



A Theoretical Inquiry into Maheep Singh's Victimization in *Unlawful Justice*

M. Kalaiyarasan¹ & Dr. A. Vadivukarasi²

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of English, Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women, Udumalpet, Tamil Nadu

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women, Udumalpet, Tamil Nadu



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Abstract

The article analyzes Maheep Singh's character by the controversial Victim Precipitation Theory, which proposes that victims have the potential to cause their own victimization by their own actions or by the situation that they are in. Whereas usually reserved for genuine victims, this analysis uses a critical examination to examine how Maheep Singh, who is the perpetrator of a sexual assault on a 16-year-old girl, Baby, is constructed as a victim of circumstance by his legal defense and social privilege. The article examines how the powerful will manipulate criminological theories in a bid to justify or downplay their blame and present themselves as provoked, misdirected, or trapped. In the case of Maheep, the theory is turned around: he is wrongly presented as being one who had acted out of response to what the victim had done, thus hiding the truth of his guilt. This abuse is evidence of a larger trend of defending the privileged at the expense of believing marginalized victims. Through the analysis of this turnaround, the paper challenges the moral and legal consequences of extending victim-focused theories to perpetrators, particularly in situations of gender, class, and age disparities of power. The article finally contends that Maheep Singh's character demonstrates how Victim Precipitation Theory is used as a tool to circumvent responsibility in the name of reputation and social power.

Keywords: provocation, gender and justice, victimization, consequences

The degree to which victims can actively or passively contribute to the sequence of events leading to a crime is explored by victim precipitation theory. The approach is often employed to analyze the interaction between a victim and an offender's behavior, highlighting the social and psychological forces at play, even though it is controversial, especially in cases of serious crimes such as sexual assault. The case of Maheep Singh in Vish Dhamija's *Unlawful Justice* is an interesting case for this study, but due to the gravity of his offenses, the ethical and practical shortfalls of the theory are especially evident.

A nuanced application of the victim precipitation theory can analyze how Maheep Singh is, if only

partially, a "victim" of greater circumstances and social factors that led to his downfall, even when *Unlawful Justice* primarily presents him as an aggressor and offender. On victim precipitation theory, Maheep Singh, the central character of Vish Dhamija's legal thriller *Unlawful Justice*, is, in a way, a secondary victim of his upbringing, environment, and structural privilege, even though he is largely presented as the actor responsible for a gruesome crime. Although not an innocent victim by any means in the traditional sense, Maheep is shaped and, in several ways, dismantled by forces beyond his control. This article analyzes Maheep Singh as a complex person who is both the criminal and the



product of psychological, family, and social abuse. Maheep Singh, the son of wealthy businessman Maninder Singh, is the epitome of "spoilt brat". Maheep is undisciplined and spoilt due to his family's wealth and status, and he does not care about moral and legal limits. His environment was defined by parental neglect, uncontrolled wealth, exposure to vice, and an attitude of superiority over others that is deeply ingrained in him. Maheep has smoked, drunk, and dealt in contraband since childhood, treating others, especially the poor, as if they were toys for his pleasure. His path concludes with his brutal rape of Baby, a Diwan family housemaid's daughter—a crime committed with gleeful arrogance and impunity.

Victim precipitation theory describes that at times, crime may be caused by encounters where the victim, by action or omission, is responsible for their victimization. This might involve direct provocation or broader situational factors that increase vulnerability, yet that theoretical usage should never be applied to explain or downplay offenders' initial agency and responsibility, especially in the case of rape and associated crimes.

- Active precipitation occurs when a victim provokes confrontation.
- Passive precipitation targets situations in which the victim's attributes or conditions elevate risk to victimization—e.g., socioeconomic status, location, association, or absence of protection.

Analysis: Maheep Singh through the Lens of Victim Precipitation Theory

In *Unlawful Justice*, Maheep Singh is the obvious aggressor and main offender of his crimes. But applying the victim precipitation theory to the overall situation under which he operated gives us a number of insights into the social context and the sequence of events:

Maheep's offense against Baby is backed up by extreme power imbalances—economic, social, and physical. Baby's social status as a daughter of a housemaid and the absence of structural protection for society's weaker elements are situational factors that, the theory postulates, make her vulnerable to abuse.

The trust the family placed in Maheep and their own lack of responsibility in giving him free access to their home and children amounts to passive precipitation. The situation did not lead to nor excuse the crime, but it did set up a situation where Maheep could take advantage of his privilege with impunity. Parental Neglect: The character of Maheep is that of the spoilt and pampered son of a wealthy businessman. His father's wrongdoings, unrestricted cash, and absence of moral teaching allow Maheep to operate in an atmosphere where he is unencumbered, making his sense of entitlement and poor impulse management all the more potent. Unbridled Privilege: Maheep was brought up in a setting that condones evil, and his upbringing did not encourage responsibility, compassion, or respect for boundaries. His social conditioning "precipitates" his later actions and ultimate victimization—first as a criminal, then as someone who is killed because of it. Isolation: His social position and privilege isolate him from having regular interactions and responsibilities, making him a victim of his own privilege and the expectations placed on him.

Maheep's parents, especially his father, indulged Maheep's free behavior. Without the discipline and moral guidance, Maheep's propensities developed unguided, which foresaw his criminal activity. Though they were not conventional victims, their lack of vigilance led to the situation of the assault and serves as a criticism of society in the novel. Victim precipitation theory can be applied in this case to examine how negligence, privilege, and lack of responsibility in rich homes result in offenses against the poor. Application of victim precipitation theory to sexual assault remains highly problematic, as can be seen with the support of modern criminology and feminist perspectives. No behavior, status, or characteristic of Baby can be translated to mean inciting assault by Maheep. The entire fault lies with Maheep and the broader institution that did not prevent it. At best, the theory can be used as a means of judging systemic failures, like Diwan family's neglect and Maheep's suicidal attitude of invulnerability, instead of blaming the actual victim. Maheep's narrative shows how children who are ultra-



rich are vulnerable to their own self-destructive impulses when they are insulated from the repercussions of their behavior. His path to serious crime is hastened by the lack of institutional (family, school, and community) oversight, highlighting the extent to which failures in society and parenting can "victimize" individuals by withholding them from proper boundaries and values. can "victimize" individuals by taking away from them proper boundaries and values.

