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THEORETICAL / PHILOSOPHICAL PAPER

The Victim

Observations on a New Social Type

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Abstract
While victimization is as old as human history, the notion of victimhood as currently understood is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over the last several decades, the notion of victimhood has been increasing discussed both within academia and the wider public, a trend that has intensified in recent years. In order to gain a clearer vision of this social phenomenon, the current piece follows the lead of Georg Simmel, and identifies a new Simmelian social type—*the Victim*. After discussing Simmel's understanding of social types and tracing the origins of the Victim, we examine some of the characteristics of this new social type. While the Victim is best understood on a high level of abstraction—as are all social types—a richer appreciation of the emergence and nature of the Victim will help us to better understand current discussions around victimhood in both academia and the wider public. These philosophical and sociological reflections on the nature of the Victim can thus be of help for better understanding a social phenomenon of considerable importance in today's world.

Keywords Victimhood · Victimization · Violence · Simmel · Social types · Suffering

> *Insofar as man is a social being, to each of his obligations there corresponds a right on the part of others. Perhaps even the more profound conception would be to think that originally only rights existed; that each individual has demands which are of a general human character and that result of his particular condition, and which afterward become the obligations of others. But since every person with obligations in one way or another also possesses rights, a network of rights and obligations is thus formed, where right is always the primary ele-*

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> *ment that sets the tone, and obligations is nothing more than its correlate in the same act, and, indeed, an inevitable correlate.* (Simmel, 1965, p. 118)

The existence of the Victim, not as arising from an objective chain of events or even as a subjectively lived experience, but as a social label, appears to be a quintessential example of the emergence of an obligation out of the recognition of a right unfulfilled or denied. What is more, the extreme proximity of right and obligation in the face of victimization can cause the sound of each to blur into a singular voice. This perceived singularity appears to attest to an intensely personal or personalized message. Denial further personalizes a universal right, and renders its rectification individually tailored. Similar to how the notions of "guest" and "host," or "giving" and "receiving," have shared, singular etymologies (in the Latin word *hostis*, or Proto-Indo-European *ghabh* respectively), the Victim constitutes a singularity of dialectical voices, of right and obligation; a singularity that belies the denial of the independence of both. Thus, in as far as the Victim constitutes a social type, its existence can be set apart from the singularity and independence of rights and obligations and the social dynamics of the network it forms explored most thoroughly on a sociological level (in the Simmelian sense of "pure sociology"). In other words, despite the individuality to which it appears to attest—and in the name of which it even seems to cry out—the Victim constitutes a social category that is not bound to any individual or group, but which functions by its own logic.

We will first explore the societal preconditions that facilitated the rise of the Victim as a social type, tracing the genealogy of the concept as does Simmel (1965) in the case of the Poor. We will then explore how the Victim can be understood as a social type in the spirit of Georg Simmel, i.e., a sociological category that should not be confused with any particular victim, victim group, or particular experience of victimization. Next, we will examine some of the non-conflicting dichotomies, or social forms, that constitute the Victim. As an introduction to this new social type, the current piece constitutes an attempt to lay the theoretical foundations for future research on the Victim, and some suggestions for future lines of such research are discussed.

Societal Preconditions of the Victim

There have always been what we would today call victims and victimization, but the Victim as a Simmelian social type is new. We will now look at a few of the broader societal changes that made the rise of the Victim possible, namely, *shifts in moral cultures*, "*tribunalization*," *hyperpositivity within a clinicalized society*, *precarious identities*, and what might be called *technological change and the individual*. While Simmel does not conduct such genealogies for all of his social types, he does so at considerable length for some of them (e.g., the Poor). As the claim of the current piece is that this social type is relatively new, such a genealogy is all the more necessary to support that claim. While there are many places to start and many paths to follow, we can only identify a few of them here. One useful place to start is with recent shifts in moral cultures.

Shifts in Moral Cultures

Within the West, we saw a broad historical shift in the 18th century, and more clearly in the 19th and 20th centuries, away from a focus on honor and to a greater focus on the notion of dignity (Berger, 1983; Campbell & Manning, 2018; Leung & Cohen, 2011; Rosen, 2012; Taylor, 1992). While these moral cultures are different, they are similar in that they attest to an understanding of what it means to be authentic, that is, to authentically assert the self as an identity that is independent from fixed, hierarchical social structures (Taylor, 1992; Vannini & Williams, 2009). Both honor and dignity are demands for recognition, although they do not require the same response from the Other. Honor must be asserted and protected by the self (or in the name of close others, such as family), and in that sense it is unique to the individual (i.e., the authentic self). While it can be taken away, it cannot be given (or at least it is very difficult to do so, especially relative to the ease with which it can be taken away). In this sense, it is more of a right demanded than an obligation fulfilled—in the sense discussed above. By contrast, the notion of dignity allows greater room for obligation on the part of others, although the right does not depend upon its recognition within the obligation, and in that sense it cannot in effect be taken away. To recognize the dignity of another is to acknowledge that which is, and was, already there, thus the right stands independent of the obligation and can be meaningfully asserted even in the face of its denial. In this sense, dignity is a universal, a recognition of common humanity.

If, as the general story goes, it was with a sense of honor that the major world powers and their populations entered into the First World War, and an awakening to war's denial of human dignity that resulted, the Victim arose in the decades following the Second World War, and more particularly within social dialogue around the Holocaust and the shifting understandings of the history of European colonialism outside Europe. In the case of the Victim, right and obligation are brought closer together, so much so that they may be thought of as being simultaneously present; the denial of the obligation is the denial of the right ("silence is violence"), and the assertion of the right is the assertion of the obligation (the demand for recognition). The Victim's existence is denied in the absence of either the claim to the right or the fulfillment of the obligation. To suffer (e.g., indignation, even violence) for honor was elevating, and to suffer for dignity was worthwhile, and both were understood to be the case even if those struggles were unsuccessful. In other words, in the case of honor and dignity the gap between right and obligation constitutes a canyon that is worth trying to cross, even if the gulf remains uncrossable. Immediate gratification is a contradiction of terms. However, with regard to the Victim, there is no canyon to cross between right and obligation. Within the Victim the difference between victim and sacrifice has been blurred (the German term *das Opfer* means both victim and sacrifice), with the notion of *to suffer for* having been shortened to *to suffer*. Without the object clause, sacrifice is an impossibility. "The other-dependent person is a slave to 'opinion'" (Taylor, 1992, p. 45)—the Victim is the denial of the servitude of rights to obligations. As Rousseau (1979, p. 85) wrote, "Dependence on men, since it is without order, engenders all the vices, and by it, master and slave are mutually corrupted".

