

**“Psychopathology” and “Crime” in Joyce Carol Oates’s (Rosamond Smith)
novel *The Soul/Mate***

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Abstract

Soul/Mate written in 1989 by Joyce Carol Oates under the pseudonym Rosamond Smith, centers on a 28-year-old murderous psychopath Colin Asch and his obsession with a double, an alter ego—a beautiful “pure” 39-year-old widow named Dorethea Deverell. When Colin meets her unexpectedly at a dinner party, he becomes obsessed with Dorethea “as given by God” and considers her his soul mate, “lacking a soul” he dedicates his life to her welfare whereby he wishes to complete himself. Ironically, Dorethea has to be awakened to her own condition as she is reluctant to take responsibility both as a woman and as an art historian in the capitalist society that is symbolized by the psychopath Colin and Dorethea his double. In this novel Oates uses psychopathology as a metaphor for the invisible harm that the society and the individual is subjected to as the term itself is problematic. Invisible crimes are committed in the society by respectable members whereas psychopaths are easy suspects. Ironically, psychopaths are not always criminals. The idea of “success” and the “American Dream” make competition a necessity such it becomes impossible to recognize psychopathic doctors, lawyers, respectable fathers or bosses, who have position and power in the society. This article will explore the relation between psychopathology and crime in the light of R.D. Laing’s view of society and madness and Cleckley’s and Hare’s view of psychopathology.

Keywords: Double, Psychopath, Crime, R.D: Laing, Cleckley, Hare.

Introduction

Soul/Mate written in 1989 by Joyce Carol Oates under the pseudonym Rosamond Smith, centers on a 28-year-old murderous psychopath Colin Asch and his obsession with a double, an alter ego—a beautiful “pure” 39-year-old widow named Dorethea Deverell. When Colin meets her unexpectedly at a dinner party, he becomes obsessed with Dorethea “as given by God” and considers her his soul mate, “lacking a soul” he dedicates his life to her welfare whereby he wishes to complete himself. On the other hand, symbolically, Dorethea accepts this soul coming to the “riverbank” or “fertile upland region” in the form of the “sacred” bird the “Bobwhite, the Quail or the Partridge” and is fascinated and hypnotized.

Hence the male and the female is to unite intellectually. Unfortunately, the art historian Dorethea Deverell will come short in answering the intellectual needs of Colin. Colin’s subjects are the question of art, the role of the artist, history and existential philosophies. His quest is for knowledge and intellectual accomplishment. The poet P. B. Shelley, the artist Michelangelo, John Marin, Paul Bowles, Marco Polo, Caligula and the biblical figure David are among some of the significant names Colin mentions. His examples of poetry and paintings are all related to righteousness, power, individual significance, success and spatial relationships. He is fascinated by landscapes and watercolour paintings that emphasize the beauty and importance of space that the soul is to occupy. Colin travelled all around the world and America. As suggested by the pun on his name; the Bobwhite, the Quail and the Partridge, these species occupying a large place in nature, are to be extinct in near future when there is nothing serious done. So, in the novel Colin takes on the role of the storyteller, telling about “life.” As stated by Greg Johnson, Oates’s attempt is to get the whole world into a book (13). Colin is representing the capitalist system whose harms and violence remain invisible. His murders committed in an artistic way make these harm visible. So this paper will explore psychopathology and crime in the light of R.D. Laing’s view of society and madness in Oates’s novel *The Soul/Mate*.

Ironically, Colin as an intellectual but not well educated psychopathic character suits to Coleman’s definition (1972) and when looked from this perspective he seems to be a threat to the society. He violently kills people without any reason. He is unable to love others and does not fear law and punishment. He wants to destroy the whole world including himself and does not want to live over thirty. He rejects guilt and pity because of his insufficient superego.

He wants to get immediate satisfaction as he is selfish and wants to satisfy his instinctive drives without considering the consequences. He can impress others and can make profit out of them, but he is unable to have any genuine relationships with others, symbolically, by presenting Colin and his murders Oates shows the condition of the individual in capitalist society and reflects the view of the anti-psychiatrist R. D. Laing:

We must know about relations and communications. But these disturbed and disturbing patterns of communication reflect the disarray of personal worlds of experience whose repression, denial, splitting, introjection, projection, etc.—whose general desecration and profanation—our civilization is based upon. When or personal worlds are rediscovered and allowed to reconstitute themselves, we first a shambles.

