
OBSESSION, SELF-DESTRUCTION, AND PATHOLOGICAL VICTIMISATION: A FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF NARRATIVE, COMPULSION, AND CONSEQUENCE

Adv. Ishaan D. Joshi, Forensic and Criminal Intelligence Expert
Founder and Director, CCSFI – Centre for Crime Sciences and Forensic Intelligence

ABSTRACT

This paper examines obsession, self-destruction, and pathological victimisation through a forensic psychological framework grounded in narrative analysis. It argues that many forms of victimisation cannot be understood solely as discrete events but must be read as psychologically organised stories in which desire, humiliation, grievance, duty, fantasy, guilt, and fatalism become binding scripts. The paper distinguishes clinical obsession from broader cultural and interpersonal fixations, showing how compulsive attachments may arise through trauma, betrayal, narcissistic injury, moral conflict, and distorted meaning-making rather than through obsessive-compulsive disorder alone. Drawing from victimology, trauma theory, moral injury scholarship, psychoanalytic thought, cognitive distortion research, and narrative identity theory, it demonstrates how individuals may become trapped in patterns of revictimisation, coercive attachment, stalking, sacrificial duty, and revenge-oriented self-undoing. Mythic and literary figures including Narcissus, Icarus, Ahab, Ravana, Bhishma, Duryodhana, Shishupala, Hiranyakashipu, and Surpanakha are treated not as decorative analogies but as compressed narrative laboratories of obsession, contradiction, and ruin. The paper concludes that forensic psychology benefits from narrative reading because it clarifies motive, distortion, vulnerability, and escalation without collapsing complex victimisation into either pathology alone or moral blame, while also preserving the ethical distinction between explanation and exculpation in law, psychiatry, and victimological analysis.

Keywords: victimology; obsession; self-destruction; narrative identity; forensic psychology

1. Introduction

Victimology has long resisted two distortions that threaten its intellectual seriousness. The first is reductionism: the tendency to treat victimisation as a discrete event and nothing more. The second is contamination by blame: the tendency to convert questions about vulnerability, repetition, attachment, risk, or narrative into insinuations of culpability. A rigorous forensic psychology of victimisation must avoid both errors. It must recognise that victims are harmed by acts, but also by meanings, by betrayals, by interpretive frameworks, and by the stories through which danger, duty, desire, shame, and loyalty become psychologically legible. The modern victimological tradition itself proceeds from a broad conception of harm, recognising physical, mental, emotional, economic, and rights-based injury, and insisting that victims be treated with compassion, dignity, access to justice, restitution, compensation, and assistance (United Nations, 1985).

This paper takes the position that obsession is not merely a psychiatric symptom. It is also a narrative force. A person may become fixated on a beloved, an enemy, a humiliation, a memory, a grievance, a sacred duty, a lost object, a promise, an image of self, or an idea of cosmic fairness. In some cases, this fixation becomes the organising principle of life. It structures attention, perception, rationalisation, memory, and conduct. It alters what appears bearable, what appears impossible, what appears fated, and what appears morally necessary. Once a person begins to inhabit a destructive script rather than merely experience a destructive event, victimology enters a deeper terrain. The question is no longer only what was done to this person, but what story has taken hold strongly enough to shape how they approach suffering, danger, endurance, retaliation, and loss.

The importance of narrative in psychology is well established. Narrative identity theory argues that persons construct an internalised and evolving life story through which past experience and imagined future are integrated into a sense of selfhood and purpose (McAdams and McLean, 2013). This insight becomes especially important in victimology because trauma rarely remains an isolated incident in the psyche. It becomes a chapter, then a theme, then sometimes a whole script. A person may come to live under the sign of betrayal, rescue, martyrdom, contamination, unworthiness, vigilance, revenge, or fatal devotion. These are not merely metaphors; they are organising forms of action and endurance.

