THE REPRESENTATION OF MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE USE

Study of Character Development in Ali Smith's Hotel World

Candidate's thesis

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Käsittelen tutkielmassani kielen keinoja marginalisoituneiden identiteettien representaatiossa. Käytän aineistonani fiktiivistä tekstiä, jonka avulla selvitän menetelmiä, joita kirjailijan on mahdollista hyödyntää identiteettien kielellisessä representaatiossa halutunlaisen kuvan aikaansaamiseksi. Olen erityisen kiinnostunut marginalisoitumisesta yhteiskunnan sisällä ja valtakulttuurin keskusten läheisyydessä. Haluan tutkielmallani kiinnittää huomiota erilaisuuden kulttuuriin sidottuihin esittämistapoihin ja toivon tuovani alan tutkimukseen tuoretta näkökulmaa käsittelemällä sosiaalista marginalisoitumista fiktiivisen representaation kautta.

Tutkielmani aineistona toimii Ali Smithin romaani *Hotel World* (2002), joka kertoo viiden naisen tarinat episodeiksi jakautuen. Naisten elämät koskettavat toisiaan hotellissa tapahtuneen onnettomuuden seurauksena. Keskityn tarkastelemaan henkilöhahmojen identiteettien representaatiota kahdessa episodissa, joissa pääosassa ovat koditon nainen ja vastaanottovirkailija, jonka mielenterveys horjuu. Nämä henkilöt ovat selviä esimerkkejä marginalisoitumisesta yhteiskunnassa. Käytän tutkimuksessani hyväksi diskurssianalyysin ja episteemisen konstruktionismin sekä kulttuurintutkimuksen ja kriittisen monikulttuurisuuden näkökulmia ja menetelmiä. Erityisinä tarkastelun työkaluina toimivat narratiivin ja selonteon käsitteet.

Tutkimuksessani selvisi, että kulttuurisessa ja yhteiskunnallisessa kontekstissa muotoutuneet käsitykset marginaalisesta ja valtavirtaan hyväksytystä vaikuttavat tapaan, jolla ihmiset määrittelevät identiteettinsä sekä suhteensa ympäristöönsä. Kirjan henkilöhahmojen syrjäytyminen normaaleiksi käsitetyistä sosiaalisista toiminnoista ilmennettiin kielenkäytössä tavanomaisesta poikkeavilla keinoilla. Hahmojen identiteettien sisäänpäin kääntyneisyyttä tai ympäröivää maailmaa kohti kurkottelua kuvattiin kielen käytön määrää ja tarkkuutta säätelemällä. Identiteettien marginaalisuuden tunnistamiseksi lukijan täytyy kuitenkin olla selvillä kyseisessä yhteiskunnassa ja kulttuurisella alueella yleisesti hyväksytyistä kielenkäytön normeista. Kielen ollessa oleellinen osa ihmistenvälistä kommunikaatiota, olisi hyvä tutkia myös sen muita osa-alueita, jotka vaikuttavat marginaalisuuden syntymiseen. Huomiota voitaisiin lisäksi kiinnittää myös ihmisten välisiin suhteisiin, ei vain yksilön suhteeseen yhteiskunnalliseen ja kulttuuriseen kontekstiin, kuten minun tutkielmassani.

Asiasanat: discourse analysis, cultural studies, fictional representation, marginalized identities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to acknowledge difference within societies. There has been, accordingly, research done on aspects of culture characteristic of or developed by people viewed as somehow belonging to the margins of society, for instance in the fields of discourse analysis and cultural studies. As Lehtonen and Löytty (2003: 7) state, the awareness of multiculturalism has become a growing trend. This is due to the fact that societies around the world are developing into increasingly heterogeneous combinations of people (Goldberg 1994: ix).

Language is crucial to communication and different modes of language use have an influence on, for example, the representation of identities. The object of interest in my thesis is, consequently, the way marginal identities may be represented through language use. I hope to bring forth fresh ideas concerning the social and cultural expression and creation of difference by applying already existing theories in a way that combines specific views and features of study in a somewhat atypical manner. This may reveal aspects of linguistic representation hitherto left without much attention. I used as my data a fictional text, a novel called *Hotel World* (Smith 2002), and analysed it with the aim of specifying what it is in the language used within its limits that makes some of the identities represented emerge as marginal to the eyes of a reader. The point of view of fictional representation and character development in studying identities and marginalization within society is something that I felt was absent in previous studies in the field.