Bodies half-dead; genitals dissociated from heart; heart severed from head; head dissociated from genitals. Without inner unity, with just enough sense of continuity to clutch at identity—the current idolatry. Torn-body, mind and spirit –by inner contradictions, pulled in different directions. Man cut off equally from his own body –a half crazed creature in a mad world. . . we are all implicated in this state of affairs of alienation. This context is decisive for the whole practice of psychotherapy. (55)

Colin commits his murders in the name of Love, which suits Laing's description. Colin is obsessed with Dorethea as a long desired mother figure and he committs murder to protect Dorethea in expectation of a motherly love in the hope of a supporting family. Again as mentioned by Laing:

The economic metaphor is employed. The mother “invests” in her child. What is most revealing is the husband's function. The provision of economic support, status and protection, in that order. There is the frequent reference to security, the esteem of others. What one is supposed to want, to live for, is “gaining pleasure from the esteem and affection of others” if not, one is a psychopath. Such statements are in a sense true. They describe the frightened, cowed, abject creature that we are admonished to be, if we are to be normal—offering each other mutual protection from our own violence. the family as a “protection racket”.... The family's function is to repress Eros; to induce a false consciousness of security; to deny death by avoiding life; to cut of transcendence; to believe in Go, not to experience the Void; to create, in short, one dimensional man; to promote respect, conformity, obedience; to con children out of play; to induce a fear of failure; to promote a respect for work; to promote a respect for respectability.” (64-65)

R.D. Laing: Love and Violence

Unfortunately, the most violent crimes are committed in the family in the name of love. For Laing (1967), love and violence are polar opposites, whereas love lets the other be with affection and concern, violence attempts to constrain the other's freedom, to force him act with ultimate lack of concern and with indifference to the other's own existence or destiny in the way one desires. The human beings destroy themselves by violence masquerading as love (58), like Colin who wants to destroy the whole world. Colin rejects to adapt into his environment, ironically, adaptation is the requirement of the contemporary world. For Laing, this kind of adaptation is absurd, human beings require to “utilize intellect” and also require “ an intellectual equilibrium that permits a person malleable, to adjust himself to others without fear of loss of identity with change, it requires a basic trust in others, and a confidence in the integrity of the self.” So, Laing too, rejects adaptation, he says “adaptation to what, to society or to a world gone mad? .“ For him, the human being “ is a victim burning at the stake” in the world (64).

Colin appears to be clinging in vegetarianism, as he does not want animals to be exploited, but ironically he exploits everybody and anything that comes on his way. Colin also fits Geçtan's (1988) description of a psychopath, as he tells lies and feels unconnected because of his psychopathic ego, which does not accept love. He is egocentric and thinks that others control him which causes his rage and enmity (210-212). His only goal in life becomes having control, because control is essential for living. He has also narcissistic qualities, he admires himself and his abilities and feels himself godlike. Therefore, he is hard to be recognized and categorized, psychopathology is a long debated subject and the term psychopath is a problematic term. The Pschopath and the criminal is another subject of scientific study as suggested by Hare & Babiak:

Given the psychopaths' personality features, and their inclination for breaking the rules and pushing the envelope of acceptable human behavior, there is some merit to this argument. Still, just having a psychopathic personality disorder does not make one a criminal. Some psychopaths live in society and do not technically break the law—although they may come close, with behavior that usually is very unpleasant for those around them. Some may lead seemingly normal lives, not hurting people in ways that attract attention, but causing problems nonetheless in hidden economic, psychological, and emotionally abusive ways. They do not make warm and loving parents, children, or family members. They do not make reliable friends or coworkers. Many psychopaths adopt a parasitic existence, living off the generosity or gullibility of others by taking advantage of and often abusing the trust and support of friends and family. They may move from place to place and from one source of support to another. You probably know one. You could work for, work with, or be married to someone with a psychopathic personality and not know that there is a formal psychological term for the individual who causes you so much pain and distress. He or she can be a neighbor, friend, or family member whose behavior you may find fascinating, confusing, and repelling (20-21).

So, Colin remains unrecognized in his environment and especially by Dorethea. Dorethea's lawyer lover identifies Colin as a psychopath, but he cannot prevent his crimes. Colin has a traumatic childhood and he loses his parents at the age of twelve in a car accident, in which he tries to save them in vain. After this defeat he wants to take the control in his hands by making others pity him and taking people's lives. As a psychopathic quality Colin is obsessed with the idea of control. The psychopath's pretense to emotional sensitivity is really part of his control function: the higher the level of belief in the psychopath that can be induced in his victim through his drama, the more "control" the psychopath believes he has. This, too, is true for Colin. He has control when others believe his lies. On the other hand, the "submission" to this control produces so much pain when the truth is glimpsed by the victim, but the victim prefers to continue in the lie than to face the fact that he has been duped. Dorethea and his other victims in *The Soul/Mate* do not want to accept that Colin is a psychopath and Colin counts on this. This gives him a feeling of power and the will to rule as Colin states: "It's power—doing things the way you want them done, becoming the agent of your own life. And death" (299).

The lesson he learns after the suicide of his teacher Mr. Kreuzer is another strengthening factor for his viewpoint. For Colin, only one-tenth of one percent of human beings has the superior will to rule the world. Colin feels among one of those privileged few who can willfully control fate (Creighton 87). He thinks that he is "the Agent Of Death."