The argument of this paper is that obsession, self-destruction, and pathology in victimology

are best understood through the meeting point of five domains: forensic psychology, narrative identity, trauma and revictimisation, psychoanalytic and moral conflict, and mythic-literary structures of compulsion. Such an approach permits explanation without romanticisation and complexity without surrender to vagueness. It also allows forensic psychology to do what it is uniquely positioned to do: to read behaviour as neither mere symptom nor mere sin, but as structured conduct situated within motive, injury, cognition, relationship, and consequence.

2. Victimology, Forensic Psychology, and the Problem of Pathology

Victimology, particularly when informed by clinical psychology, is not concerned only with the criminal act. It is also concerned with the psychological aftermath, the integrity of testimony, the possibility of recovery, the effects of trauma on cognition and emotion, and the burden borne by professionals working with victims (Yılmaz, 2021). A forensic perspective enlarges the problem further. It asks how victimisation is experienced, narrated, repeated, and assessed in contexts where credibility, memory, intent, vulnerability, and future risk all matter. The victim is not simply the passive recipient of force. The victim may also be a narrator, survivor, witness, reluctant participant, morally conflicted actor, or, in some cases, a future perpetrator. That last point is uncomfortable but indispensable.

The victim-offender overlap literature has shown that victimisation and perpetration are often developmentally entangled rather than mutually exclusive categories. Histories of abuse, neglect, betrayal, and repeated exposure to violence can shape later aggression, antisocial coping, and offending, even while such histories continue to matter as victimological facts in their own right (Beckley *et al.*, 2018). This does not mean that victim and offender are morally indistinguishable. It means that forensic psychology cannot afford naive binaries. Injury may be internalised into self-destruction, externalised into violence, or oscillate between both.

The phrase “pathology in victimology” is therefore dangerous if used crudely, but useful if used carefully. It does **not** mean that victims are disordered because they are victims. Nor does it mean that structural violence can be psychologised away. Rather, it refers to the maladaptive psychological processes that can develop around victimisation: traumatic repetition, shame-based attachment, dissociation, betrayal blindness, coercive dependency, pathological loyalty, self-punishment, obsessive grievance, retaliatory fixation, and narratively organised surrender to harm. Used in this way, the concept of pathology helps explain persistent patterns without converting explanation into accusation.

3. Obsession: Clinical Symptom, Narrative Fixation, and Forensic Problem

In ordinary language, obsession is used promiscuously. One may be “obsessed” with success, love, beauty, fame, revenge, fitness, power, knowledge, or duty. In psychiatric language, however, obsession has a narrower and more specific meaning. In obsessive-compulsive disorder, obsessions are intrusive, recurrent thoughts, urges, or images that generate anxiety or distress, and are often accompanied by compulsions aimed at reducing distress or preventing feared outcomes. OCD is associated with impairment, chronicity, and substantial disability, and it remains underdiagnosed and undertreated in many settings (Stein *et al.*, 2019). This distinction is crucial.

Forensic psychology must not confuse all fixations with OCD. A stalker may be obsessive without having obsessive-compulsive disorder. A jealous spouse, grievance-fuelled attacker, coercive ex-partner, or revenge-fixated litigant may display perseveration, entitlement, attachment dysregulation, narcissistic injury, and coercive persistence rather than classical obsessional pathology. Indeed, stalking theory has evolved precisely because simplistic notions of “mad obsession” fail to capture the relational, cognitive, behavioural, and coercive complexity of stalking conduct. Contemporary analysis identifies the relevance of attachment theory, coercive control, social learning, information-processing models of aggression, and relational goal pursuit theory in understanding persistent pursuit and escalation (Parkhill, Nixon and McEwan, 2022).

The distinction between ego-dystonic and ego-syntonic fixation is particularly important here. In OCD, intrusive thoughts are often experienced as alien, unwanted, and distressing. By contrast, many destructive fixations in forensic settings are ego-syntonic: the subject experiences them as meaningful, righteous, deserved, fated, romantic, or morally justified. The stalker does not merely suffer the thought of the other; he may treat the thought as a command. The revenge-seeker does not merely ruminate; he may experience retaliation as duty. The self-sacrificing victim does not merely endure; she may experience endurance as virtue. This is where obsession becomes narrative rather than symptom alone.