Target of Retaliation: Due to his actions, Maheep is finally murdered. Though his crime led directly to his victimization, the conditions that rendered him vulnerable—lack of protection, isolation after the crime, and concern of family members about preserving their image—all come into play in the conditions under which he is killed.

Escalating Conflict: Victim precipitation theory states that Maheep's violent choices (active) and neglected upbringing create a horrible chain of events that transform him from the sole aggressor to the victim of revenge.

Passive Precipitation: A victim of poisonous privilege and neglectful parenting

Parental neglect is among the prime reasons for Maheep's failure. It is less of a concern for his father to raise an ethical son than political ambitions and business ventures. Maheep never learned the basics of human decency and responsibility because she had no moral guidance. His mother also doesn't appear to play a prominent part in guiding his moral development. Maheep lacks balanced parenting, with material indulgence replacing emotional support and moral instruction, as he does not receive moral instruction or models. Also, Maheep grows up in the environment of unquestioning luxury. He adopts a perilously egocentric world view, never learns the significance of consequences, and is never punished for misbehaviour. He is pampered socially by a system that allows rich young men to treat the poor as expendable, and this makes him objectify someone like Baby. Such a background, as much as it does not directly lead to a specific incident, sets up the structural context making some individuals more likely to offend and become victimized, per victim

precipitation theory. Maheep can thus also be seen as an active victim—consciously acting out something that we, objectively speaking, know is wrong and which he knows is wrong, but which is also unavoidable to him given his family crisis and the circumstances of his social environment.

Ironically, Maheep becomes a victim in the very strict sense of the term due to his own activities. Maheep is the victim of vigilante justice after Baby's ghastly rape and the subsequent legal failure. A turning point in the narrative is when he is stabbed to death as an act of personal revenge. Despite the fact that Maheep's death was precipitated by his own hand—an example of active victim precipitation—his case also illustrates how the system ultimately makes him vulnerable to his horrible death by first failing to hold him accountable. Others must police the law for themselves because of the state's unresponsiveness. Since he is in his own mind invincible, Maheep becomes careless and vulnerable to attack. He dies under this vile turn of justice as a victim of the same system that raised him up and did not adequately punish him, as well as being a criminal. Once again, victim precipitation theory comes into play in this situation—not to justify the retaliation, but to illustrate how initial warning signs, unchecked behavior, and institutional breakdown lead to the victimization of innocent individuals such as Baby and the eventual self-destruction of the perpetrator.

The Irony of Victimhood: The victimhood paradox—being able to both play the role of predator and prey in a given situation—is exemplified in the character of Maheep Singh. He is the victimizer of Baby, shattering her to create trauma that destroys her life—but he is also a monster, so to speak, socially constructed, a youth who has been failed by every moral, familial, and societal infrastructure designed to contain and shape him. The victim-offender divide is not always clear-cut, as victim precipitation theory reminds us. The idea aims to clarify how elements such as upbringing, social standing, and systemic inaction foster deviance, but it should never be used to justify criminal behavior. This complexity is reflected in Maheep's example. By rewriting Maheep Singh's biography in terms of a tragic outcome of



privilege, power, and parental failure, victim precipitation theory does not absolve him. He is a living testament to the way system neglect, both familial and societal, can create individuals who harm others with just as much ease as they ruin themselves.

In *Unlawful Justice*, Vish Dhamija presents a scathing critique of social injustices and moral decay caused by privilege without accountability, along with narrating a story of crime and courtroom drama. Through the character of Maheep Singh, we are forced to confront challenging questions: Is the setting or the person who really creates the delinquent? And the victim is the one who suffers most when justice fails, society, or maybe both? In the process of unpeeling Maheep Singh as perpetrator and product of victimization, we gain a better understanding of criminal behavior—not to condone it, but to reflect on the society that produces it. Maheep Singh's situation today is not an accident, but the logical result of his own choices. Each choice he made, each boundary he crossed, and each law he disobeyed has brought him to this moment. Consequences don't discriminate — they pursue evil, whether by intention or by position. Maheep was given an opportunity to turn around, but he chose not to. He committed errors that were too glaring to pass up, whether brought about by arrogance, carelessness, or willful harm. Responsibility was deferred for much too long, but justice always has a way of catching up. He must now face the aftermath—not in ill will, but because justice demands it. He is learning that there are consequences to decisions made long after the fact and that actions have consequences. No matter how much one feels a sense of authority or protection, responsibility and honesty ultimately come out on top. It was Maheep's own bad choices, not other people's, that resulted in his breakdown. Restoring balance and maintaining norms is the purpose here, not revenge. This is no exception to the principle that society functions best when people are held accountable for what they do.

It sends a message to others that bad behavior will be accepted or tolerated. For what he has done, rather than who he is, Maheep Singh is deserving of the punishment. His punishment is in proportion to what he did wrong and what harm he caused. Now, he must pay the price, which is part and parcel of introspection and self-improvement. Perhaps in facing them, he will learn and become a wiser and honest individual. But for now, fairness and due process must remain the paramount priorities. Let this serve as a reminder that everyone is subject to responsibility. Furthermore, Maheep Singh's punishment is just and well-earned.

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