Like, after all, there're so few times in your life you really know you're standing in exactly the right place at the right time. Like you're not even yourself any longer. But an agent of history. Of Death (298).

He believes he has an outstanding talent. His ability is to kill people and cover his murders. He wants to be good by destroying the world for recreation. As Creighton (1992) affirms, Colin is a very attractive young man and charms people easily (7). Colin's charming nature disguises his brutality and nobody suspects him of murder, until he reveals them and confesses to Dorethea. On the other hand, he is the outcome of his gothic environment. As Johnson (1987) suggests, the American reality stupefies, sickens, infuriates, and embarrasses to one's own meager imagination (12). The absence of positive

authority figures adds to the development of his insufficient superego and prevents personal relationships, which is for the existentialist psychiatrists R. D. Laing (1967) no longer possible in the present situation. As for Laing, the human beings are as driven to kill and be killed as they are to let live and live. The human beings seem to seek destruction as much as life and happiness. (76)

Colin loses his chance of being good at the age of twelve, at the moment of his parent's death due to the lack of positive parental role models. His substitute mother, aunt Ginny, is too weak to mother him and her husband is not able to father him. His rage toward his absent mother never fades, as she left him alone and helpless. Blaming others is another feature of the psychopath. Because of his feelings for his mother, Colin cannot have healthy relationships with women. He exploits them both physically and materialistically. Aunt Ginny babies and pities him, although being aware of the wounds on his hands she does not do anything to stop him. Aunt Ginny creates an illusion about Colin and becomes his blind admirer.

As stated by Cleckley in *The Mask of Sanity*, psychopaths are not "fragile individuals, what they think and do is produced from a "rock solid personality structure that is extremely resistant to outside influences." Many of them are protected for years from the consequences of their behavior by well-meaning family and friends and as long as their behavior remains unchecked or unpunished, they continue to go through life without too much inconvenience. Aunt Ginny and her husband Martin cannot deal with Colin, nor the psychiatric institutions, where he is constantly treated. Colin was sent to the house of corrections and received several treatments in past, but locking him up brought him nowhere. As suggested by Kiehl and Buckholtz, when locked up psychopaths learn to be better psychopaths. Psychopaths typically get worse, not better, after standard treatments like group therapy and they get insights into others' vulnerabilities which become opportunities to hone their manipulation skills. (<http://cicn.vanderbilt.edu/images/news/psycho.pdf>).

Soul/Mate & Psychopath

Only when Colin meets Dorethea, his soul mate, he has the possibility to replace the absent mother figure and satisfy his longing for a mother. He does not want Hartley to resemble Dorethea to his real mother (he hates). His mother did not have the right to die. The inspirational poet Shelly's death, like his mother's death, was too early. Colin does not kill Charles, because he is the perfect father figure he desires. He kills Charles's former wife Agnes, an alcoholic, in order to unite his substitute "parents" to find the long lost familial unity again. Dorethea is sacred for him, as suggested by her name she is "God given." Actually, Dorethea is a fixated idea, as her name is also an allusion to Dorothea Dix, who was a Mental Health Reformer and a Civil War Nurse (1802-1887) (<http://siarchives.si.edu/>).

Dorethea Deverell, on the other hand, is fascinated by him. When he forces her to go away with him, she becomes intensely interested in him as by awe or terror. Thus being captivated and enchanted. She is utterly charmed by his sight. Although being an art historian, Dorethea is unable to analyze and evaluate her own life. Her husband Michel died at an accident, when she was newly married, and after

this traumatic event she lost her baby. She has no sense for future. She hopes for a promotion, but she is not sure about her qualifications. She thinks that she is not good enough to be promoted. When it comes to her lover Charles, she is desperate. There is a suffocating silence between them. Lacking self-confidence she accepts being Charles mistress (being in a secondary position) she also adopts a minor and insignificant role in her work. She cannot speak out her ideas and has no urge to make her voice heard.

At this point Colin appears in Dorethea's life calling for action and change. He fulfills his mission by killing Roger Krauss, her "enemy," an unsympathetic and critical board member at the institute, and thereby helps Dorethea's being selected as the director of the institute. He kills Agnes, Dorethea's lover's ex-wife, to make the long delayed marriage possible. All of these actions emanate from his soul as evident in his words written in the blue ledger with capital letters "ANYTHING DONE HENCEFORTH IS BLESSED BECAUSE IT EMANATES FROM THE SOUL." The blue room is the only private place where he is free to create. There nobody interferes. When he suspects Aunt Ginny's entering this prohibited territory he immediately wants to punish her without thinking about the care she provides. His blue room is symbolizing distance, love, spirituality, peace, and happiness. It is his sacred place. There his mind is relaxed, he overcomes inhibitions, and is encouraged to communicate where he can fulfill himself and find answers to his questions related to his existence. He also does not want the room cleaned by a black maid, loathing segregation and discrimination. His blue room is a place of meaning-making and creation. In there he takes his decisions to carry out his mission to destroy the whole world which is unfair and his obsession with Dorethea becomes his only instrument.