The dualistic model of passion offers a further refinement. Not all powerful attachment is pathological. Harmonious passion can be intense yet integrated; obsessive passion is rigid, conflictual, controlling, and often associated with stress, dysregulation, and reduced flexibility (Tomkins, 2018). This distinction has obvious forensic value. It allows us to separate depth

from domination, commitment from compulsion, and vocation from self-cannibalising fixation. The question is not whether an attachment is strong, but whether it has become tyrannical.

4. Narrative Identity and the Psychology of Victimisation

Narrative identity theory argues that people create an internal life story through which they organise suffering, aspiration, moral meaning, and continuity across time (McAdams and McLean, 2013). Victimisation enters this structure with particular force because trauma is not easily assimilated as a neutral event. It often demands explanation. Why did this happen? What does it say about me? What does it require of me now? Am I chosen, cursed, guilty, impure, tested, ruined, or responsible? When these questions harden into fixed plots, psychological danger increases.

A trauma-informed victimology must therefore pay attention to the form of narrative, not merely its content. Trauma may produce fragmented recall, altered temporal structure, sensory dominance, avoidance, and discontinuity in testimony. Investigative interviewing research has shown that traumatised witnesses may struggle with linear narration while still providing truthful and valuable evidence; police and legal systems that expect neat chronology may misunderstand trauma-related disorganisation as unreliability (Risan, Milne and Binder, 2020). Narrative form is thus not a literary luxury. It is evidentially relevant.

Narrative identity also clarifies why some victims become trapped in recurrence. The person may not consciously decide to repeat danger. Rather, the self-story may make repetition intelligible. “I can save him.” “This time endurance will redeem the suffering.” “If I leave now, everything I sacrificed will mean nothing.” “After so much pain, the universe must balance.” “I was born for trials.” “Only by staying will I prove I am loyal, pure, forgiving, or strong.” Such story forms are powerful because they are not absurd to the person who lives inside them. They often recruit culture, religion, romance, family honour, and moral ideals into private justifications for continued exposure to harm.

This is where narrative meets forensic danger. Once suffering becomes a script rather than an interruption, warning signs lose their ordinary function. Rejection may become a challenge. Betrayal may become an invitation to prove love. Humiliation may become the seed of revenge. Duty may become a sacred alibi for self-erasure. The victimological problem is not simply

exposure to harm, but narrative adhesion to harm.

5. Trauma, Betrayal, Revictimisation, and the Repetition of Harm

Revictimisation research demonstrates that earlier victimisation can increase vulnerability to later victimisation across the life course. Systematic reviews have found robust associations between childhood maltreatment and subsequent revictimisation, with mechanisms including emotion dysregulation, dissociation, trauma symptoms, impaired boundary recognition, self-blame, and altered perceptions of trust and danger (Fereidooni, Daniels and Lommen, 2024). These findings must be handled with care. They do not imply that victims cause later harms. They show that traumatic injury can alter the psychological apparatus of self-protection.

Betrayal trauma theory is especially valuable in this regard. When trauma is perpetrated by a trusted or needed other, the victim may suppress awareness, distort trust judgments, or fail to respond self-protectively because attachment and survival are at stake (Gagnon, Lee and DePrince, 2017). This theory helps explain why some victims remain bonded to the very relationships that injure them. It also explains why repetition may occur without conscious consent to repetition. The self may be organised around attachment first and danger recognition second.

Such dynamics are central to intimate partner violence, coercive family structures, grooming, exploitative care relationships, and other settings in which harm is interwoven with dependency. The victim may appear from outside to be irrationally loyal, but from within the relationship the script is more complex. Loyalty may promise survival, belonging, or moral coherence. To leave may feel not merely difficult but ontologically shattering. A forensic psychology that ignores narrative and attachment will read such cases poorly.

