

Disciplining the Deviant: A Foucauldian Analysis of Criminal Subjectivity in 'The Lock Artist'

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Abstract

The present research applies Michel Foucault's perspectives on discipline and punishment to Steve Hamilton's novel *The Lock Artist*, exploring the criminal subjectivity of the protagonist beyond the binary of good and evil. Through textual analysis, the study examines the norms, upbringing, and circumstances that shape the protagonist's identity as a deviant and criminal. The research also investigates the role of confession as a tool of the modern state in altering the subjectivity of its subjects. The findings suggest that deviance and illegality are social constructs, created and maintained by power structures. The study highlights how society defines deviance and the state defines illegality, leading individuals down a path of criminalization. This research provides insight into the ways power operates to shape an individual's subjectivity, particularly in relation to criminality, and offers a critical analysis of the ways the modern state exercises control over its subjects. For useful explanation and analysis of criminal subjectivity, Michel Foucault's book 'discipline and punishment' has been referred. This article discusses the norms, upbringing, and circumstances of the protagonist and tries to explore his subjectivity as a criminal beyond the paradigm of good and evil. It elaborates those factors which constitute his identity as a deviant and then as a criminal. Also, this research discusses the role of confession as a tool of the modern state to alter the subjectivity of its subject.

Keywords: criminal subjectivity, Foucault, discipline and punishment, deviance, illegality, power structures, confession, identity formation.

1. Introduction

This research explores the concept of criminal subjectivity through the lens of Michel Foucault's seminal works, "Discipline and Punishment" and "Subject and Power". The central argument is that notions of deviance, crime, and illegality are subjective and reflective of a society's power dynamics. Foucault posits that every society constructs its own definition of criminality, which reveals the underlying power structures and values. As he notes, "A society's definition of criminality and criminals reveals a great deal about its power dynamics" (Foucault, 1975). In other words, power shapes the labels and definitions assigned to individuals. Through Foucault's theory of power, discipline, and punishment, this dissertation examines how modern states and power structures influence actions through discourse and law, adapting to changing circumstances. Foucault's perspective on criminality challenges modernist notions of objective truth, instead advocating for multiple interpretations and perspectives. He emphasizes that understanding crime requires considering the criminal's perspective, rather than solely relying on state-defined laws. To fully grasp this postmodernist stance on criminal subjectivity, it's essential to distinguish between deviance and illegality. Deviance refers to the state of diverging from societal norms and expectations, particularly in social behavior. Illegality, on the other hand, specifically refers to the violation of written laws.

This research examines the criminal subjectivity of a criminal in American society through the textual analysis of *The Lock Artist*. By applying the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment* it addresses the nature and cause of a crime. Michel Foucault talks about criminal subjectivity in many of his works, including *Technologies of the Self*, *History of Sexuality*, and *Power Knowledge*. In all these works Foucault's stance on subjectivity identifies that power supervises a person's subjectivity, it subjugates its subject by eliminating his individuality. 'Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are' (Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 1982)

The Lock Artist highlights how in an American society a boy who has poor socialization and a traumatic childhood becomes deviant in society and then later on for that very deviance he is called a criminal. The term deviance means not incorporating with the usual codes, but 'an action or behavior that violates social norms, including a formally enacted rules such as crime, as well as informal violations of social norms' (Oxford Advanced learner dictionary, 2010)

The Lock Artist is a novel by Steve Hamilton. It is a crime thriller story of a mute boy who has a natural talent for picking locks, but this talent in his teenage years makes him a criminal in the eyes of his society. It explores how a person ends up becoming a criminal? Through the fictional character of Mike, the protagonist of the novel Hamilton has shown that how a boy with a born talent of picking locks first labeled as deviant and his poor socialization does not let him learn the codes and laws of the society well. But that very society and the state label him as deviant 'you are not like others Mike, you look and behave differently from other kids' (Hamilton, 79). Then his deviance becomes a threat to the existing code and dominant discourse he is labeled as a criminal 'He is a criminal, and a criminal cannot be an artist Amelia' (Hamilton, 168). Hamilton has shown that how society and power describe someone's identity and social status. Hamilton has used various language tools to unveil the hidden and covert means which are used to

schematically label someone deviant and a criminal according to the changing standards of society. These language tools will be traced in this dissertation.