Productive Obsession & Karma

His obsession is a productive one. It is a pressing idea that serves for meaning-making needs. In *In Praise of Positive Obsessions* Eric Maisel states that positive obsession is a response to the desire to live fully and an answer to the question, related to real concern in life. It is the fruit of mental energy: it bubbles to the surface because of the necessary curiosity, enthusiasm, and passion. Ironically, Colin's metaphoric murders generates out of his mind as his productive obsession with Dorethea generates mental energy: he is obsessed with the idea of satisfying Dorethea that energizes him and makes him research options and make plans to act according to them. When he captures Dorethea, he states that she can never know what is to kill a humanbeing. By kidnapping her, he calls her for action and cooperation. He warns Dorethea not to committ any kind of error, because by this way he will be forced both to kill her and himself, for which he is not ready yet. He believes each of his actions need careful planning. There is always a pressing idea in his mind that explains his constant exhaustion.

Ironically, his obsession turns out to be constructive. Colin believes in Karma. In Karmic Religions science and philosophic vision should be considered complementary to each other for ensuring the welfare of mankind as mentioned by Satva in Indian Philosophy (15). In Karma, action means the moral law of cause. Bad actions and effect are governing the future. Good behavior leads to rebirth in the higher orders. There are various beliefs in Darshana, for example, the body endowed with

intelligence or consciousness is alone called the self or the soul. The body itself lead to rebirth. In the lower orders of being is the self or the soul (21). Therefore as regards the world, there is no 'Supreme God' who is the Controller, the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Destroyer who grants re-birth. The Ruler of the Land alone is 'Ishvara.' Ishvara has no role or influence in the life of a sentient being. Hence, only sentient beings have independent lives. Each sentient being gets a life once only. The body is created out of the four truths (fundamental elements) and the power of intelligence or consciousness. (21) Arises therein. So long as the power of consciousness exists in the body, it has life. No sooner the power or force of consciousness ends, the body is destroyed. Therefore, the body (life) has no link or connection with the past. Keeping this principle in mind, Chârvak says "borrow if need be to consume ghee". This implies that if you don't have funds or good things of life with you, you should borrow from others to ensure a happy life of enjoyment. This is because after death, consciousness has no existence. In that case, the question of repayment of debts does not arise (21). Chârvak Darshana is rooted in materialism. It accepts the direct evidence of the senses as the only valid source of knowledge. In this world, whatever we experience with our sense organs is deemed as direct perception. Therefore, basic matter is regarded as the only philosophical truth in the Chârvak Darshana. Ishvara, soul, heaven, hell, eternal life as also 'mâya' or 'cosmic illusion or nescience' etc are directly imperceptible. Consequently Chârvaks do not accept such concepts as valid (22). "Putting faith in intangible or invisible things, men strive to attain the invisible or illusory happiness of heaven which they will never secure. Nor will they experience the perceivable happiness of the present world. These are the unhappy people. They will remain servants all their lives. The emergence of any Darshana takes place only when there is adverse mismatch or imbalance between materialism and spirituality. When a path in which faith, devotion, trust has been transformed into blind faith, that path (doctrine) is refuted or challenged by the emergence of a new Darshana (24). People may have started portraying common problems, (Indian Philosophy 25) well within the scope of normal human intellect and reasoning, as something very big and serious. As a result of this, Society may have become totally dependent or enslaved. It may have become crippled. Under these circumstances, the life of human beings may have become neither spiritual nor materialistic. Life may have become insipid. It may have become a life only in name. Under similar conditions, the Chârvak Darshana emerged. In order to protect people from blind spiritual dogmas, the material path was clearly enunciated by this doctrine giving prominence to material values (25). The state of society may have become just like "the blind leading the blind." Ironically, like the American society, which is luled by the American Dream and "the blind are leading the blind."

Colin identifies himself with Marco Polo, as a reincarnated person he considers himself as a great story teller (another pschopathic quality) and he wants to be "good." In Indian philosophy there are also the five vows Ahimsâ (The Vow of Non-Violence)– Not causing sorrow to any human being, animal, bird, leaf, tree or any form of life whatsoever is termed Ahimsâ. (The Vow of Truthfulness) – A vow taken to utter speech which is dear, agreeable, proper, and which conforms to the truth, is termed or 'the vow of truthfulness'. That speech though truthful is yet deemed untrue if it is not dear and not conducive to the good. (Satva 51). Asteyavrat (The Vow of Non-Stealing) – Not taking any article belonging to anyone unless given by that person which implies not stealing anything is defined as the 'Asteyavrat'. (The Vow of Celibacy/Chastity) – To vow to sacrifice all heavenly and

greedy/lustful desires enjoyable by the three means namely 'Krut, Anumat, and Karit' (Mind, Speech, and Action) is the "Brahmâchâryavrat". Aparigrahavrat (The Vow of Non-Attachment or Non-Possession) – The vow to sacrifice of the desire to possess anything at all is the 'Aparigrahavrat'. The observances of these five vows are considered wholly and completely necessary (Satva 51). Ironically, Colin is committing the crimes in the name of the vows, thinking he is reincarnated and he is Marco Polo the great traveller. Colin also believes that evil begins with stopping, with entrophy, therefore he wants his counter "progress."