Traumatic repetition is therefore not merely behavioural recurrence. It is often the return of an unresolved narrative. The person seeks not pain as such, but mastery, redemption, restoration of dignity, or reversal of an old injury. Tragically, the chosen circumstances often reproduce the wound rather than transform it. This is one of the great ironies of self-destructive victimisation: what is pursued as repair may function as repetition.

6. Self-Destruction as a Victimological Pattern

Self-destruction in victimology is frequently misunderstood because it is imagined only in

spectacular form: suicide, overdose, extreme violence, explicit self-harm. Yet many self-destructive victimological patterns are quieter and more narratively respectable. They include compulsive return to dangerous relationships, refusal of help out of moral pride, endurance of abuse as proof of loyalty, obsessive pursuit after rejection, revenge that destroys the avenger, and sacrificial duty that annihilates the self in the name of honour. These forms are often invisible precisely because they can be wrapped in virtues: devotion, patience, strength, forgiveness, resilience, commitment, duty, faith.

Moral injury scholarship deepens this picture by showing how guilt, shame, betrayal, and perceived moral failure can lead to self-attack, withdrawal, substance misuse, and self-destructive patterns of living (Vermetten and Jetly, 2018). A person who feels contaminated by what happened may begin to treat suffering as deserved. A person who feels that they failed to prevent harm may live as though atonement must be endless. Survivors of interpersonal trauma may experience guilt for staying, for not anticipating, for not escaping, or for exposing others to danger, even when such guilt is unwarranted (Norman, 2020). In these cases, the victim becomes prosecutor and judge of the self.

Psychoanalytic language remains useful, if used carefully. Freud's structural model suggests that desire, conscience, and mediation may enter destructive conflict. The id presses appetite, rage, sexual longing, and primitive need; the superego moralises, condemns, and punishes; the ego struggles to negotiate reality, often by rationalisation (Freud, 1923/1962). In pathological victimisation, one often finds not the absence of conscience but its distortion. The superego may not prevent destruction; it may demand it in the form of self-punishment, sacrificial suffering, or the refusal of self-preservation. A person may remain in danger because leaving feels sinful, disloyal, cowardly, or selfish.

From a forensic standpoint, such cases must be interpreted without sentimentalism. Explanation is not exoneration. Yet neither is maladaptive endurance proof of free and informed choice in any simple sense. The person may be acting, but the action may be structured by shame, dependency, distorted loyalty, fatalism, trauma, and narrative coercion. To understand self-destruction is therefore to understand not only behaviour, but meaning.

7. Campbellian Compulsion and the Seduction of Ordeal

Joseph Campbell's account of the hero's journey remains influential because it offers a

grammar for ordeal: call, threshold, trial, descent, confrontation, transformation, return (Campbell, 2008). Used carefully, it illuminates the human tendency to confer order and meaning upon struggle. Used carelessly, it risks universal simplification. For present purposes, its real value lies in identifying a dangerous psychological temptation: the overidentification of suffering with destiny.

What may be termed **Campbellian compulsion** is the pathological conviction that one's suffering is not merely difficult but necessary, not merely painful but sacred, not merely avoidable but required for identity. In such a framework, warning becomes trial, refusal becomes cowardice, humiliation becomes initiation, and injury becomes proof of chosenness. This is a profoundly seductive narrative form because it redeems pain by embedding it in significance. The person no longer asks whether the ordeal is destroying them. They ask only whether they are enduring it adequately.

This pattern is visible in many forms of victimological entrapment. The abused partner believes suffering is the price of profound love. The obsessed pursuer treats rejection as the final gate before union. The morally injured subject imagines that only unending self-punishment can restore order. The revenge-seeker experiences grievance as a cosmic summons. The sacrificial professional destroys body and mind in the name of duty, unable to differentiate honour from self-erasure. In each case, narrative enlarges the person's capacity to suffer while shrinking their capacity to withdraw.

