125(1), 64-74. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/abn0000129>.
- Holoyda, B., & Newman, W. (2016, March 01). Between belief and delusion: Cult members and the insanity plea. Retrieved from <http://jaapl.org/content/44/1/53>.
- Kuriawada, T., Kumano, N., Shiromoto., & Haraguchi D. (2014). High population density and egg cannibalism reduce the efficiency of mass-rearing in *euscapes post fasciatus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). DOI: 123.221-228.
- Lester, D., White, J., et al. (2015). Cannibalism. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, 70(4), 428-35. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0030222815573732>.
- Matthews, C. H., & Salazar, C. F. (2013). Second-generation adult former cult group members' recovery experiences: Implications for counseling. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 36(2), 188-203. doi:10.1007/s10447-013-9201-0
- Mechling, J. (2006). Solo Folklore. *Western Folklore*, 65(4), 435-453. Retrieved from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25474824>.

Morrison, D. (n.d.). Christie Cleek: Is this the real Sawney Bean? Retrieved from

<http://www.sawneybean.com/horrors/ChristieCleek.htm>.

This article was adapted from "Tales of the Border and of Scotland."

Mysterious Britain and Ireland. (n.d). *The Legend of Sawney Bean*. Retrieved from

<http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/scotland/dumfriesshire/legends/the-legend-of-sawney-bean.html>.

Noyes, Dorothy (2012). The Social Base of Folklore. In Bendix, Regina; Hasan-Rokem, Galit.

A Companion to Folklore. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 13–39. doi: 10.1002/9781118379936.ch1.

Posts about Christie Cleek on The Haunted Palace. (2013). Retrieved

from <https://hauntedpalaceblog.wordpress.com/tag/christie-cleek/>.

Tidefors I., Arvidsson H., Ingevaldson S., & Larsson M. (2010). Sibling incest: A literature

review and a clinical study. *Journal of sexual aggression*, (16) 3, 347-260. doi: 10.1080/13552600903511667.

Turner, A. P. (2008). Incest, inbreeding, and intrafamilial conflict: Analyzing the boundaries of

sexual permissiveness in modern North America. *Sexuality & Culture*, 12(1), 38-44. doi:10.1007/s12119-007-9015-5.

Tang, Y.; Jiang, W.; Liao, J.; Wang W.; & Luo A. (2013). Identifying individuals with antisocial

personality disorder using resting-state fMRI. *PLoS ONE*, (9)4. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0060652>.