By choosing Dorethea as his soulmate he hopes for change. He wants to change Dorethea's holy life. Colin functions as a catalyst by orienting himself toward other people, eventually toward another single person, Dorethea as the person having the next most important Karma with his soul. He is just a person helping - usually helping the weaker one - out of the present situation to master the change of life and to help to reorient in life after having gained the new freedom from the previous partners. He appeared suddenly in the life of a person, and is to do his "job" and to disappear. He would be either to remain just a very good friend or totally disappear out of sight for the remainder of this incarnation. As Colin cannot establish personal relationship, he is to disappear. Therefore, he commits suicide as Dorethea refuses to die with him. He is someone just coming into her life, getting her out of her apparent death-end road and once she is safe again, saying "good bye" and vanishing without living a hint. Dorethea hardly remembers anything of her captor, and for her, Colin was like an innocent school boy who had to be violent. For her, what she experienced was like a dream. By captivating her he gives her a life lesson transmitting the knowledge of life.

We are a grotesque parody or domesticity, Dorethea thought, but of what sort of domesticity is the parody? She seemed to know that, if she survived, she would remember this interlude for the remainder of her life: not the episodes of confusing action and violence (for she understood that violence was unavoidable)...her young blond captor Colin Asch sat brooding over his notebook like an unusually intense schoolboy immersed in his lesson (295).

Dorethea is attracted by Colin because she has a similar Karma. As Colin perceives the world full of pain and suffering which foreshadows his suicide he wants to destroy the whole world. He works for the media as a photomodel, but he does not want his body to be used. His job is the outcome of the capitalistic system. He rejects to be a commodity:

No, I never liked it, Dorethea: I loathed it. Peddling my flesh like I was some kind of Meat, or a prostitute, or something (276)

In this capitalist system media directs people and produces mass. Colin does not want to be a part. The pun on his name indicates a need for change. He is not to be satisfied as representing the individual in the man dominated capitalist society.

Therefore, Colin is after immediate satisfaction. He feels all people must provide satisfaction. He steals Aunt Ginny's money easily. Ironically, he has all the right to take things from people; life,

money sex and love without paying the price. He even thinks of killing Hartley, because she speaks against Dorethea. For this reason he imagines a violent death for her. Colin is so diseased that he can be pitied. On the other hand, he rejects guilt and pity, because it is the most destructive and the most useless of all human instincts, and ironically, he feels pity for Hartley although he imagines her dead. He also thinks of murdering Charles, but he feels pity. His unexpected death would upset Dorethea. This too is paradoxical, because the psychopaths are incapable of feeling concern or remorse for the consequences of their actions. They can calmly rationalize their insensitive and bizarre behavior all the while attributing malice to everyone but themselves. When caught in a lie, they will manipulate others or stories to their own advantage without any fear of being found out - even if it is obvious to everyone around them that they will be found out. Psychopaths cannot feel fear for themselves, much less empathy for others. Most normal people, when they are about to do something dangerous, illegal, or immoral, feel a rush of worry, nervousness, or fear. Guilt may overwhelm them and prevent them from even committing the deed. Dorethea is full of feelings of guilt whereas Colin rejects guilt. As defined by Cleckley:

The psychopath feels little, if any, guilt. He can commit the most appalling acts, yet view them without remorse. The psychopath has a warped capacity for love. His emotional relationships, when they exist, are meager, fleeting, and designed to satisfy his own desires. These last two traits, guiltlessness and lovelessness, conspicuously mark the psychopath as different from other men. (426)

Colin feels empathy for Dorethea. As he himself and his environment is violent, his death must be violent. He wants justice and immediate punishment. The meaning of life fades at the moment when Dorethea refuses his death offer. He decides to cut his own throat in front of her. Dorethea, too, feels empathy for Colin. During this captivation period, Dorethea comes to an understanding that violence is necessary to cope with life. Only when violence is made visible it can be grasped fully. His killing of Block was a requirement. Although, Block seemed to be a protector of the animals he was hypocritical and deserved death. The murder had to be brutal since he himself was brutal. The signal while driving was a sign suggesting that he should be punished. Colin felt blocked by him. As a seemingly and a hypocritical intellectual he deserved this brutality.