The historical development of the word "victim" further supports these observations. In the 15th century, the term initially referred to an animal sacrifice offered in the performance of a religious rite (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). By the 17th century this term could be applied to people who are "hurt, tortured, or killed by another". In the 18th century human victims could be those people made to suffer for the achievement of some other ends, and it was not until the end of the 18th century that the term could be applied to people who were mistreated more broadly speaking (Goltermann, 2017). Not forgetting the general lag between first use of a term in a particular way and the spread of that use within the broader society, this timeline nicely fits with the development of the ideas explored below, and lends further credence to the idea that while cruelty and suffering are as old as human history itself, our contemporary understanding thereof—particularly of victimhood—is quite new. The notion of the Victim as a social type is even newer. While these observations concern the history of the term in English, similar trajectories can be found in various languages, although one would expect the particulars of etymology and social history to vary.

Tribunalization: Pleading Our Innocence

Prior to the Enlightenment, God was given as the answer to all unanswerable questions, and the existence of suffering and evil in the world was seen as part of the great mystery of existence after the Fall. The expulsion from Eden was justified and yet the particular suffering in the world was not the work of humanity, but was now part of a life beyond our comprehension and control. We could ask God various "whys," as God was in control, even if those questions were never fully answered (or the answers were not intelligible to us). Much of this changed as a result of the Enlightenment. By wrestling control of the question-and-answer process for ourselves, we began to not only answer those questions ourselves, but to see ourselves as the source of the explanations. Thus, the "whys" became self-directed, including the whys regarding suffering in the world. The Enlightenment focus on reason as *the* guiding principle has driven much of our thinking in recent centuries, and has allowed us to explain away the unanswerable whys in terms of our as-of-yet insufficient knowledge. However, the Enlightenment also gave rise to another, parallel line of thinking. If we are the source of question and answer alike, it is perhaps not only we who suffer but also we who cause the suffering. These two lines of thought run side-by-side—our agentic improvement of the world on the basis of reason and the underlying problematic nature of that agency. Their intellectual proximity can be seen perhaps most vividly in our understanding of Nazi Germany as the pinnacle of both scientifically-driven social development and human depravity. We see something similar in the legacy of colonialism, whereby the expansion of "advanced" societies came to be associated with brutality and cruelty. Thus, in the 20th century we saw the scales more evidently tip within the social imagination towards humanity as the source of our problems, or at least increasingly towards a suspicion that this is the case. This is reflected in the continued popularity of the various victimization narratives cultivated in Marxism, even following the general decline of communist states and political parties (Korzeniewski, 2006). While we may doubt our ability to fix the social ills of the world (e.g.,

within a utopian state), people can still be readily seen as the source of other people's problems.

In this current state of affairs, nations, peoples, and individuals can no longer try to openly dominate others as they would have in the not so distant past. However, if they do so, they need to hide that violence below a cloak of ostensible benevolence and aid ("it is for their own good"), or to present the target of the violence as the real purveyor of violence ("but look what they are doing to others"). In other words, the burden of violence need be outweighed by some sort of moral benefit. As can be seen in "legitimate" justifications for the use of violence, this shift has been marked by an increase in the sense of a moral obligation to recognize victimization. However, to recognize a particular victim is not simply to concede that such and such happened, but to hear that victimization as *voiced*—as part of the authentic, speaking person (Benjamin, 2019; Butler, 2004). Here we see that victimization is not something apart from an otherwise non-victim person or group, and it is not something that needs to be recognized solely by the perpetrator of that victimization. Rather, as the voice of authenticity, as part of one's identity, victimhood needs to be recognized by everyone, by the world (Benjamin, 2019, refers to the lack of such recognition as "failed witness"). "[A]cknowledgment by the world as well as expressed remorse by perpetrators can transform the position of helpless victim into one of agency and empowerment" (Benjamin, 2019, p. 13). Thus, the court of social justice has come to require not only the innocence from having done harm but also the active recognition of the harm done to others. Over the last several decades we have seen a dramatic increase in public apologies, or "acts of contrition," for past victimization, an increase in public calls for recognition, as well as an increase in public statements of recognition by parties not historically involved in the victimization itself—even of victimization in faraway parts of the world (Korzeniewski, 2006; Lübbe, 2001; Staub, 2003). This is part of an expanding need for social adjudication in general, whereby all must be deemed balanced on the scales of justice, or better yet, the scales must be found to be tipping to the side of the good, the just, and the justified. This process of turning everything into a tribunal has been called the process of *tribunalization*—the now ubiquitous demand for justification and justice (Marquard, 1991).

> Today there is a prevailing, widespread tendency to require everything and everyone to legitimate itself or herself or himself. Everything is supposed to enter a "context of justification" (of which the luxury model is the so-called "dominance-free discourse") and to justify itself, especially if it has entered a legitimation crisis—and today, in what people like to call the "postconventional" age, that seems to be the case with everything. And if a legitimation crisis should still be absent anywhere, it is, if need be, invented—in the interest of making the demand for justification ubiquitous. (Marquard, 1991, p. 8)

We all stand before the tribunal and plead our innocence. The mantra of our time has come to include the two elements mentioned above. On the one hand, we must "do no harm" (or at least, "do no unjustified harm"), a statement that before the tribunal becomes: "I have done no harm". The notion of rational progress, as arising out of

the Enlightenment and our more modern scientific worldview, has ceased to suffice as a defense.

> … after seeing that the strength of reason is also a form of force, the dominance of rationality began to lose its moral validity. It became necessary to find another legitimization. It became necessary to identify another universal aspect of the human condition that would simultaneously not be suspected of the desire to dominate. The candidate for that role became injustice. (Leder, 2018)

The second contemporary mantra is "I recognize victimization," as such recognition has become an obligation, and as its denial has become the repression of the authentic self of the other. If the right is denied, we have the denial of one's own authentic self, and if the obligation is denied, we have the denial of another's authenticity. Within this context, the best way to prove one's innocence, one's goodness, before the tribunal has become the expression of moral indignation—at either one's own mistreatment or the mistreatment of others. It is the "flight from having a conscience into being the conscience" (Marquard, 1991, p. 59).