Since the text analysed was fictional, I expected the view of language functioning as a tool for representation would provide information of some of the methods an author has for creating the desired effect when building characters. My study could, thus, provide perspectives not only on the construction of identities in social contexts, but also on the special methods of performing the activity in literary texts. The specific aim of examining the way language functions in representing and creating marginalized identities in a fictional text differs from the more traditional cases of studying factual texts and authentic conversations in relation to identity formation.

In my thesis, there is first some clarification of the theories and concepts affecting my views. Following this, the data for the study is introduced, as well as the concepts of an account and a narrative, which were the particular features of language that were observed in analysing it. After the results of the research are displayed they are examined from the points of view of discourse analysis and epistemic constructivism, and cultural studies and critical multiculturalism. The aim is to discover how aspects of language use were utilized in the analysed text to create the representation of social marginality in association with the identities of the characters under scrutiny.

2   ANALYSING FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The methods and concepts used in examining the data come from the fields of discourse analysis and cultural studies, with some additional views and terms from literary theory. Considering the fictional nature of the data, the various sub theories of literary theory, such as the study of reader response or deconstruction, could have provided some interesting views. In addition, feminist and queer theories surely could have been of great assistance in observing marginalization. I have, however, chosen to draw on discourse analysis and cultural studies as my main theoretical approaches because both of them concentrate on social and cultural phenomena as objects of study on a more general level, and view language use as an essential source of information. The areas of study are very wide and offer various ways of treating data. I will introduce below the ones which were utilized in my study.

2.1   Discourse Analysis

The central position I give to language in my study situates it largely in the domain of discourse analysis. This field of study is hard to define, since various approaches and focal points are possible within its limits. In the context of my thesis, however, it is most usefully described as concentrating on language use in social interaction because it is in social circumstances that identities are formed. Language is viewed as action affecting the cultural and social reality instead of, for example, merely as a channel for conveying information or an instrument of description (Jokinen et al. 2002: 18-20). The study of identities and their

representation has long roots in the tradition of discourse analysis (Jokinen et al. 2002: 68; see also Freadman 2005: 306-9; Robins 2005: 172-5).

An approach which is helpful for developing my view in examining identities and used in discourse analysis is epistemic constructivism. This branch of constructivism views social reality as constructed through conventions of language use. Language users are given an active role in forming the world around them and determining the roles they themselves as well as other people play in it. (Jokinen et al. 2002: 162-3.) I prefer epistemic constructivism to, for instance, the ontological branch, which presses the existence of non-discursive worlds (ibid. 162-3), since I feel the epistemic approach offers more interesting points of analysis for a study dealing with representation within a literary text. This is observable in the discussion part of this thesis.

2.2   Cultural Studies

Language has acquired an important role also in cultural studies. In this context language is understood as giving "meaning to material objects and social practices that are brought into view and made intelligible to us in terms which language delimits." (Barker 2003: 88.) In cultural studies, the idea of cultures as people's ways of life has brought about a view concentrating on the roles and possibilities of individuals within a culture (Korsisaari 2003: 307). Cultures can be understood as signifying orders (Danesi and Perron 1999: 67) within which social interaction and, therefore, the formation of identities take place.