Campbellian compulsion is especially dangerous when fused with narcissistic injury. Then the person sees themselves as uniquely tested, misunderstood, burdened, or exempt. Reality becomes subordinate to script. The law, the family, the victim, or the institution that resists the script appears not as reality but as obstruction. At that point obsession hardens, and self-destruction begins to masquerade as destiny.

8. Cognitive Distortions, Fatalism, and the Logic of Obsession

Obsessive and self-destructive patterns are often maintained by distorted reasoning. The gambler's fallacy is an obvious example: the mistaken belief that previous independent outcomes alter future probabilities. In gambling, it produces the belief that a reversal is "due". In human relationships and self-destructive narratives, similar thinking appears in transformed form: after repeated suffering, reward must be imminent; after enough rejection, acceptance

must occur; after many survivals, the next risk will also be survivable; after enduring so much, leaving now would make the entire ordeal meaningless. Experimental work on gambling-related distortions confirms that such fallacies can shape decision-making powerfully even where reasoning ability is otherwise intact (Xue *et al.*, 2012).

The sunk cost pattern is equally relevant. People remain in destructive arrangements because they have already invested too much to retreat. This is not simply bad economics. It is narrative bondage. The more one has suffered, the more necessary it feels to transform the suffering into significance. One last sacrifice, one final confrontation, one more act of endurance, one more apology extracted, one more chance granted. The self becomes captive to its own expenditure.

Fatalism compounds the danger. Cultural ideas of fate, karma, destiny, curse, or divine testing can be psychologically sustaining, but they can also become evasions of agency. The subject tells themselves that what unfolds was always written, that they are only enacting a script older than their will. Such beliefs can blunt panic and preserve coherence, but they may also paralyse intervention. The person ceases to ask what ought to be done and asks only what must now be endured.

This is where forensic psychology must be especially disciplined. It must not pathologise religion or moral commitment. But it must recognise when spiritual or moral language functions as camouflage for compulsion, dependency, self-punishment, or obsessional surrender to danger. The issue is not whether a person invokes fate. The issue is what invoking fate permits them to ignore.

9. Myth, Epic, and Poetry as Forensic Laboratories of Obsession

Myth and literature belong in this paper not as ornament, but as compressed archives of motive. They preserve recognisable human structures in intensified form. Forensic psychology, though empirical in method, benefits from such materials because they reveal the inner logics by which desire, humiliation, conscience, love, rage, and destruction become narratively organised.

9.1 Narcissus: Self as Object, Self as Ruin

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Narcissus is destroyed by fascination with his own reflection, while Echo is reduced to remainder, voice without embodied reciprocity (Ovid, trans. 2004). The myth is often read lazily as vanity, but its forensic-psychological significance is sharper.

Narcissus cannot tolerate relational otherness. He desires an image that mirrors him without resisting him. That is why the myth resonates with stalking, coercive attachment, and narcissistically organised pursuit. The other is not encountered as autonomous subject but as reflective surface.

Victimologically, the Narcissus structure is important because it generates pseudo-victimhood. The narcissistically injured subject often experiences themselves as the deepest victim in the scene while simultaneously violating others' boundaries. Rejection is experienced as persecution because it is experienced as intolerable symbolic injury. The self then pursues repair not through mourning but through reassertion, control, or appropriation. Narcissistic obsession thus creates both victims and self-destruction, because the world eventually refuses to remain mirror-like.

9.2 Icarus: The Erotics of Warning

The myth of Icarus stages overreach under warning. He is cautioned not to fly too high, yet exhilaration defeats proportion, and the sun melts the wax that holds the wings together. What is psychologically striking here is not mere recklessness but the transformation of warning into temptation. The limit itself intensifies desire. This structure recurs in self-destructive risk, in grandiose projects, in illicit love, in revenge, in substance abuse, and in occupations of danger where invulnerability becomes part of identity. Icarus is not merely careless; he is seduced by altitude.