Connecting this definition of subjectivity, it means that the perspective and point of view of the criminal Mike, in the novel *The Lock Artist* about his act of picking locks.

Foucault has analyzed the power relation between the state apparatus and its subject. He has illustrated that the major aim of power is not to kill or harm the ones who don't comply with it. But it aims to reform them and discipline them according to the dominant discourse and existing codes. Foucault suggests that the power and the modern state doesn't function through violence and punish its law violators physically, but now it functions invisibly and reform its subject and develop a subjectivity which is not the subjectivity of the person or the criminal but a subjectivity which aligns with the notions of modern state and power.

Foucault has discussed the difference between deviance and illegality. He says that it is the society and its discourse which make people believe that they are deviant and then it is this power of generating discourse which codifies norms into laws and then makes those deviants criminals 'Knowledge once used to regulate the conduct of others, entail constraints, giving identities, regulation and disciplining of practices' (Foucault,223).The focus of this dissertation is on the depiction of criminal subjectivity, of the fictional character of Mike the protagonist in *The Lock Artist*, with the use of Michel Foucault's theory, 'Discipline and Punishment'. It will answer two key research questions:

Research Objective:

- To examine how power relations between social groups and institutions shape the definitions and boundaries between deviance and legality.
- To analyze how dominant groups and institutions use their power to label certain behaviors or actions as deviant or illegal, and how this impacts marginalized communities.

Research Question:

- 1: What role do power relations play in shaping the boundaries between deviance and legality?
- 2: How does the practice of confession contribute to the construction of modern criminal subjectivity, and what power dynamics are at play in this process?

2. Literature Review

This research critically examines the concepts of subjectivity, power, deviance, confession, and crime through a review of various writers and thinkers. It argues that events are complex and multifaceted, requiring consideration of diverse perspectives and contexts.

The concept of criminal subjectivity is central to this dissertation. It involves analyzing how individuals are labeled as criminals by society, structure, discourse, and power, despite having no other choice. This labeling is influenced by personal perceptions, experiences, expectations, and cultural beliefs that shape an individual's understanding of external phenomena.

To understand criminal subjectivity, it is essential to consider the individual's perspective, behavior, circumstances, and personal subjective view of their actions. This includes examining how they perceive their actions - as a crime, an act of compulsion, adventure, duty, or something else.

The case study of Mike illustrates how criminal subjectivity works. Mike is labeled a criminal by society, structure, discourse, and power, despite having no other choice. This dissertation explores how Mike's criminal subjectivity is shaped by his personal perceptions, experiences, and cultural beliefs, and how he perceives his actions.

By examining criminal subjectivity, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how individuals are labeled as criminals and how they perceive their actions. It highlights the importance of considering individual circumstances, societal influences, and power structures in understanding criminal behavior."

The term subjectivity has another meaning as well which means the state of someone being a subject. This subjectivity cannot understand until we discuss another term used by Foucault that is "subjectivation". By definition 'subjectivation' means 'the process by which one becomes a subject' (Nick Butler). Foucault used the term subjectivation as a process in which a person's subjectivity is formed or developed through different ways by society and its discourse. He says "the process in which the society, discourse, modern state, and family makes someone its subject is "subjectivation"." (Michel Foucault, *Subject and Power*) In this way the factors that form a person's subjectivity and make him its subject as in society, discourse, family, narrative, and family, etc. Now a process in which society and discourse label its subject as criminal is "criminal subjectivity". In other words, how the power that keeps transferring from people to people makes someone a criminal or illegal in the dictionary of the modern state is criminal subjectivity. Adding in it, criminal subjectivity is a process in which a subject is declared or for deviance is a sociological term. According to the sociologist, William Graham Sumner, deviance is a violation of established contextual, cultural, or social norms, whether folkways, mores or codified law. Now deviance is defined by a society's cultural and contextual norms. These norms are arbitrary and vary from place to place. According to psychologists deviance is a matter of improper or failed socialization. That means the key insight is that individuals' deviant status is ascribed to him through social processes. Individuals are not born deviant, but become deviant through their interaction with reference groups, institutions, and authorities. So is the case with the protagonist of the novel under study *The Lock Artist*. His socialization is improper and in his educational institution, he is instantly given the status of a deviant person who doesn't match normality.