Viewing certain identities as marginalized in a cultural context sets my thesis predominantly in an area of cultural studies specified as multiculturalism. Multiculturalism focuses most typically on the social position of people of varying ethnicities, or on a larger scale, the struggle of formerly colonized countries in a world still dominated by the West (Ang 2005: 226-9). In my thesis, however, some conceptions of multiculturalism, especially of its critical branch, are used to examine other kinds of marginalization. I feel the views of critical multiculturalism may reveal unexpected aspects of the dynamics of cultural identification when transferred from their usual area to a more general level of social functions. Following the guidelines of Trinh (see e.g. 1991: 12, 14, 17-18, 21), I expand the concept to include a greater variety of modes of marginalization

in relation to culture and society. Critical multiculturalism scrutinizes the way language and the meanings it produces function in the construction of difference (McLaren 1994: 55-57) and, therefore, it provides useful strategies for illustrating how identities become marginal also within the traditional Western culture. As Trinh (1991: 18) argues, one has to be aware of the margins also within the centre. Social and cultural marginalization of this kind has been examined before, for example, within the field of gender studies. Nevertheless, I believe approaches provided by critical multiculturalism applied together with methods of discourse analysis, as well as some concepts of literary theory, are able offer fresh and interesting views on the relationship between an individual and the society, as is evident in the discussion part of this thesis.

2.3 Literary Theory

Literary theory is connected to my thesis through the fact that my data is a fictional text. It is not unusual to examine literary texts in studies situated in the fields of discourse analysis and cultural studies (see e.g. Barker 2003: 37, 309; Danesi and Perron 1999: 158-160, 261-4; Jokinen et al. 2002: 236). Literature is an essential part of culture, regardless of the way it is defined. Creative writing is a way of artistic expression which is also considered as conveying values and perspectives typical, and sometimes critical, of the culture and society within which it is produced.

On the other hand, cultural studies can be perceived as a branch of literary theory. In this case, literature is concentrated on as the main focus of study instead of culture, which is used merely as a standpoint for viewing the developments in the literary field. (Korsisaari 2003: 307.) For my thesis, however, it is more useful to study the literary text from the point of view of culture, which is understood as a context for the development of identities. Cultural studies are also interested in the ways literature affects societies and vice versa (Korhonen 2003: 27). For my study, literary theory provides a framework with the concepts of which the data was analysed as the formation of the identities of the fictional characters was examined.

3   MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

As has been mentioned, the main focus of my study was to examine the representation of marginalized identities, which occurs in a social context. In this chapter, the concepts of an identity and marginality are discussed with the aim of defining what was meant by them in my study. Furthermore, the perception of social and cultural context utilized in the thesis is clarified by depicting the relationship of a signifying order and a subject position. Finally, the research question is introduced.

3.1   Identity

Identities are affected by their environment, and on the other hand, have a role in producing it. They are not stable, but vary according to situation. In fact, identities could be described as performances, since they are constructed according to the roles acquired within different circumstances (Robins 2005: 172-5.) How these performances are created through language in social interaction has been studied frequently both within discourse analysis and cultural studies. Barker (2003: 228-9), for example, refers to identities as discursive constructions which cannot exist outside of linguistic representation.

It is possible to differentiate between self-identity and social identity. Following the distinction made by Barker (2003: 220), the former indicates our views concerning ourselves while the latter stands for the ways others perceive us. The development of both the forms of identity may be depicted as narratives. Their stories are told through discourse in cultural processes. (Barker 2003: 220.) A person is always "in the midst of a knowing, acquiring, deploying world" (Trinh 1991: 12), and the identity shifts and shapes itself according to the changes in the relationship between the individual and the world. It is this view of identities as narratives and performances that is employed in my study. This enables the perception of identities as continually developing and of individuals as actively partaking in the process of building their relationships to the society. The course of identity formation may lead, for example, to marginalization within society, as was observed in my research.

3.2   Marginality

As other aspects of identities, their marginality is also constructed through social discourses. For a person to have a marginal status in a society, it means to be positioned outside the mainstream culture and central social processes. Marginality may also be used to indicate being situated between social and cultural worlds without adapting to any of them. (Patton 2005: 204-205.)

The marginality of a person may be the result of exclusion from the society by its other members, or it may be a choice made by the individual. Being marginal may form an essential part of a person's identity, for this makes it possible to differentiate oneself from the values of the wider society. On the other hand, being excluded from one group often opens up an access to another group. (Trinh 1991: 14, 17-18.) This shifting of group memberships has an undeniable effect on the process of identity formation, both from the point of view of the individual and the society.