From a victimological perspective, the Icarus pattern appears when subjects confuse transcendence with safety. The abused partner believes the extremity proves depth. The revenge-seeker believes the scale of retaliation proves justice. The ambitious offender believes immunity will hold because it has held before. Many collapses that appear sudden are, in fact, slow meltings of wax under persistent heat.

9.3 Ahab: Injury as Cosmology

Melville's Captain Ahab is perhaps modern literature's clearest study in monomaniacal obsession. Maimed by the white whale, he ceases to live in a plural world. Injury becomes total explanation, and pursuit becomes metaphysical necessity (Melville, 1851/2003). Ahab is invaluable for forensic psychology because he demonstrates how grievance can expand beyond

the original wound until it consumes judgment, recruits others, and legitimises catastrophe.

In many contemporary cases of grievance-fuelled violence, stalking, retaliatory homicide, workplace revenge, or protracted persecution ideation, one finds the Ahab logic: a real injury transformed into a cosmology of mission. The grievance may begin in fact; its later life depends on narrative inflation. The world is reduced to one insult, one enemy, one rectification. That reduction is psychologically efficient and morally disastrous. Ahab is both victim and author of disaster, injured and injurious, intelligible and horrifying.

9.4 Ravana: Greatness Without Restraint

Ravana's value lies in contradiction. He is not a flat emblem of lust. He is learned, powerful, devout, musically gifted, ascetic, and grand, yet undone by entitlement and transgressive desire (Vālmīki, trans. 2022). This makes him forensically richer than a simple villain. Ravana is destroyed not because he lacks capacity for greatness, but because greatness in him ceases to restrain appetite. His self-conception becomes too elevated to accept ordinary boundary.

For forensic psychology, Ravana represents the danger of exceptionalism. A person may be accomplished, disciplined, even spiritually oriented, and still become catastrophic when convinced that distinction authorises transgression. This is not merely lust; it is moral licensing through grandeur. Ravana is therefore central to any serious psychological account of obsession because he demonstrates that intelligence and devotion do not neutralise pathology. They may instead furnish it with rhetoric.

9.5 Surpanakha and the Violence of Humiliated Desire

Surpanakha offers another important pattern: desire moving swiftly into humiliation, then into broader catastrophe. Her approach, rejection, mutilation, and subsequent chain of retaliation reveal how erotic injury can become political and violent when shame is uncontained. In forensic contexts, humiliation is one of the most underestimated accelerants. Many destructive acts are not primarily about gain but about the intolerability of narcissistic insult. Surpanakha thus belongs in this inquiry because she illustrates how ridicule, wounded pride, erotic refusal, and revenge can merge into a destructive social sequence.

9.6 Bhishma: Duty as Self-Destruction

Bhishma's vow is one of the great studies in noble pathology. He is admirable because he

sacrifices personal fulfilment for filial obligation, yet that very vow becomes the architecture of later tragedy (Vyāsa, trans. 2010). Bhishma matters because not all self-destruction is driven by appetite. Some is driven by duty carried beyond wisdom. The pathological element lies not in commitment itself, but in rigid fidelity to a principle after its humane function has expired.

This pattern appears in caregiving, military, legal, academic, and familial contexts alike. Persons destroy themselves in the name of service, honour, sacrifice, or role integrity because they can no longer distinguish moral seriousness from self-erasure. In victimology, such people may not be recognised as victims at all, because their destruction is socially praised. Yet their suffering is real, and their inability to protect the self is often narratively organised around duty.

9.7 Duryodhana and Shakuni: Injured Entitlement and Strategic Obsession

Duryodhana, especially in relation to Shakuni, represents obsession organised around humiliation, possession, and injured entitlement. The issue is not simply power, but the refusal to concede legitimacy to rivals. The dice game is psychologically illuminating because it is not only strategy; it is spectacle, degradation, and symbolic reordering. Duryodhana's pathology lies in the inability to coexist with frustration. What he cannot own, he must dishonour.