> Now man is the accused party before this tribunal. He escapes this tribunal only by becoming it: Nominating himself to the role of the Redeemer-man (who, with a monopoly on accusation, is the avant-garde and represents only the future), he brings a case—in matters of evil in the world—against the other human beings, as obstructors of emancipation, as wicked Creator-men, and condemns them forthwith to becoming the past, through revolution. (Marquard, 1991, p. 15)

Without a separation of "rights" and "obligations"—in the parlance of Simmel—the act of crossing of the gulf between them can have no value. In the face of the *tribunal*, the presence of the divide becomes itself the problem. The gulf is not to be crossed, nor is such a bridging to be attempted. Rather, the divide is to be removed or otherwise denied. To remove the space between right and obligation is to undercut the value of assertion in the face of denial, and it renders dumb the independent voice of recognition. It is deaf to both apology and forgiveness. It is indifferent to independent agency, and leaves one worried about creating the division between subject and object in the first place, rather than about how to nurture mutual engagement between the two. In a world in which sweeping social apologies are more widespread and more demanded than ever, both genuine contrition and sincere forgiveness are in a decline (Korzeniewski, 2006; Lübbe, 2001).

This process of *tribunalization*, if it is to be just, contains the conviction of positive compensation, whereby wrongs are to be outweighed by rights (á la Leibniz). As an outgrowth of theodicy, *tribunalization* is part of our response to evil in the world (what we could today call suffering and injustice). As our (public) rejection of violence and the overt dominance of the other has spread, and as our sensitivity to injustice has grown, perhaps paradoxically we have begun to see this evil more frequently and in fact it appears to be growing. "Precisely this decrease of violence explains the important place that violence has come to take in our culture; the less actual violence there is, the more sensitive we are to its appearance" (Gauchet, 2002).

The “rule here is that of the increasing intensity of remainders: The more negative things are abolished, the more vexatious—precisely as they diminish—the negative things that remain become” (Marquard, 1991, p. 12). In protecting our feet from the roughness of the world on which we walk, shoes have increased the discomfort we feel when even the smallest of pebbles breaches their defenses.

> For the modern age is the age of distance: the first epoch in which impotence and suffering are not the taken-for-granted and normal state of affairs for human beings. Now, for the first time, want seems, in principle, masterable; pain avoidable; sickness conquerable; wickedness abolishable; and man’s (finitude-induced) impotence outmaneuverable. (Marquard, 1991, p. 12)

Hyperpositivity Within a Clinicalized Society

Our hyper-sensitivity to emotional valence has been linked with the increasing expectations regarding positivity in general found in contemporary society (Lupton, 1998; Reckwitz, 2019). We have shifted from more traditional modern societies in which emotions, both negative and positive, were generally balanced by emotional restraint—the “stiff upper lip”. Within late modernity, society has been marked by an increased emphasis on positive emotions. Following the positive psychology movement starting in the 1970s, self-fulfillment has become a central aim in life, and positive emotions have become associated with our understanding of the authentic self. Negative emotions are a sign that something is wrong, that we are denying the true self, and neutral emotions suggest that we have not actualized our true self far enough (Illouz, 2008; Reckwitz, 2019). This hyper-emphasis on positivity as increased our sensitivity to all emotions, and in line with the observations of Durkheim over a century ago, the societal premium placed on hyper-positivity has led to an increased sensitivity to the cornucopia of emotions that do not meet the mark (Ehrenberg, 2010). Thus, *tribunalization* takes place in a hyper-emotional space in which positivity is understood as requiring the negation of all other emotions, a space that in effect highlights those non-positive emotions.

Psychoanalysis (as well its various offspring who may or may not speak openly of their intellectual heritage), has also helped give shape to the modern tribunal. We have come to understand the actions of individuals and collectives alike as not always meaning what they seem to mean on face value. Various ideas from this tradition have captured the popular imagination, such as the idea of the scapegoat (Girard, 1986). Broadly speaking, the notion of recognition is particularly important within psychoanalytic, and psychoanalytic-inspired, schools of thought, a concept that is particularly important for the development of the Victim. In addition to the more self-evident sense of suppression and guilt on which psychoanalysis builds, recognition of the painful and hidden past is understood within psychoanalytic thinking as constituting the way forward. In other words, psychoanalytic thinking assumes a past that is somehow problematic, whether we know it or not, and that the suppression of our awareness thereof stands in the way of our development. What is more, this past is not a problem to be solved (as in other schools of clinical psychology), but some-

thing to be acknowledged and investigated, potentially *ad infinitum*. The fear of being unseen or misunderstood described by victims (e.g., in the writings of Levi, 1988, Herling-Grudziński, 1996), has come to be understood not only as a psychological experience of the individual but also as an experience of the victimized collective (Gerson, 2009; Honneth, 1995; Ullman, 2006). The recognition of that problematic past by well-intended others can help empower the individual, as well as the collective. The responsibility to recognize the painful past is no longer only a matter for the victim and the victimizer. It has become a matter "beyond doer and done-to" (Benjamin, 2004) and has become a matter for "the moral third" (Benjamin, 2019, p. 4), those people and peoples who were—relative to the past in question—"elsewhere". Importantly, this obligation is not only there for well-intended third-parties, such as family or friends, but it now stands before all others. We are told to not only expect this recognition from victimizers or sympathetic significant others, but from the entire world. What is important to note is that the value of such recognition is primarily of a psychological nature (Staub, 2003), and that it is this psychological quality that has been extended beyond people or groups in contact with each other. "I proceed from the pragmatic view that 'we' (who are not suffering this violence) can fail or succeed in the call to confirm through witnessing the knowledge of terrible things that others have suffered, *whether or not we are in a position to provide justice for the victims*" (Benjamin, 2019: 14, italics added). "Psychoanalysis … has increasingly become aware of being faced with the aftermath of unacknowledged trauma, charged with a task of witnessing and healing, despite its founder's warnings about the limits of our ability to save or heal" (Benjamin, 2019, p. 26–27). Recognition of victimization has come to be seen as a value in itself, and one that changes the status of the victim: "The suffering or death of the victims is thus dignified [by recognition], their lives given value. Their lives are worthy of being mourned, as Butler (2004) termed it, they are grievable lives" (Benjamin, 2019 30f.). Within our current discussion we are not weighing the pros or cons of such positions, but merely observing that the language of recognition, especially within this psychological form, is a relatively recent development and that, despite its relative youth, it has come to color much of our contemporary thinking and it has done so in a manner that is directly relevant for the tribunal.