People who are identified as marginal within the traditional Western culture may be viewed as existing in "an elsewhere-within-here" (Trinh 1991: 17). They live in a marginal reality within a society and culture, which is not, however, as strictly banned from the world of the mainstream as it could seem. Identities slide across borders and absorb influences from different areas, thus forming a dialogue between discourses. (ibid. 14, see also p. 12.) This action is performed in the context of a signifying order.

3.3   Signifying Order and Subject Position

The concept of a subject position in relation to a signifying order brings forth the perspective of signification and presenting identities with meaning in the environment or system within which they exist (Danesi and Perron 1999: 68-70; Jokinen et al. 2002: 68). According to Danesi and Perron (1999: 67), culture is the context in which representations are formed based on shared meanings. Within a certain signifying order an individual organizes information, which is gained through experiences from one's own subject position (Danesi and Perron 1999: 69).

In my thesis signifying order is understood, on the one hand, as the society and culture in which the story of the novel takes place and, on the other hand, as the

society and culture in which the novel was written, as well as read. The reason for pressing the interplay between an individual and his or her environment is to clarify the process of mutual development of people's identities and their societies that is realized through language use. This follows the views of current research on the topic, which has come to recognize the possibility of multiple and context related identifications. (See Robins 2005: 173-175.)

3.4   The Research Question

In this chapter and the previous one I have introduced the main theoretical approaches that have influenced my thesis as well as the most important concepts used in forming the research question. All of the theories and concepts could be viewed from various other angles and explained in remarkably broader terms than has been done above. The descriptions given should, nevertheless, provide an extensive enough clarification of the theoretical background of this thesis.

The aim of my research is to find out how the marginality of identities can be represented through language use. The study looks into the building of identities in a fictional text and then concentrates on the aspects of representation that create the appearance of marginalization. This is done in the context of a particular data and through examining the formation of individual identities with the help of the concepts of an account and a narrative. Both the data and the concepts to be used as instruments of study will be further illustrated and explained in the following chapter.

4   DATA AND METHODS

The data for my study are episodes of a fictional text which is studied through the use of the concepts of an account and a narrative. The formation of marginalized identities is, therefore, examined from the point of view of narrative construction on the level of the story and the society as well as on the personal level of the characters which are focused on in the research. Below, the data and methods of the study are introduced in respective order.

4.1   Data

The data used for my study are two chapters of *Hotel World* (2002), a novel by Ali Smith, a Scottish writer. The novel has been short-listed for and awarded a

number of prizes (British Council Arts 2008), and it has been noted for its courageous and original handling of challenging themes, such as death and love between two people of the same sex. The way language is used in the book is especially noteworthy, since it plays with the possibilities of conveying feeling without sentimentality and using poetic style to create a vivid sense of reality. Even so, I was unable to find any previous studies on the novel, which made the prospect of examining it the more intriguing. The main reason, however, for choosing this data was the variety of identities which can be described as marginal within the traditional Western culture that are included in it. In addition, the fact that the data is fictional offers a chance to examine how a social reality can be constructed through creative activity.

The novel is composed of episodes relating the stories of five different women, whose lives become tied together through an accident in a hotel. The main characters are the victim of the accident, her sister, a lonely journalist, a homeless woman and a receptionist, who becomes mentally ill. I will concentrate on examining the last two of the characters mentioned, because they are very clear examples of marginalization within society. Moreover, specific types of language use play an important part in illustrating the formation of the identities of these characters.

4.2   Methods

The identities of the two characters chosen for scrutiny were examined separately with the help of the concepts of a narrative and an account. Both the concepts are in frequent use in discourse analysis and cultural studies (Jokinen et al. 2002: 68, see also Danesi and Perron 1999: 248-9), as well as in literary theory, to varying extents depending on the approach (Alanko and Käkelä-Puumala 2003). The concepts are introduced below in the forms they are utilized in the context of my thesis.

4.2.1   Account

Accounts were used in relation to narratives to illustrate the points of view the characters are represented as having. According to Jokinen et al. (2002: 67), an account can be used as a general concept of the study of signification, since it

indicates the way people use language to motivate their actions in different contexts.