By definition, illegality means the state of being contrary to or forbidden by law, especially criminal law. That means any act which contradicts the law of any particular place comes under the umbrella of illegality. This illegality is arbitrary as well as deviance. For example, drinking alcohol may be illegal in any country but it could be legal in any other country. Likewise, having the same haircut that the president of North Korea Kim Jong-un has is illegal but it is not illegal in other countries. This draws an outcome that illegality is only what "power" describes as an illegality. Power such as modern state societal discourse defines that what comes under the umbrella of illegality and what not.

Michel Foucault, in his article, *Subject and Power* analyzes this subject power relationship between subject and state. His major stance in that article is that our laws and norms are codified under the guidance of the framework provided by societal discourse. This societal discourse holds the power to shape and reshape law, norms, and truth. As he says "Power is the capacity to shape and reshape the realities. It turns its subjects into its object" (Foucault,78). Just like the above-mentioned quotation of Foucault, the societal discourse and prevalent state narrative define what is deviant and what is illegal. It means illegality in its essence is nothing but whatever doesn't suit the pattern and monotony or what doesn't conform to defined codes is made "illegal". Foucault explains more by saying that whosoever holds the power and authority over creating knowledge, creates the knowledge which benefits his interests through discourse and education. So any person or deviant action which threatens the prevalent discourse is labeled as illegal. For example routine suits the state and its narrative. A person who follows routine goes to office, comes back home, buys things, and goes to sleep this routine suits to power, but if the person leaves his routine and starts raising slogans and protests in the Centre of the street then it doesn't suit this ruling community so they will label it as illegal.

Power/knowledge is a collection of closely related writings and interviews of Michel Foucault which encompasses his crucial critique of power and its mechanism.

In power/knowledge Foucault emphasizes that power is not exercised or operated from one center. He says that power has its innumerable points to operate and reform 'Power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations'(Foucault,33), he means that in every society there are multiple relations of power that constitute the social norms. In other words, power makes people think about what is bad and what is good. Now, this sole hold of power cannot be implemented nor last long without the production, accrual, and formation of discourse 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it'(Foucault,127).

In power/knowledge Foucault says that discourse is the major instrument for power to produce the knowledge that benefits it 'Discourse is thus a way of organizing knowledge, that structures the constitution of social order'(Foucault,207) Those who have power have the authority and ability to produce knowledge according to their standards. Foucault studies this production of knowledge Where a particular kind of knowledge is completely disqualified and rejected because it does not suit the social fabric manufactured by power through discourse and everyone becomes a mouthpiece of that knowledge in the society 'Discourses are produced by effect of power within a society and this power prescribes particular rules and categories which define the criteria for legitimating knowledge and truth within the discursive order'(Foucault, *The Archaeology of knowledge*) . Similarly, in *The Lock Artist* Mike is treated as what this relation of power labels him as. When the society and its discourse called him a deviant, magical boy and in his friend circle celebrated as a person with an exceptional talent he is not criminal. But when he is labeled as a criminal for doing that very act he is treated as another by his friends and society. That's how power molds and reshapes its subjects and makes them its object. Conclusively, in "power/knowledge" Foucault says that power produces things, it injects pleasure, build knowledge and produces a discourse that let its hold for good.