Precarious Identities: Hyper-Individuality and Hyper-Sociality

Within *tribunalization* we also see reflected the modern tension, as widely discussed by social commentators over the last century, between the individual and the socially shared. Simmel explored these ideas in *On Social Differentiation* (1890), arguing that the more free individuals are, the more they are defined by the collective. Coser (1977: 178) describe Simmel's observations in this regard as follows: "The forms of social life impress themselves upon each individual and allow him to become specifically human. At the same time, they imprison and stultify the human personality by repressing the free play of spontaneity. Only in and through institutional forms can man attain freedom, yet his freedom is forever endangered by these very institutional forms". Similarly, working on victimhood within the psychoanalytic tradition, Benjamin (2019: 13) wrote that "the insights of psychoanalytic recognition theory

should ultimately contribute to both awareness of interdependence and attachment to the social whole as well as the respect for the rights and needs of unique and different individuals". On the one hand, we have come to see ourselves as fundamentally isolated individuals. "I exist in a garden of good and evil to which there are no visitors" (Gergen, 2009: 6). This individuality is even to be celebrated within the modern promotion of freedom and agency. However, this increase of individual autonomy and freedom has made us increasingly aware of how fundamentally important is the social in the development of a meaningful, valuable, and valued life. When society was normative and hierarchical, the individual had something to follow or to revolt against; something in contrast to which—if not in partnership with—one could build one's identity. Max Weber described the removal of hegemonic structures as leading to the creation of a polytheistic world in which warring deities of values and norms "strive to gain power over our lives and again … resume their eternal struggle with one another" (1946: 149). In a similar spirit, it has more recently been argued that the "[s]truggles of conscience are not the struggles between good and evil but between competing goods" […] "It is in the multiplication of the good that we find the genesis of evil" (Gergen, 2009: 359). Freedom is no longer freedom from temptation, depravity, weakness, or sin, but freedom of choice, of options. Within the modern world characterized by the "iron cage" of rationality/science and the "warring deities" of competing values, Weber asks: "How is it at all possible to salvage *any remnants* of 'individual' freedom of movement *in any sense* given this all-powerful trend?" (Weber 1946: 159). Hervieu-Léger (2000: 29) refers to this challenge as lying within "… the fragmented, shifting and diffuse nature of the modern imagination – an awkward conglomeration of beliefs cobbled together, indefinable bric-a-brac of dreams and reminiscences which anyone may assemble, privately and subjectively, as the situation demands, its impact on society being at the best least problematic". Where in today's world can we turn as individuals in the search for authority, the authority by which we can claim our own authenticity? Many scholars have argued one of the primary places we have been looking is back towards history, not as an end in itself, but so that it might serve as the foundation of who we are today (Hervieu-Léger, 2000; Korzeniewski, 2006). As will be explored further below, historical victimization is a particularly strong foundation upon which to build.

In our search for a justification of our authenticity, we have increasingly turned to history (or rather, to what we might call collective memory in the present). The past has come to serve as a foundation for the self, as it can tell us who we "really" are. This return to the authority of history *is done in the present*, and increasingly self-consciously so. It is not a return to the past, or a yearning therefore (even a created past in the sense discussed by Benedict Anderson), but it is homage paid to the past for the purposes of the present (Hervieu-Léger, 2000). This use of history does two important things. It joins us with a collective, and allows us to choose sides, if you will, in Weber's polytheistic war of the deities. When connected with victimization, it also allows us to align ourselves with the side of the good, and to do so in a manner that is increasingly recognized as good. Historically grounded victimization tells us both who we are and that we are justified before the tribunal. In negotiating the victimization of the past in the present, we can build a wide-reaching consensus, a universal history that avoids open conflict and advocates broad agreement (e.g.,

on such terms as human rights and multiculturalism) (Korzeniewski, 2006; Žižek, 1997). In other words, history is important for its ability to recognize individual and collective idiosyncrasies and for its ability to build universal agreement about right and wrong, good and bad, justified and unjustified. In bridging the idiosyncratic (of *this* group) with the universal (recognition of victimization), historical victimhood completes a task that is not easily done; it meets the requirements of what Weber called sect-like communities (*Sektengesellschaften*), wherein attachment to a specific community channels energy into a universally recognized enterprise. Hervieu-Léger (2000) sees this as occurring today in micro-communities of choice.

Technological Change and the Individual

One can also not overstate the importance of technological changes in laying the foundations for the Victim. Modern technologies and their social uses have created a "look at me" culture wherein rights have become interwoven with obligations—as the right to be seen blends with the obligation to see. Even in the heat of disputes, people turn on the cameras of their phones so as to relinquish judgment to the court of public opinion, making the unknown masses the ultimate arbiter of the matter. We willingly film all and show all to all, thereby willingly setting ourselves within the panopticon of social media. This can be empowering, or disempowering, or even "neutral" of the individuals or collectives in question, but in any case it is a qualitative change in our lives. It is a form of hyper-dialogue wherein the self is asserted within a dramatically expanded community containing a massively multiplied number of others, even if that dialogue is largely imagined or only loosely personal. However, as already mentioned, this blending of rights and obligations in fact constitutes something apart from both, and for which neither are actually necessary. One of the great paradoxes of modernity (and even more so of late modernity) is that despite the value placed on the autonomy and self-sustainability of the contemporary individual who is free to choose and shape his or her own path in life, modern technologies have amplified the centrality of the masses, both as source and target of information. Thus, modern technologies simultaneously both accentuate and downgrade the value of the individual (Han, 2015; Riesman et al., 1961; Turkle, 2011). As Durkheim observed at the start of the 20th century, everyone is expected to "be their own person," and to even excel at doing so, and yet that uniqueness, and the value thereof, ultimately vanishes within the aggregate data that largely give shape to the modern world. Within the modern world, a premium is placed on aggregate data and on the algorithms built out of them (and for them), and yet we increasingly and ever more loudly demand the recognition of our individual and/or collective uniqueness. Much has been written about how the demands of modernity are paradoxically both flattening and differentiating, involving both the removal of difference and the hyper-emphasis on difference; the "universal demand powers an acknowledgment of specificity" (Taylor, 1992: 39). The combination of increased individual freedom and increased irrelevance of the individual led Simmel (1950a) to call the modern city the "frightful leveler". We see something similar on the collective level, as we both recognize and deny collective identities today:

> These two modes of politics, then both based on the notion of equal respect, come into conflict. For one, the principle of equal respect requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion. The fundamental intuition that humans command this respect focuses on what is the same in all. For the other, we have to recognize and even foster particularity. The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of nondiscrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mold that is untrue to them. (Taylor, 1992: 43)

The Victim seems to have resolved this puzzle, or rather, to have risen above this tension and not succumbed to it. It is apart from, or above, both sides. It is apart from the individual victim and the particular victimized group, as well as the recognition of that victimization as a reflection of a shared humanity. The Victim is the embrace of the objective over the subjective, the nomothetic over the ideographic, but the particulars of any given exemplar keeps it from being some sort of common moral law, as in the golden rule, which can be used as a guide by individuals. Its universality is the foundation of its claim to objective truth, whereby individual rights and individual obligations are in fact irrelevant. With regard to the case of the Poor, Simmel (1965: 131) wrote the following: "We see here again the old epistemological correlation between universality and objectivity". Such is the nature of social types in general, as they are necessarily "above" any and all exemplars. While it makes appearances in local dialogues, the Victim is a much larger phenomenon, even a global one. It thrives in the age of the internet, where local idiosyncrasies are unknown and ultimately irrelevant within a dialogue built on more easily and more widely transferable tropes. However, the Victim simultaneously speaks the language of particulars. It must necessarily be filled by them within the given moment. Just as Simmel's Stranger takes this form and now that form across time and space, the Victim must take on a form and in so doing allows for the promotion of difference within a form of mutable singularity. As we have now begun to discuss the nature of the Victim, it is to a more explicit exploration of this particular social type that we now turn.

The Victim as a Social Type

Just as Georg Simmel differentiated various social types (e.g., the Poor, the Stranger, the Miser, the Adventurer, the Nobility) from particular people or peoples for whom the given term might also be used, so too can we distinguish between the Victim as a social type from the various experiences, people, and peoples to which the label of victim might be meaningfully and justifiably applied. To say that a social type stands apart from the particular experiences, people, or peoples to which the same term might be applied is to assert a generalizability of form beyond the particularities of its given expression. However, to do so is not to deny the existence of the experiences of victimization or to undercut individual or collective claims to the label. To assert the value of the Stranger is to set it as a social type apart from, or conceptually (not morally) above, all particular experiences of being strange, but it is not to deny the appropriateness of the term "stranger" to those who see themselves or are seen by others as in some sense strange (Simmel, 1950b). However, as a social type, the

Victim contains a particular form of disconnectedness, and even disinterestedness, relative to particular victims and experiences of victimization (as do other Simmelian social types to any and all particular exemplars). One can hear a similar sentiment in Alfred Schütz's description of what he calls *typification*: "In the typifying synthesis of recognition I perform an act of anonymization in which I abstract the lived experience from its setting within the stream of consciousness and thereby render it impersonal" (Schütz, 1967: 186).

Social types are useful in that they allow us a degree of conceptual portability that is essentially denied by the uniqueness of individual experience. This is one step further from the kind of classification we see in such statements as "the poor living in this or that region," as it can be spoken of in abstraction from even such broad particulars. This is because, as a social type, the Victim arises out of a particular constellation of social forms, rather than being built on the basis of any particular experience by a particular person or people, at a particular time, or in a particular place. Simmel argued that such types are not the representation of a static state or a label applied after the fact, relative to an unchanging past event (as in the case of victims). Rather, they emerge at the intercept of what might be thought of as particular social tensions. For instance, the Stranger is not a fixed person or group of people, but the type that emerges at the intersection of distance *and* proximity, disinterestedness *and* interest, foreignness *and* familiarity, mobility *and* connectedness (Simmel, 1950b). To be fashionable, according to Simmel (1957), is to be new, but not too new. To be fashionable is to be socially suspect, but not so much so as to not be somehow familiar and uniquely trusted. It is to be thoroughly individualistic, but simultaneously socially shared, etc. As these tensions are ever in flux, social types might be metaphorically thought of as a rainbow—appearing now here, now there, depending on the exact constellation of several apparently distant factors meeting at just the right place, under just the right conditions, being seen from just the right angle, etc.

While useful for better understanding society, Simmel's social types are not merely analytical tools of the social scientist, but they also give rise to, and arise from, social interaction and as such are interwoven with the lived experience of social actors. In other words, the Victim can help us to gain a bird's-eye view on the nature of social life, but it can also help us better grasp, or "feel-into," the lived experiences of individuals and in this sense it is part of the phenomenological tradition. Just as Schütz (1967) argued the analytical aspects of social analyses to render them impersonal, he argued that the "opposite process is also possible" (1967: 186)—whereby analytical categories can be of use for understanding the subjective, lived experience of the individual within a concrete context. While Simmel did not fully clarify this potential tension in his own thinking on social types, subsequent thinkers have attempted to do so, with some seemingly embracing both the analytical aspects of social types and their phenomenological qualities, while others have tended to embrace one over-and-above the other (compare Klapp, 1949, 1958; Park, 1928). Others have highlighted new or underappreciated aspects of social types, such as how they reflect classifatory contestations, wherein the victors hold greater influence over the creation and cultivation of meaning, and over various types of "social capital" (e.g., Le Grand, 2019). What can be safely said is that despite the fact that the term has been used for some time, the social type remains differently used and differently understood (Almog,

1998; le Grand, 2019). Simmel's social types can also be compared and contrasted with the ways in which others have used the term, as well as with a range of other concepts described within the social sciences, such as the notion of "ideal types" (explored by Max Weber), the notion of the "social figure" (Moebius & Schroer, 2010; Moser & Schlechtriemen, 2018), or "typification" (Schütz, 1967). Similarly, Simmel's line of thinking can be compared with other broad schools of thought, such as social constructivism or symbolic interactionism. A further exploration of these and other matters related to the nature of social types is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of the current piece.

Also in large part due to space restrictions, we will not examine particular examples of the Victim in this piece. There are, however, also other reasons for doing so. Simmel was cautious when providing examples of various social types, not because examples are hard to find, but because any particular example of a social type is but a momentary expression of a wider-reaching, more complex, and more dynamic yet more socially stable phenomenon. As such, by providing an example of a social type hastily and without sufficient explanation one runs the risk of giving the impression that this particular person or group *is* the Victim in some sort of a fixed or even essentialized way. After all, as discussed below, by definition the Victim is not a particular person or group. To continue a metaphor used earlier, to provide an example of a social type is to indicate with your finger that a rainbow is *there* in the sky, whereas it may not appear *exactly there* for every observer and it may not even be there for anyone at all in the next moment. This challenge is what makes social types somewhat elusive, but it is also what makes them so phenomenologically insightful and analytically useful; social types provide us with a window onto aspects of our social lives, aspects we would miss if we were to ignore the view it affords us by focusing too much on the glass, on the frame, or on the wall in which it is set.