This dynamic has forensic relevance wherever perceived status injury fuels coercion or violence. The grievance may be legal, romantic, occupational, or familial; what matters is the psychological transformation of frustration into entitlement to humiliation of the other. Such persons often appear highly rational in planning yet profoundly irrational in moral structure. Fallacy becomes instrument.

9.8 Shishupala, Hiranyakashipu, and the Persistence of Defiance

Shishupala's repeated abuse of Krishna, despite warning and forbearance, illustrates the psychology of compulsive insult and escalating defiance. He cannot stop because opposition has become identity. Likewise, Hiranyakashipu's persecution of Prahlada is not merely tyranny; it is a pathological inability to tolerate dissent from the object one believes one owns or governs. Both figures illuminate a pattern central to stalking and coercive control: the persecutor is driven not simply to dominate, but to extinguish the affront represented by another's independent allegiance.

9.9 Poetry and the Compression of Ruin

Poetry often reveals obsession more efficiently than theory because it compresses recurring thought into rhythm, image, and refrain. Shelley's *Ozymandias* is a small anatomy of grandiosity and collapse: imperial self-certainty survives only as ruin and inscription (Shelley, 1818/2022). Poe's *The Raven* is almost a monograph on grief as compulsive return, where the bereaved speaker repeatedly solicits the answer that hurts him most and converts repetition into ritual injury (Poe, 1845/2024a). *Annabel Lee* presents love as persistence beyond death, but also as an inability to relinquish possession of the lost object (Poe, 1849/2024b). Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* stages enchantment as depletion, leaving the subject emptied by a vision he cannot metabolise (Keats, 1820/2024). Milton's *Paradise Lost* gives perhaps the grandest English-language account of pride, temptation, transgression, and moral self-division (Milton, 1667/2008).

Such texts matter because forensic psychology routinely encounters lives already half-poetic in their logic. People do not simply report facts; they speak in motifs, repetitions, images, and self-legitimizing myths. The forensic task is not to romanticise them, but to hear them accurately.

10. Obsession, Love, Desire, and Moral Imposition

One of the most difficult analytical problems in this field is distinguishing love from possession, passion from fixation, and duty from coercive self-loss. In many destructive narratives, morality is imposed retrospectively upon desire. The person does not say, "I wanted and therefore pursued." They say, "I was obliged, destined, tested, faithful, provoked, left with no choice." This conversion of appetite into moral script is one of the central mechanisms by which obsession preserves dignity while intensifying harm.

The phenomenon is visible in romantic obsession, honour violence, stalking, revenge, predatory devotion, and sacrificial caregiving alike. It is also visible in victims whose self-destructive endurance is narratively beautified. The language may be noble, but the pattern remains pathological if it strips the person of flexibility, reflective judgment, and self-protection. This is why forensic psychology must be alert not only to symptom and behaviour, but to rhetoric. What moral language is doing the work of compulsion?

At the same time, one must resist simplistic secular condescension toward duty, devotion, or spiritual language. Not all vows are pathological; not all endurance is masochistic; not all suffering is narratively distorted. The question is whether the narrative expands or abolishes agency. Does it permit revision, boundary, refusal, and withdrawal when harm becomes intolerable? Or does it sanctify annihilation? Once suffering becomes the proof of sincerity, pathology is near.

11. Forensic Implications: Assessment, Interviewing, Risk, and Intervention

11.1 Assessment

Forensic assessment should distinguish carefully between psychiatric obsession, personality-organised fixation, trauma repetition, coercive attachment, and culturally reinforced sacrificial scripts. It should ask what story governs the conduct. Is the person organised around grievance, rescue fantasy, contaminated shame, exceptional destiny, punitive conscience, or dependency disguised as duty? Is the fixation ego-dystonic or ego-syntonic? Is the subject distressed by the thought, or devoted to it? Such distinctions are indispensable in differentiating OCD, stalking, delusional jealousy, obsessive grief, trauma bonding, and self-destructive victimisation (Stein *et al.*, 2019; Parkhill, Nixon and McEwan, 2022).