Another article that talks about deviance and formation of deviance and connects to the stance of this dissertation on deviance is reviewed. Social norms and deviant behavior is an article

written by Ashley Crossman. It was published in an online website 'Thought.co', on 12 May 2013. This article talks about how deviant behaviors come to know as deviant behavior. It says that the definition of deviant behavior varies from place to place. The behavior called deviant in one society may not be considered as deviant in some other society. The article says that it is through social norms and codes that the members of that society are told the roles they should play and the way they should interact with others. This highlights that this social coding creates some common expectations within the group of people to expect a standard behavior in response to any act. And any act of deviance that disrupts the social order or negates the mutually accepted codes and norms is called "deviant". Similarly, Mike the protagonist of the novel under study is called deviant in the first place when he does not respond to his teachers and mates in a normal way and cannot incorporate their culture and discipline. Additionally, it says that in a way crime are the infringement of the norms codified into law. This stance supports the stance of this dissertation as well. That Mike is called deviant when he is for his exceptional talent by society. But when he does an act of crime in a situation when he does not see his actions as a crime but violates the norm which has been codified into law he is called a criminal. In conclusion, this article states that deviance is not the act itself but how society interprets that act. The Same is the case with Mike that he is told by the society that he is deviant just being abnormal to what is called normal in his school and for possessing exceptional talent.

Technologies of the Self by Michel Foucault was published on 1 January 1988. In this article Foucault besides his other views such as power, state, discourse self and other talks about the importance and technique of "confession". He says that for him it is evident that confession plays an important part in all sins and not only in sex. That means confession is a thing that plays an important part to make someone renounce one's self according to the set patterns and codified norms. Then in the latter part of the article Foucault talks about "exagoresis" an old Christian practice where the guilty would confess in front of the church and the public and renounce himself for good and reform himself according to the new patterns commanded by the new masters 'Exagoresis is an analytical and continual verbalization of thoughts carried on in the relation of complete obedience to someone else. This relation is designed on the renunciation of one's own will and one's own self' (Foucault, Technologies of the self). This very trait has been adopted by the modern state to take the confession of the guilty and make him subservient to their laws and norms. Similarly, in the lock artist, Mike's confession shifts his angel of life and his ways completely. His confession to the magistrate makes him what he wasn't. Foucault in this article says that technologies of the self-affect individuals to have a certain number of operations on their bodies, souls and thoughts and way of being. This operation is done to Mike to supervise and alter his way of being.

Foucault's idea is that in pre-modern era criminals were punished publicly and incarcerated in confinements. But today's modern prison makes a criminal believe that this is not damnation but everything here is being done for his betterment. Now they are more inclined to reform the criminal. A confession is surely a tool of this mental coercion and reform.

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not damnation but everything here is being done for his betterment. Now they are more inclined to reform the criminal. A confession is surely a tool of this mental coercion and reform.

Discussing the part of confession, here is another article is reviewed. The Psychology of Confession by Milton W. Horowitz, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Queens College, Flushing, New York published in the year 1956. In this article, Horowitz identifies the social and psychological conditions of a confession. He points out that what psychological changes and challenges the confessor goes through after and during his confession. He says that in most cases the guilty is accused by the authority or its representation. Therefore, it gives very little or no power to the accused to think and react sanely since he gets the pressure of the situation and this threat of authority makes him believe that confession is the only way out for him. Moreover, he says that the confession in the modern state works as a tool to give guilt and feeling of self-hostility to the confessor 'The person believes he has caused an act. This act is negative which accounts for the guilt. This results in hostility toward himself or to some part of himself' (Horowitz, Psychology of confession). Instead of giving him the feel of a mistake, it makes him feel guilty and hate himself. In this way, the confessor thinks that this confession is a way of redemption for him just like the old Christian practice and confesses to the authority. But in reality, this redemption never happens for the confessor; instead, it makes him an object in the hands of his new masters. In the same way, Mike's confession to the modern state makes him a tool that contributes to making him a criminal. This confession takes his will and subjectivity away and forms a new subjectivity that aligns with the notion that he is a criminal and his talent is not talent but a crime.

Conclusively, overall in this chapter, some researches, articles, and writings have been reviewed that support the main stance held in this dissertation. Not a few writers and thinkers have explored how a criminal's subjectivity is formed and how the society and its dominant discourse, which has been framed by the state and power, define someone as criminal, innocent, deviant, and abnormal.