An exploration of examples of the Victim is arguably even more challenging than in the case of other Simmelian social types. This is so for at least two reasons. One is that as a new and rapidly developing social phenomenon, examples of the Victim cannot be pulled from the historical record, whereby many shades of distance can allow for cool, analytical analysis. In other words, examples will inevitably be interwoven with the social discourses and social debates of our current day, something that can render it difficult to gain enough distance so as to see the form of the Victim behind the details on which we might be more inclined to focus our gaze. The other, related reason emerges from the moral, ethical, and emotional nature of victimization and suffering in general, especially within our contemporary cultural milieu (as discussed above). While examples of other social types (such as the Stranger, the Adventurer, or even the Poor) may involve just as complex social processes, discussions of examples of the Victim can take on uniquely powerful emotional, moral, and ethical tones. This can make the kind of abstraction necessary for the Victim appear cold, disrespectful, or even offensive. While people might understand their own experience as, or with, the Stranger as different than that of another, thereby challenging the analytical category, this is all the more likely in the case of individual or collective experiences that might constitute the Victim. While making use of historical examples of the Stranger or the Poor need also be done cautiously, such examples are less likely to cause offense, to evoke defensiveness, or to otherwise elicit responses that make it difficult

to keep the weight of the conversation on the social type, rather than on the particular example(s) being used to illustrate it. It is for this reason that we are not discussing the rather large victimology literature in this piece, even areas thereof that might very well be particularly useful for our current discussion, e.g., "competitive victimhood". An examination of that literature would, however, make for an interesting extension of the current discussion. For these and other reasons, an examination of examples of the Victim needs to be addressed in a separate article. Thus, rather that explaining the victim on the basis of singular examples, we will now explore its nature in somewhat abstract terms, although more "concrete," illustrative examples will be provided for its various features along the way.

The Nature of the Victim

Simmel's assertions below regarding the Poor can be carried over to our analysis of the Victim, and are a good place to start this discussion.

> … no one is socially poor until he has been assisted. And this has a general validity: sociologically speaking, poverty does not come first and then assistance—this is rather the fate in its personal form—but a person is called poor who receives assistance or should receive it given his sociological situation, although perchance he may not receive it. […] The poor, as a sociological category, are not those who suffer specific deficiencies and deprivations, but those who receive assistance or should receive it according to social norms. Consequently, in this sense, poverty cannot be defined in itself as a quantitative state, but only in terms of the social reaction resulting from a specific situation. […] The binding function which the poor person performs within an existing society is not generated by the sole fact of being poor; only when society—the totality or particular individuals—reacts toward him with assistance, only then does he play his specific social role. (Simmel, 1965: 138)

In a Simmelian sense, victimization does not come before the recognition of the Victim as a social type. Rather, someone or some group can be understood as the Victim based on how—at a particular time, in a particular context—they illustrate a particular constellation of social forms in the light of which the Victim emerges (see Holstein & Miller, 1990). Just as the Stranger teeters at the intersection of proximity *and* distance, being inside *and* outside the group, being disinterested *and* interested in the group, being mobile *and* stationary relative to the group, etc., we can identify such non-conflicting dichotomies and intersecting dialogues within which the Victim appears. We will now examine a few of the factors that together undergird this new social type.

The Victim is Obviously the Same and Obviously Different

While victims and victimized groups can be a meaningfully differentiated minority, and very often are, the Victim's meaningful differentiation as a minority, a group somehow apart, is both asserted and denied. The Victim is both "obviously" dif-

ferent from others, and “obviously” the same. To completely deny this differential status would be to deny the possibility of finding any suitable exemplar, while the full commitment to minority status would undercut the universality upon which its objectivity rests. The differentiation between any particular exemplar relative to a dominant group, between Hutu and Tutsi, between Pole and German, between gay and straight—*as the Victim*—is both beyond question and patently absurd. The Victim appears at that point where differences are highlighted *and* differences are denied. Variations of all kinds—phenotypical, cultural, linguistic, behavioral, etc.—are both touted and repudiated. The Victim is substantively different, and at the same time that difference is only substantive for the victimizer, who denies the humanity of the victim. It is to celebrate Polish, German, Hutu, Tutsi, etc. uniqueness, while claiming that Poles, Germans, Hutus, Tutsis, etc. are only visible to anti-Poles, anti-Germans, anti-Hutus, anti-Tutsis. It is to celebrate Jewishness, while arguing that only an anti-Semite can recognize a Jew. To be clear, while there are situations in which such differences matter in the lives of particular people or peoples, and even very consequentially matter, and while there are situations in which those same differences are of no consequence at all, those are simply not the spaces in which the Victim resides. The Victim exists within the tension between the two, that is, between valued difference and valued similarity.

The Victim is Weak and Strong

The Victim also appears at the fault-line between weakness and strength. Too much strength undercuts the union of right and obligation; it undercuts the denial of the right as calling for the fulfillment of the obligation. The weak are not required to acknowledge the victimization of the powerful. Too much weakness, however, undercuts the call for both; the right is not spoken with the confidence required for its immediate gratification, and the sense of obligation that results may take, at best, the form of pity. Victimized individuals often dislike the term “victim” for at least these two reasons. They may feel that this status undercuts their strength, that it undermines their agency and their dignity (“I do not want to be a victim”). They may also feel that this status pulls them and their experiences into the light, a place where they do not feel confident enough to stand. This is arguably why first-generation victims—people who themselves experienced some sort of victimization—often deny or reticently assert their victim status (while often describing their experiences in other ways), while this victim status is more often more loudly asserted by their children and grandchildren. The Victim needs to be strong but overpowered, weakened but upright. This balance can be achieved in many ways, such as by shifting between units of assessment. For example, while the Victim might be physically beaten, they need be morally victorious. While the Victim can be emotionally battered, they need be in the right. The Victim may succeed, but that success may not overshadow their vulnerability. The Victim may win, but that victory must be short-lived and the fruits quickly soured. This balancing act may also be another reason why victimized individuals often avoid this label, and may even feel guilt or shame in the face of such reflections.