The concept of an account aids, consequently, in clarifying the active role the characters are given in the process of building identities. In addition, it creates a connection between the linguistic elements of narratives and the signifying order, in the context of which the characters exist. The examination of the development of the characters on different levels should illuminate the process of their identity formation in relation to the progression of the story.

4.2.2   Narrative

The concept of a narrative was useful for studying how identities are built as the story advances and how the characters are represented as understanding their lives as linear progress in contrast to the episode model used in the novel, which breaks chronology. Narratives are ways of organizing events which seem to be connected to each other (Danesi and Perron 1999: 249). Setting the events on a time dimension in what appears a logically structured sequence creates an entity called a story. Stories and narratives are part of people's discursive repertoires; they are used for categorizing experiences and connected to each specific situation of use. (Jokinen et al. 2002: 68.)

In the context of a fictional text, the concept of the diegesis is useful for the study of narratives. The diegesis indicates the parts of a narrative that are integral to its fictional world, while extra- or non-diegetic elements – such as the voice of the author in the text – are external from the perspective of that world. Within an analysis of the diegesis of a narrative, there could be an inspection of the different sequences of the story that structure it into a unit. (Threadgold 2005: 231.) The principal point of analysis in my study, however, is the way language is used and, therefore, it is more beneficial to use the concepts of diegetic and extra-diegetic on the level of examining the linguistic elements which contribute to the building of identities in the interplay between the worlds integral and external to the novel.

4.3   Application of the Methods to the Data

In order to discover how language can be used to represent marginal identities, I chose to examine two of the main characters in my data, the novel *Hotel World*, as mentioned above. The characters in question are a homeless woman called Else

and a receptionist suffering from a mental illness, who is called Lise. The characters were studied individually in the contexts of the episodes of the novel in which they act as protagonists, each on their own turn, since these are the instances that provide an access to the inner worlds of the individuals. The episodes narrated from the points of view of Else and Lise contain uses of language distinctive of their personalities.

The characters were, thus, studied as separate cases of identity formation. Their development was followed through the episodes in which they play the central roles. Their representation was examined, first, from the perspective of the diegesis, which included investigation of the aspects of language that depict the way the characters view themselves and their relation to the world they live in as well as to other people occupying it. Second, their representation was analysed from an extra-diegetic point of view. This meant observing the features of the linguistic representation which contribute to the manifestation of people akin to Else and Lise as marginal within the so called mainstream society and culture. The perspectives were utilized respectively in chapters five and six.

An analysis of this kind is, of course, deficient in several manners. The other central characters in the novel would surely have proved fertile subjects of study, for they could all be seen as marginal in their own ways. Especially the victim of the accident, Sara, who discovers her homosexuality shortly before her death, seemed like an intriguing choice. Furthermore, specific forms of language use were connected to the other characters as well, not merely to Lise and Else. The characters chosen for analysis, nevertheless, provided the clearest and most extensive basis for an examination of ways of representing conventional cases of marginalization. Moreover, numerous other methods could have been used for analysing the way language is used for the purpose observed in this study. For example, the focus could have been on the interaction between characters instead of the interplay between an individual and the social and cultural context. I acknowledge, therefore, that the choices I have made for this thesis are not the only ones possible. I hope this encourages some further study of the subject, from different points of view and with diverse objectives.

5 RESULTS

In this chapter, the data, i.e. the novel *Hotel World* (Smith 2002), is studied from the perspective of the diegesis by using the concepts of an account and a narrative as tools of approach. The development of the identities of the two characters, Else and Lise, is examined separately. The concentration is on the application of accounts and narratives given from their points of view in their respective episodes in the novel and on what is revealed of their conception of themselves and the way they view their relationship to the surrounding society.

5.1 Else

The first of the characters, whose episode is examined here, is the homeless woman, Else (Smith 2002: 33-78). Her story in the novel begins with her sitting on the pavement in front of the Global Hotel, which is the central scene of action throughout most of the book. Else is begging for money and observing the teenaged girl sitting on the opposite side of the road. She is planning on stealing the money people have given to the girl, who is clearly making better profit than Else and still seems curiously indifferent to the coins that are dropped in front of her. While sitting and waiting, Else frequently drifts into her memories and recalls some details of texts she has read, either in her childhood or in the library when looking for shelter. It also becomes clear that her imagination is very capacious and vivid, which may be seen as compensating for the terseness of her speech, for her ability to speak has been reduced by the illness in her lungs.