Thesis statement:

Through its exploration of the protagonist's experiences, the novel exemplifies Foucault's argument that 'power is not held, it is exercised', demonstrating how criminal subjectivity is shaped by the exercise of power through various institutions and discourses.

3. Research Methodology:

This study will employ a qualitative research approach, utilizing textual analysis and critical discourse analysis to examine the portrayal of criminal subjectivity in "The Lock Artist". The novel will be analyzed through the lens of Foucault's concepts, including disciplinary power, governmentality, biopower, and carceral society. A close reading of the text will identify key themes, motifs, and character developments related to criminal subjectivity, which will then be contextualized within the broader social, cultural, and historical context. Secondary sources, including academic articles and books, will be used to support the analysis and provide additional insights into Foucault's concepts and their application to literary analysis.

The data analysis will involve coding and thematic analysis of the novel and secondary sources, as well as critical discourse analysis of language and narrative structure. The study will also engage in comparative analysis, comparing and contrasting the novel's portrayal of criminal subjectivity with other literary works, theoretical texts, or real-world examples. Through this methodology, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how "The Lock Artist" portrays criminal subjectivity and the exercise of power and control in the criminal justice system, as well as insights into the ways Foucault's concepts can be applied to literary analysis and our understanding of criminal subjectivity.

Text analysis:

This research examines how American society labels a boy as deviant when he fails to conform to its norms and codes. However, deviance is not inherent to the act itself, but rather a product of the dominant discourse's interpretation. The codes and laws of society are codified through discourse, which shapes people's realities and alters their subjectivity. As Foucault notes, discourse normalizes and homogenizes, exerting control over the bodies and subjectivities of those it dominates (The Archaeology of Knowledge).

When a deviant act threatens the dominant discourse and existing societal code, it becomes a crime or illegality. Deviance violates social norms, but becomes a crime when it challenges the existing social order (Summner, Introduction to Sociology). Foucault's work reveals that those in power have the authority to reform and reshape subjects according to their standards, and those who defy these standards threaten their power. To maintain control, a discourse is generated that defines deviance and illegality, ensuring the dominance of power. As Foucault states, "In every society, the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed with definitions of things by a certain number of procedures... to ward off its power and dangers" (Discipline and Punish).

The subjectivity of individuals is reshaped, and their deviant behavior is deemed illegal when it violates the norms codified into law. As Foucault notes, "Notions such as norms, history, and illegality palliate our sense of selfhood, consoling and giving meaning to temporality; madding justification and weight to current power" (Discipline and Punish). In the novel, Mike, a mute child with a natural talent for picking locks, grows up with a sense of pride in his art. However, his surroundings label him a deviant person with an exceptional talent. Through a Foucauldian lens, this chapter will examine how Mike's actions were first deemed deviant and later criminalized, highlighting the power dynamics at play.

Steve Hamilton in the lock highlights how Mike was made believe that he was a deviant person who does not fit in society.

"I started learning sign language. It didn't come easy for me. I never went home and kept on using it. Meanwhile, all of the deaf kids were totally immersed in it. It was their own culture, their own private code. So I wasn't just a "different" kid. I was a foreign invader who barely knew the language." (Hamilton, 53).

He further adds "I had already been the odd man out at the school." (Hamilton,54)

These references from the text cement the notion that Mike was at his very early age ascribed the status of a deviant person. Since schools and colleges are the major institutes that teach a person how to conform to conventional and cultural norms and become a person who is called a good person according to the standard of a modern state and society. That's why when Mike always felt different and deviant and couldn't get that proper conditioning from school then, of course, he is prone to commit an act of deviance which may be called illegality.

Explaining Mike's situation and circumstances in this context of deviance it is evident that when he was a child and sent to a school just because he couldn't get familiar with the system and cooperate with his teachers due to his different behavior he was expelled from the school.

"good boys are those who have a strong conscience, good at coping with frustration and identified with conventional and cultural norms, and bad boys are opposite to all of these qualities" (Walter Reckless and Simon Dinitz, 1967).