Colin's superiority complex makes him fearless about law and punishment. He believes the police is too stupid to trace him. He records his murders carefully in his blue ledger. The codes he uses have to be read and identified like all the invisible deficiencies. He despises homosexuality and does not want anyone to touch him. When his aunt's husband puts his hands on his shoulder he becomes mad and thinks he is queer. He had traumatic sexual experiences. He was used and abused in his childhood. He not only despises homosexuality, which metaphorically, stands for the love for the patriarchal system, but also he despises heterosexual love which stands for the lack of love and communication between the men and women in the materialistic man dominated society. When women make love to him, he feels they violate him by sucking his life from him. Actually, he exploits women and shows no sense for love and justice. He thinks that women adore his penis and he feels superior to them because of his sexual power. This hints at his distorted viewpoint related to sexuality and the

lack of authentic relationships in society. His symbolic connection to Dorethea is an exception. When Dorethea asks what he wants of her, he expresses his wish for appreciation, guidance and love.

Psychopathology & Crime

Colin, the psychopathic serial killer is symbolic for the individual, who is the outcome of the capitalistic society. What he calls for in life is too much in a selfish and profit oriented society. He is feelingless, brutal and merciless like the society in which he lives. Joyce Carol Oates by presenting Colin criticizes the cruelty of this society by making the invisible psychopath and violence visible. As affirmed by Cleckley, psychopathy is quite common in the community at large, since businessman, doctors, and even psychiatrist function as normal and is referred to as antisocial personality disorder- as an extreme of a “normal” personality dimension. Although, they occasionally appear on casual inspection as successful members of the community, as able lawyers, executives, or physicians, they do not, it seems, succeed in the sense of finding satisfaction or fulfillment in their accomplishments. Nor do they, when the full story is known, appear to find this in any other ordinary activity. By ordinary activity we do not need to postulate what is considered moral or decent by the average man but may include any type of asocial, or even criminal, activity so long as its motivation can be translated into terms of ordinary human striving, selfish or unselfish (Cleckley 191). Whereas they are considered successful and are respected, the criminal psychopath is considered unsuccessful. All psychopaths are not criminal. Having a psychopathic personality disorder does not make one a criminal. Some psychopaths live in society and do not technically break the law—although they may come close, with behavior that usually is very unpleasant for those around them. Some may lead seemingly normal lives, not hurting people in ways that attract attention, but causing problems nonetheless in hidden economic, psychological, and emotionally abusive ways. They do not make warm and loving parents, children, or family members. They do not make reliable friends or coworkers. Many psychopaths adopt a parasitic existence, living off the generosity or gullibility of others by taking advantage of and often abusing the trust and support of friends and family. They may move from place to place and from one source of support to another. You probably know one. You could work for, work with, or be married to someone with a psychopathic personality and not know that there is a formal psychological term for the individual who causes you so much pain and distress. He or she can be a neighbor, friend, or family member whose behavior you may find fascinating, confusing, and repelling. (Hare, Babiak 20)

Ironically, Colin, as an unsuccessful psychopath does not fear law, because Oates challenges the system of law and the institutions that are not reliable and cause crimes and injustice. Colin commits his murders without being prevented as the system of law comes short in dealing with crime in any form. Psychopathology, as a metaphor, is a form of crime which is made visible in the violent murders and suicide of Colin. Since the “hidden life” as one of the most important aspect of the psychopath is sometimes not well hidden but not preferred to be seen. It is difficult even for psychologists and psychiatrists to accurately decide whether someone has a psychopathic personality or not. Even Cleckley who had the chance to observe the persons closely realized that many of them did not display the usual symptoms of mental illness, but instead seemed “normal” under most conditions. He watched

them charm, manipulate, and take advantage of other patients, family members, and even hospital staff (Hare, Babiak 20), so did Colin.

He as an intelligent and intellectual serial killer functions as a tool to show the deformity of the law system as an important mechanism of the capitalistic system as represented by Charles Carpenter, who is as cruel as Colin. He as a married husband has an illegal relationship with another woman and does not put an end to this marriage, although he promises Dorethea a future. He does not have children suggesting that he is unable to father any children. Therefore, Colin considers this a blessing. He hopes to be closer to Charles because the law has to identify him. So, in the novel the only person identifying Colin as a psychopath is Charles. But when Colin captivates Dorethea, she hopes to be rescued by Charles in times of threat and danger, but Charles is absent. Her survival depends on Colin's decision to vanish. Charles labels him as a brutal criminal, which suggests his short sighted view. His ignorance and blindness enables him to tell the difference between a dangerous criminal and the psychopath as defined by Cleckley:

1. The criminal usually works consistently and with what abilities are at his command toward obtaining his own ends. He sometimes succeeds in amassing a large fortune and may manage successfully and to his own profit a racket as complicated as a big business. The psychopath very seldom takes much advantage of what he gains and almost never works consistently toward a goal in crime or anything else, seemingly lacking purpose. Colin met Dorethea and defined his goal in life.
2. The criminal ends, though condemned, can usually be understood by the average man. The impulse to take money, even unlawfully, in order to have luxuries or power otherwise unobtainable, is not hard to grasp. The criminal, in short, is usually trying to get something we all want, although he uses methods we shun. On the other hand, the psychopath, if he steals or defrauds, seems to do so for a much more obscure purpose. He will repeatedly jeopardize and sometimes even deliberately throw away so much in order to seek what is very trivial (by his own evaluation as well as by ours) and very ephemeral. He does not utilize his gains as the criminal does. Sometimes his antisocial acts are quite incomprehensible and are not done for any material gain at all.
3. The criminal usually spares himself as much as possible and harms others. The psychopath, though he heedlessly causes sorrow and trouble for others, usually puts himself also in a position that would be shameful and most uncomfortable for the ordinary man or for the typical criminal. In fact, his most serious damage to others is often largely through their concern for him and their efforts to help him.
4. The typical psychopath, as I have seen him, usually does not commit murder or other offenses that promptly lead to major prison sentences...A large part of his antisocial activity might be interpreted as purposively designed to harm himself if one notices the painful results that so quickly overtake him... Psychopaths who commit physically brutal acts upon others often seem to ignore the consequences. Unlike the ordinary shrewd criminal, they carry out an antisocial act and even repeat it many times, although it may be plainly apparent that they will be discovered and that they must suffer the consequences. (Cleckley 261-263).

Joyce Carol Oates uses psychopathology in order to show the degenerating and dehumanizing force of the capitalistic society. Because psychopathy is almost required to survive in the competitive and capitalistic America and seems to be on the rise.

It is the very nature of American capitalist society. The great hustlers, charmers, and self-promoters in the sales fields are perfect examples of where the psychopath can thrive. The entertainment industry, the sports industry, the corporate world in a capitalistic system, are all areas where psychopaths naturally rise to the top. Some observers believe that there is a psychological continuum between psychopaths (who tend to be professionally unsuccessful) and narcissistic entrepreneurs (who are successful), because these two groups share the highly developed skill of manipulating others for their own gain. It is now being thought that they are actually the "same." It is hard to define. Although Charles labels him a psychopath he does nothing to protect Dorethea and Dorethea prefers to reject. Colin also can be falsely recognized as a narcissist rather than a psychopath. On the other hand narcissism is only a lighter form of psychopathy. Through Charles Oates hints at self-realization and respect for other creatures.

As it is all too easy to fall under the spell of the charismatic psychopath. The characters in the novel are manipulated by Colin. Many do his bidding without realizing that they have been subtly and cleverly controlled. The symbolic white outfit given to Dorethea by Colin as a Christmas gift suggests her unquestioning belief in Colin and the start of a new beginning. People in the psychopaths environment can even be manipulated to perform criminal acts, or acts of sabotage against another - innocent - person on behalf of the psychopath like Dorethea and when they realize having caused suffering in innocent people at the behest of a liar, again they prefer to deny this. Dorethea becomes the only witness of Colin's murders.

Innocence is another issue that is repeatedly emphasized and controversial in the novel. For Dorethea, Colin and Colin's victims are innocent. Dorethea is unable to identify Colin because she is the double as implicated by the several times mentioned mirror imagery, which brings self-realization not only for Dorethea but also for Colin:

Regarding Dorethea Deverell intently yet calmly, as if he were staring into a mirror at his own reflection, Colin Asch brought the end of the blade against his throat, against an artery he'd groped with seemingly practiced fingers (305).

Dorethea as representing the stereotypical intellectual woman in the novel, is unaware of her own needs and fears. She does not have an idea about her womanhood. Her ideas about her own past, present and future are vague. Dorethea seems to love Charles Carpenter, but is unable to talk about her true feelings and waits from him to court her and does not ask for more. She is too patient and too understanding. Ironically, as an art historian she is unable to analyze her own past. Her past and present are confused. Her ex-husband Michel's death and Colin's death are much the same.

Since the psychopath is particularly unable to make decisions based on future consequences, and is able only to focus attention on immediate gratification - short term goals - it is possible that such individuals can be dealt with by establishing a history of dealing out swift social retaliation (http://www.cassiopaea.org/cass/official_culture.htm). Unlike this stereotypical psychopathic behavior, Colin, the double of Dorethea wishes to control life and restore the lost balance and shape the future.

That is, he calls for immediate identifying and punishing liars and cheaters. People should predict, notice and prevent his deeds and reveal the causes of his murders, since nothing happens without a cause. And he reflects the idea of the necessity for identifying the psychopaths, ceasing the interaction with them, cutting them off from the society, making the individual unavailable to them as "food" or objects to be conned and used as psychopaths to view others as objects or pawns to be moved around at will. Psychopaths are better at understanding the intellectual or cognitive lives of others than they are at understanding their emotional life. As a consequence, people have value only for what they can provide. Once used, they are discarded (Hare, Babiak 53-54).