The Victim is both a Coveted and an Abhorred Status

The Victim is also both a coveted and an abhorred status, but not either one exclusively. To solely covet the status would be to embrace martyrdom, to go happily to the lions. Such a position would downplay, or even remove, the problematic nature of the Victim. To solely abhor that status, however, would be to undercut the rights to which it lays claim; it would be to deny its strength. As discussed above, such a denial is also the denial of authenticity (either one's own or that of another). Thus, a balance has been struck, as in the glimmer of pride heard in self-deprecating humor. It is found at the intersection of "system justifying stereotypes," whereby all parties involved express a mixture of desirable and undesirable features (Jost et al., 2004). No one explicitly wants to be the Victim, and yet both its first-person and third-person denial is unthinkable.

The Victim is Simultaneously in the Past, the Present, and the Future

The Victim exists at a point between the past, the present, and the future, but not in one time alone. To be too much in the past is to lose relevance. It is to be, in today's eyes, Egyptian slaves building the pyramids, or people in the crumbling kingdom of the Hittites. However, to exist solely in the present opens the door to the differentiation between right and obligation, and the various individuations and idiosyncrasies of which they both allow. It would make this a problem to be solved, a wrong to be righted, an obligation to be fulfilled. By itself the present is too agentic, and by itself the past too impotent. However, the Victim is also of the future—but again, only to a degree. In as far as the wrong has yet to be righted, the Victim is supported by those visionaries with a view to the future. It involves a "flight forward" by the avant-garde who are ahead of their time (Marquard, 1991: 59). However, to be too much in the future is to lose connection with today. It would constitute concern over the social problems of human colonies on yet unknown planets beyond our Solar System. The Victim is the escape into history on future-driven wings by people in the present.

The Victim is Decoupled from Individual and Collective Experiences of Victimhood

As the obligation to assist the poor has a specifically local character (Simmel, 1965), so too is the obligation to individual or collective victims of a personal, local nature. To acknowledge one's victimization (or that of a particular group) is to know their story, it is to recognize the unique breach of their rights as a person or a collective (Benjamin, 2019; Staub, 2003). However, the Victim is not personal or local in this sense. Again, Simmel's description of the Poor is illustrative of this point:

> Rather, to centralize it in the largest circle and thereby to bring it about not by immediate visibility but only through the general concept of poverty [and of the Victim - LM]—this is one of the longest roads which sociological forms have had to travel to pass from the immediate sensate form to the abstract. [...] The municipality is no longer the point of departure, but rather a point of transmission in the process of assistance. (Simmel 1965: 129)

To say that the Victim is disconnected from both rights and obligations is to say that it constitutes a social type apart from the organically emerging network of rights and obligations found between particular people or peoples. Similarly to how society can be said to have an obligation to the Poor without the need to even mention the particular poor people in question or the particular (not poor) people before whom this obligation stands, so in the case of the Victim do we now see social discourse and even social structures addressing the Victim that need neither particular victims nor the particularly obliged. Simmel foresaw these changes, writing that "to the extent that the earlier individualistic world-view is replaced by the historical-sociological one, which sees in the individual merely a point of intersection of social threads, collective guilt must take the place of individual guilt" (Simmel cited in Frisby, 2002: 67). Various forms of organizational life (e.g., governments, corporations, universities) are beginning to incorporate the Victim into their formal structures. Such formalization within institutional structures, as in the case of the Poor, has endowed the Victim with a degree of stability not seen among any particular victim or victimized group.

> The State operates in a causal sense, private assistance in a teleological sense. To put it in other words: the State assists poverty; private assistance assists the poor. A sociological difference of the greatest importance becomes manifest here. Abstract concepts, which crystalize certain elements of a complex individual reality, often acquire life and consequences for practice which would appear to fit only the concrete totality of the phenomenon. This may be seen in very intimate relationships. The meaning of certain erotic relationships cannot be understood in any other way than that one of the parties seeks not the beloved, but love, often with notable indifference toward the individuality of the lover. This is so because what is wished by this person is to receive that emotional value—love—in and by itself. (Simmel, 1965: 132)

The Victim is Unhealable and Unforgiving

As such, the Victim does not come and go, but is here to say. It appears in various exemplars at different times and different places, but within these transformations lies its stability. The Victim is not a problem to be solved, as is the case with particular victims or victimized communities. In the light of the Victim, *mea culpas* imply a scrupulosity that affords no real aid to the victimized, no real forgiveness of the victimizer, and no real respite to third parties. Similar to the way in which scrupulous individuals search for purity within a distorted vision of both sin and forgiveness alike (in the religious sense), or of both harm and healing alike (in the psychological sense) (Działa, 2002), so the Victim implies a conceptual change, or distortion, of victimization and the recognition and healing thereof. This bespeaks neither a necessary malice towards victims, nor the denial of their experiences of victimization, but it does involve a necessary indifference to them. Just as the Poor as a social type stands apart from poverty and poor people, and the Stranger stands apart from the strange and the experience of strangeness, so too does the Victim imply a social real-

ity apart from the individuals and groups with whom it shares the same name. It has become a feature of society and is found in all social strata. The Victim has become bureaucratized and institutionalized, and has come to exist irrespective of any particular rights claims or sense of obligation. It has been solidified as an abstraction within the concrete structure of the state and other large bureaucratic institutions. Even salaried positions devoted to the Victim have been created (e.g., within governments, at universities, at large corporations). The obligation to the Victim is an obligation to the state, to the institution, not to any particular person or group, and that obligation has no corresponding rights claim. To fail to fulfill the obligation is a failure before the state, not before another person or another community. Stated another way, the obligations do not arise from a complementary right, and in fact, the rights are in fact irrelevant, as Simmel describes in the case of the Poor: "As soon as the welfare of society requires assistance to the poor, the motivation turns away from this focus on the giver without, thereby, turning to the recipient" (Simmel, 1965: 121). Such social structures as related to the Victim would have been unthinkable until fairly recently.