Just like the above-mentioned quotation. Mike was labeled a bad boy because he wasn't identified with conventional laws and cultural norms his socialization was limited in the beginning. The likewise case can be seen in the novel *The Lock Artist* the protagonist Mike's born talent for picking locks was considered as deviant behavior as long as he wasn't a threat to the power. As on different occasions in the novel when he opens the locked safe of his friend at his house party and when Amelia's father asks him to put a show of his talent in front of locksmith his behavior is deviant but when he does the same action against a person in power and becomes a threat to the social order which is constructed by the state and its actors. They call it "illegal" and "criminal".

To explain this argument, the modern state claims that all citizens hold equal importance to it and every crime is penalized according to the severity of the crime. But it is not the case in reality. The modern state segregates people based on their social status, power and wealth. For example, a crime of stealing five hundred rupees from a shopkeeper is not that much a big crime as stealing ten lakh from a rich person. That means a crime that involves a person who represents power is more heinous as compared to a crime that involves a person of low status.

According to Foucault "if you are not like everybody else, then you are abnormal, if you are abnormal, then you are sick. These three categories, not being like everybody else, not being normal and being sick are very different but have been reduced to the same thing" (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish*) Foucault's argument elaborates Mike's situation and makes it easy to understand how deviance is made illegal. Mike was a deviant person and right from his childhood till his school life when he was labeled as deviant and was never told or informed that his born talent could be called illegal if he goes against the social pattern. Instead, he was on different places of the novel celebrated as deviant and unique but was immediately called illegal or a criminal when he did the same action against a person who represents power.

Now observing this process that makes deviance illegality. It could be observed in the novel under study as well. It can be noticed that in the novel Mike exists between deviance and illegality. According to the sociological idea of deviance, a person is deviant because he is labeled as deviant. (Simon Dinitz, 1920). This definition of deviance supports the notion that Mike was labeled and treated as deviant right from his early childhood to his adulthood. And he

was labeled deviant according to those codes which were set by the people who define these codes according to their wish. Now Mike exists between this definition of illegality and deviance. Steve Hamilton describes some events in the lock artist when Mike was only treated as a unique or deviant person.

"Danny: He's the amazing artist of art or something.

Trey: will you shut up with that, you are just jealous because you are not amazing" (Hamilton, 89)"

Now, this above-mentioned dialogue gives an insight into Mike's circumstances and his social standing among his circle that celebrates Mike for his uniqueness and deviance and label him as amazing and unique not criminal. This shows that in a society when Mike picks a lock to put a show of his talent or to help his friend it is called deviance and that's what Mike is a deviant person. But that very society and its codified laws call him criminal when he becomes a threat for themselves. That means Mike is deviant as long as he is not a threat to the structures of power who define, who is criminal, who is illegal, and who is deviant.

"If I was good at it, that meant it had to be either useless or else totally against the law." (Hamilton,122).Through the above-mentioned statement from the novel the writer portrays that for Mike, he was only good at one thing to pick locks and for him, it was his talent, not a crime. It can also be seen that when Mike picks the lock at Lakeland and caught he is labeled as a criminal. But when that very man uses Mike and his talent for his purpose he is only a person with a unique talent who can help him deal with his enemies and debts.

Now, Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punishment* explains how this society makes someone a criminal and takes him under its fold forever to control him. It means that the way in which Mike was made illegal and deviant according to the desire of system and structure is similar to what Foucault says in his book "The carceral archipelago assures, in the depth of the social body, the formation of delinquency based on subtle illegalities, the overlapping of the latter by the former and production of specified criminal." (Foucault, 296).This quotation by Foucault cements the above-explains that it's this society which makes people criminal due to their subtle deviances. Mike is a person who after society's treatment with him identifies himself as deviant but the power structure label him a criminal.