Ironically, the case is different with Colin. His only wish is to be appreciated by Dorethea. He wants to be praised. With his slogan " I WANT TO BE GOOD" he sends his plea to the indifferent world. His previous life has brought him nowhere, locking him up had no effect on him in terms of modifying his life strategies. In fact, it made him worse. Since when locked up, he like many other psychopaths just simply learned how to be a better psychopath. This should be changed.

A change in the individual is required. The individual should feel guilt and blaim himself, and to work to change things in himself that may need changing to reduce the possibility to encounter the psychopath or the narcissist. Yet, it is known and proven that if a psychopath/disordered narcissist targets , *no one is immune* as affirmed by Robert Hare. The social system should cease to produce them as made evident by Dorethea's ironical speech saying that such a thing cannot happen to people like her. But when it happened once, it could happen again, even after *knowing* what there is to know, if one remains uneducated about psychopathy/narcissism like most of the population. Susannah, Hartley, Krauss, Kreuzer, Martin, Charles, Ginny and Dorethea symbolize such individuals .

In the society many people are used to abusive relationships, from childhood, so they may tolerate the abuse of a psychopath and may become an "easy" target. It is their strengths that attracts the psychopath/N, who usually love a challenge. As people are accustomed to hear what is wrong with them rather than what is right they may be ignorant of these strengths. Oates characters are unaware of their own strengths and these various types of strengths attracts Colin: the power and money of Agnes, Hartley's position at work, Susannah's manipulating power on men and Krauss's campaign against feminism. When Dorethea looks at Colin she recalls the sight of the paralyzed grandfather, Colin is the reincarnated grandfather, so Colin represents the man dominated capitalistic system that finds blind followers. Dorethea's memories related to her husband's grandfather reflects this idea. Michel Deverell's (Longbridge Deverill is a village in England) with a background going back deep into the 13th century (<http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk>). The only thing she recalls about her husband is his name she still carries and the attitude of his grandfather. The ongoing patriarchal line of abuse will last in future as embodied by her present lover Charles. His invisible abuse has to be made visual.

As psychopaths recognize eachother anywhere, Charles recognizes Colin. Dorethea is unaware although there is a telepathy between Colin and her. As societies can be considered as "players" in the psychopath's game model. The past behavior of a society will be used by the psychopath to predict the future behavior of that society. Dorethea stands for the blind society. As suggested by Hare,

psychopaths are very effective at masking their true selves from those they wish to manipulate and con. Merely having a mental checklist of the traits that define psychopathy does not guarantee success in spotting the psychopath even the well-trained researchers may be fooled and manipulated by known psychopaths (67).

As Oates maintains, human salvation lies in recognizing the psychic interconnectedness of the species. The “hell” of selfishness must be cleansed from both the individual and the culture. By presenting a “Death Agent” an “Angel Boy” blonde, handsome and shinnny with his imaginative and original murder styles as an artist, and a writer recording carefully each detail as if God looks down shows this necessity.

Conclusion

So it is both ironic and appropriate that Oates often uses artist (usually writer) characters to illustrate the “dying” philosophy of egoism. Oates believes an artist may be truly egoless, even personless. In “Notes on Failure” Oates proclaims that a writer, while writing, “Is not an entity at all, let alone a person, but a curious mélange of wildly varying states of mind, clustered toward what might be called the darker end of the spectrum: indecision, frustration, pain, dismay, despair, remorse, impatience, outright failure of which Colin Andrew Asch becomes the embodiment. As his name willfully suggests, the Bobwhite, Quail and Partridge, species widely occupying the earth, a man and a warrior, his remains are of fire, the enlightenment and belief. As he brings gladioli (sword-lily) in each drop in, he tells Dorethea with the flower language, his wish for fighting and ability to be mindful of danger and knowing when to go safely and not to hesitate in time of danger. He calls for action regeneration, awakening and courage in interpretation of life issues that Dorethea as an art historian lacks. Through his artistic murders he wants to redirect the flow of life and history. By getting rid of the rotten in the Nietzschean sense he paves the way to a new beginning through a symbolic union between Charles and Dorethea (law and art). It is now up to both sexes what meaning and role to attribute on their lives as species and to prevent any forms of crime. The newly married young girl Dorethea as she feels herself, while awaiting her husband Charles “the free man” seems to have freed herself from all kinds of restrictions in the mirrorless walls and with the help of Colin she now has a new opportunity to start life over again:

There were no mirrors remaining on any of the walls and no casual reflecting surfaces.
What pleasure, Dorethea thought, to be so totally *alone*: not even one’s own face to intrude (311).

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