11.2 Investigative Interviewing

Trauma-informed interviewing is essential because traumatised persons may narrate non-linearly, omit details initially, speak in fragments, or oscillate between detachment and overwhelm. These features should not be naïvely taken as evidence of fabrication. Interviewing recommendations stress rapport, pacing, empathy, and an understanding of how trauma shapes communication and recall (Risan, Milne and Binder, 2020). The law often desires tidy narrative; trauma rarely supplies it.

11.3 Risk Formulation

Narrative analysis can improve violence and victimisation risk assessment. When a subject's self-story is dominated by humiliation, revenge, cosmic mission, sacrificial destiny, contaminated guilt, or relational possession, escalation risk may increase even before overt acts intensify. Likewise, when a victim's narrative is organised around fatalistic loyalty, shame, rescue fantasy, or redemptive suffering, their capacity to withdraw from danger may be

compromised. Risk does not lie only in circumstances; it lies in the meanings attached to them.

11.4 Intervention

Intervention should aim neither to strip away all meaning nor to collude with destructive meaning. Effective therapeutic and forensic engagement may involve helping the person re-author the narrative: from destiny to choice, from punishment to recovery, from humiliation to mourning, from loyalty to boundary, from grievance to proportion, from compulsive repetition to reflective interruption. This is not merely a literary act. It is often the psychological condition of survival.

12. Discussion

The central claim of this paper is that obsession and self-destruction in victimology are best understood as narrative-psychological formations. They are not reducible to psychiatric disorder, although psychiatric disorder may be involved. They are not reducible to social structure, although structure matters profoundly. They are not reducible to moral weakness, although moral choice remains relevant. They arise at the meeting point of injury, desire, attachment, shame, conscience, cognition, fantasy, and culture.

A victimological analysis that excludes these dimensions becomes thin. It can describe harms but not explain their recurrence, meaning, or subjective necessity. Conversely, an analysis that explains everything through pathology becomes ethically dangerous. It may criminalise vulnerability or medicalise injustice. The virtue of forensic psychology lies in its capacity to resist both simplifications. It can examine motive, narrative, risk, testimony, trauma, distortion, and responsibility together.

Myth and literature are useful precisely because they preserve human contradiction with unusual clarity. Ravana is not diminished by simplicity; he is enlarged by contradiction. Bhishma is ruined not by vice but by overpurified duty. Ahab turns injury into world-order. Narcissus mistakes image for relation. Duryodhana cannot survive frustrated entitlement. Shishupala cannot stop provoking the force that will end him. Icarus experiences warning as invitation. These are not relics. They are recurring structures of mind.

The forensic significance is immediate. Many contemporary cases of stalking, coercive control, grievance-fueled violence, sacrificial victimhood, and traumatic repetition are

incomprehensible unless one sees the script. Behaviour is often the end-stage of a story already long underway. The person may not simply choose destruction; they may inhabit it as meaning. To hear that accurately is not to approve it. It is to understand the level at which intervention must occur.

13. Conclusion

Obsession, self-destruction, and pathological victimisation form a complex field in which psychology, narrative, morality, and law intersect. A forensic psychological approach must distinguish clinical obsession from broader forms of destructive fixation; must recognise the role of trauma, betrayal, shame, and revictimisation; and must understand that many harmful patterns are sustained by narrative structures that render suffering meaningful, necessary, or redemptive.

At its deepest level, victimology is not only the study of what has been done to persons. It is also the study of how persons come to endure, repeat, rationalise, pursue, or transform harm within the stories by which they live. Some are trapped by love; some by grievance; some by duty; some by guilt; some by pride; some by fantasies of destiny or cosmic balancing. Forensic psychology gains precision when it learns to read these scripts without surrendering either to moralism or to determinism.

The most serious lesson is therefore neither sentimental nor punitive. It is this: self-destruction often arrives clothed in dignity, devotion, justice, endurance, or fate. The task of forensic psychology is to see the destruction without being fooled by the costume.

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