In support of the above-mentioned argument here is Foucault's stance on illegality and making of deviant and illegality. "The economy of illegalities was restructured with the development of capitalist society. The illegality of property was separated from the illegality of rights. This distinction represents a class opposition because, on the one hand, the illegality that was to be most accessible to the lower classes was that of property —the violent transfer of ownership— and because, on the other, the bourgeoisie was to reserve to itself the illegality of rights: the possibility of getting around its regulations and its laws, of ensuring for itself an immense sector of economic circulation by a skilful manipulation of gaps in the law—gaps that were foreseen by its silences, or opened up by de facto tolerance" (Foucault,216).This means that it is this power of creating laws and defining deviance and illegality that makes someone a criminal and deviant. These laws are made with an objective spectacle where there is no room for the doer to explain his standing on the action.

Conclusively, in this chapter, it has been argued that deviance and illegality are the terms which are not made with a perfect analysis of human behavior or circumstances but are defined by the discourse and social structures. In other words, defining social norms involves social power. As when Mike was introduced to his society it labeled him deviant and unique. The society celebrated him as deviant and made him believe that his talent might be unique but is of no use for him. Then, later on, that very social system brought him under the definition of a criminal when he performed that very art of picking locks against a person who represents power. As discussed earlier that power means to make someone do things contrary to his interests and intentions. At first it was the power of his social circle that makes him pick the lock of Mr. Marsh's house and he ends up being declared a criminal. Then it was the power of Mr. Marsh's which uses his unique talent for his purpose and now again Mike is a deviant person for him.

4. Conclusion:

This study delves into Steve Hamilton's *The Lock Artist*, examining the criminal subjectivity of a criminal in modern American society through a Foucauldian lens. It moves beyond the conventional good vs. evil paradigm, which is a moral judgment imposed by society on actions. This binary division categorizes individuals as either good or bad, based on their adherence to societal conventions, morals, and codes. Those who conform are deemed good, while those who diverge are labeled evil. By transcending this moral dichotomy, this analysis explores the complexities of criminal subjectivity, revealing the nuances of individual experiences and perspectives.

The first chapter of this dissertation explores how deviance and illegality are constructed through power structures and discourse. Deviance is socially defined, while illegality is legally defined. In *The Lock Artist*, Mike's deviance is initially identified by his school and peers, but he is later labeled a criminal when he violates state-defined codes. This highlights the role of discourse in shaping our understanding of deviance and illegality.

The second chapter, "Confession: A Modern Tool of Reformation" in *The Lock Artist*, delves into the significance of confession in shaping an individual's subjectivity and surrendering their will to power. As Foucault notes, "The confession of truth requires effort, for the revelation of truth must overcome resistance" (*Technologies of the Self*, 1982). This chapter highlights how confession is employed by the modern state as a tool to reform and alter an individual's subjectivity, molding it to conform to societal expectations. Through confession, the state not only appropriates an individual's will but also their subjectivity, reconfiguring it to align with modern standards of a civilized citizen. Hamilton's narrative poignantly portrays the struggle of a mute boy against the modern state's power, which initially labels him a criminal and subsequently contributes to his transformation into a professional criminal. Ultimately, the state's power succeeds in convincing him that his art of picking locks is not a skill, but a crime, and that a good life is one where his art is erased. As Orwell ominously notes, "They can make you say anything - anything, and they can make you believe it as well" (1984, 1948).

This dissertation discussed the criminal subjectivity beyond the binary of good and evil by highlighting all the factors that made Mike a criminal. These factors include Mike's upbringing

as he was a child who had a traumatized past and had no proper guidance that could teach him morality, laws and such things. Moreover, his improper socialization as he had no family or friends except uncle Lito and was dropped from the school for being different from others and Mike himself never felt incorporated with the school's discipline and mechanism 'Milford high school was not more than a prison for me which by the grace of God finally ended'(Hamilton,56). Society's disrespectful behavior with Mike also contributed in making him a criminal. That's why he joined the thieves gang because they treated him as an important person 'A house full of thieves, The only place where I was welcomed'(Hamilton,134). In both chapters, the dissertation traced the ways through which a person is made criminal and his subjectivity is altered.

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