Conclusion

To say that *the Victim* is a new social type is not to say that *victimization* is new. The kind of human cruelty that we would today call victimization has certainly been with us throughout history. To say that the Victim represents a new social type is to perceive within social interactions and the social consciousness a new shape; a cluster of interwoven interactions that has largely come to take on a singular meaning. To attempt to explain the phenomenon is to try to trace the emergence of this shape, this pattern of social interactions, both within contemporary social interactions and from the historical legacy out of which all sociological forms emerge. While the strategy taken here was inspired by the social types of Georg Simmel, a wide range of similar types have been described from within somewhat different traditions, such as the distinction between the Artist and the Scientist described by Daston and Galison (2007), or the historical blurring of the lines between the Sacred and the Secular described by Taylor (2007). Thus, as social types emerge or fade away within contemporary interactions, so too can we observe their emergence and retreat over longer periods of time. However, this plasticity is what affords them a degree of stability across particular situations, which is to say that while they involve psychological processes on the part of individual social actors, their sociological nature allows them to transcend individual psychology and variability on the level of any given person or collective.

The Victim constitutes a particular unity of forms of social interaction, and thus this singularity exists on a social level. In other words, the Victim as a singular social type is fundamentally different from any particular experience of victimization, either on the individual or even the group level (in as far as that group is a particular group). Simmel's arguments on this point, which he applied to the Poor, can also be applied to the Victim:

> It possesses a great homogeneity insofar as its meaning and location in the social body is concerned; but it lacks it completely insofar as the individual

> qualification of its elements is concerned. It is the common end of the most diverse destinies, an ocean into which lives derived from the most diverse social strata flow together. (Simmel, 1965: 139)

We have traced the emergence of this particular social type along several sociohistorical paths. Part of the foundation was laid within the explanations of evil (e.g., suffering and cruelty) produced in the wake of the Enlightenment, whereby humans became the prime suspects. More recently, this led to a growing disapprobation of violence and the violent domination of others. Victimization no longer served a (morally valid, socially approved) purpose. This shift largely coincided with definitional changes, as victimization became decoupled from the notion of sacrifice, becoming self-contained with no additional purpose or aim. This understanding has been strengthened and more widely distributed due to broad shifts in moral culture away from honor and, more recently, even dignity. The societal promotion of positive emotions has had the effect of also making us increasingly watchful of negative emotions, a watchfulness that couples easily with Marquard's notion of *tribunalization*, whereby all must be found to be the doers of no harm. Not only must we not victimize others, but we are called to give public witness to victimization, either our own or that of others. The tribunal, as both the hunt for victimizers and the hunt for victims (so that we might to give witness to them), has become amplified by recent technological developments whereby we are placed by others and by ourselves before the ever-watchful eye of public opinion. As we have increasing turned the process of adjudication over to the collective, we have become increasingly anxious about our own positions, about where we stand and who we are. This hyper-emphasis on both individuality and the collective that was widely commented upon a century ago has more recently taken on full swing. As we have come to lose our bearings in this motion, we have sought stability within the contemporary enactment of collective memories. The memory of victimhood has surfaced in particular as a uniquely solid foundation upon which to stabilize both identity and one's standing before the tribunal.

The unity of the Victim as a social type is found at the intersection of various social forms, balanced between non-conflicting dichotomies. For instance, the Victim is *both* different from, *and* the same as, surrounding others. This difference is praised or even promoted, *and* dismissed or even denied. The Victim is *neither* too weak *nor* too strong. The Victim is a position that is both coveted *and* abhorred. The Victim necessarily appears in local form, but as it is necessarily familiar to all, it is thereby not truly local, but common. The Victim cannot exist fixed in the present, as it would thereby be a problem to be solve, and therefore the Victim balances in the present between a remembered past *and* an anticipated future. Experiences of victimization are not necessarily balanced so, that is, at the intersection of these social forms. They can be going on right now. They may have taken place in the past, or be looming in the future. Victims can be weak or strong, different from others or similar to them. Their experiences can be unique or quite common. The Victim has historically appeared for reasons other than historical victimization, and the identification of the Victim in the present arises not from the experience of unjustified cruelty, but from the constellation of social forms discussed above. In other words, the Victim does not simply or even necessarily appear after a person or a group has been victimized, and

once it has appeared, its stability lies not in its current iteration, but in its ability to taken on different iterations.

“This group does not remain united by interaction among its members, but by the collective attitude which society as a whole adopts toward it” (Simmel, 1965: 139). While this refers to the Poor, it is also applicable to the Victim. In other words, the Victim is neither an individual nor a collective, but a social type, and in that sense it is different from collectives of the victimized, even those whose see points of commonality in their experiences and thus between them find meaningful the use of a single label. The particular content of the Victim can, and does, change, and it does so with a flexibility that is impossible for singular experiences of victimization, be they of the individual or the collective. It is this flexibility that provides its social stability. The Victim is neither politically left nor politically right, and similar to the Poor, “it becomes the basis of political unity because of its success” (Simmel, 1965: 139). Thus, the Victim is in this regard a form of social stability, similar to how other attempts at legitimization tend occur when social structures have been challenged (Berger, 1967). The Victim is beyond the “doer and done-to,” and is addressed to all. As we stand before the tribunal, it allows us to regain a degree of control and to reclaim a degree of “goodness”. It constitutes a new metric by which to both measure, and identify with, moral righteousness. “One escapes the tribunal by becoming it” (Marquard, 1989: 55).

An assessment of the implications of the Victim for particular victims or victim groups is beyond the scope of the current piece. To be clear, as a social type, the Victim stands apart from any and all exemplars. This does not mean, however, that there are no consequences of this new social type for people’s individual and collective lived experiences, for example, due to contestations over meaning creation and meaning cultivation (Le Grand, 2019). As in the case of the Poor, some may very well argue that such social abstractions as the Victim have a positive effect on particular exemplars of the category (i.e., poor people or victims), for example, by means of empowerment, providing orientation, bearing witness. Others will argue that the effects are harmful, for example, by limiting how people are allowed to experience or express their own histories, or that they otherwise blind us to the experiences of particular individuals or groups. Others yet will argue that the effects are mixed. Nevertheless, by better understanding the nature of the Victim as a social type, and by more clearly differentiating between the Victim and particular victims and victim groups, we may avoid some of the confusion that arises when we dialogue on these issues, unawares, on different levels of communication. Such conceptual clarity is particularly important as any and all expressions of the Victim inevitably materialize in the particular form of particular people and peoples (in name). It is therefore of importance for those who are interested in the changing nature of society more broadly, as well as for those who care about particular victims and victim groups, that when speaking about victimization we work to more clearly distinguish between victim and the Victim. The current piece has hopefully helped to lay the initial theoretical foundations for such further reflection.

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