There is a shift in the action when the receptionist of the hotel, Lise, comes out and first heads to the young girl, ending up accidentally chasing her away. Lise then turns to Else and offers her a room in the hotel for free for the night. Else is first suspicious and almost decides to go somewhere else. After playing with the idea, however, and after collecting the money the girl left behind on the other side of the street, she chooses to seize the opportunity. The room she is directed to presents her with a reality she has been separated from for years. The dry and hot air, soft bed and shining bathtub prove to be an overwhelming experience. In the end of the episode, Else is left lying on the bed, under her coat, planning to leave.

5.1.1 "Present Historic"

The heading of the episode featuring Else as the protagonist is "Present Historic". It is revealing of the manner the main character deals with the dimension of time in placing herself in the world. Her gaze is mainly directed to the past, with narratives offering glimpses of her life leading to the present situation. Furthermore, Else uses previous experiences to give reasons to her present actions. In other words, she forms accounts by bringing the past into connection with the present.

Else forms, thus, narratives and accounts to deal with society and to find meaning for the situation she is in. Even though she repeatedly loses herself in reminiscence and imagination, she is still capable of handling the present reality as long as staying in an environment that has become familiar to her. She is taking a step at a time in living her story.

5.1.2 Accounts

As mentioned above, Else's speech is affected by the lung disease which causes violent fits of coughing triggered by the slightest effort, such as speaking or laughing. The language she uses for communicating with other people is, therefore, diminished to short sentences comprised only of consonants. An instance of this manner of using language is the recurrent phrase employed for begging money from passers-by as shown in Example 1;

Example 1

Spr sm chn?

(HW, e.g. 35)

The reduction of language available for vocal utilization has a further influence on the language use of Else's inner narration. There is, in fact, evidence of two quite opposite kinds of effect in the accounts she forms in her thoughts to rationalize her actions and to deal with her surroundings. On the one hand, her reasoning can be compact with efficient use of language, and, on the other hand, she may let her mind form elaborate metaphors and language games.

The compact accounts are more directly influenced by the decline of speech. They mimic the attempt to express all that is necessary without causing much stir. This

is apparent in Example 2 which is a description of Else's effort to pick up a coin from the ground;

Example 2

> She leans forward. It hurts to lean. She stops trying.

<div align="right">(HW, 35)</div>

Another instance of this linguistic phenomenon is apparent in Example 3 which depicts the reason given for Else burying herself, with feet and everything, under her coat while resting on the bed in the hotel room;

Example 3

> Although it's warm in the room, somehow it's cold, too.

<div align="right">(HW, 78)</div>

Without having to specify any further reasons, Else's distress in the environment, in the social situation alien to her, is articulated through a short account. Yet another illustration of Else's view of her relationship with the surrounding society is the way she sees her reflection on the taps of the bathtub, as may be observed from Example 4;

Example 4

> She has tried to find it funny. A pigmy. A circus freak. But she looms at herself, small and misshapen.

<div align="right">(HW, 71)</div>

Else, hence, identifies herself as not belonging to the environment that functions as a context for some everyday actions for most of the people who consider themselves as part of the society. There is, consequently, no need for intricate explanations to communicate the estrangement of an individual from society and culture.

The other method of structuring accounts in Else's episode is the use of imaginative and symbolic language, forming images with words. This may be understood as compensating for the inability to use spoken language to any greater extent. A case of this is the description of the teenaged girl presented as rationalization for why Else feels sorry for her in Example 5;

Example 5

> The only thing about her is that she looks miserable, she looks greyed. She's the colour of ice that's been smashed in over a puddle.
>
> (HW, 39)

The girl is, actually, one of the very few people who deserve a more elaborate portrayal in Else's mind. Another one is Ade, a former lover and companion of Else's, whose boots, as described in Example 6, play a role in illustrating a moment of complete happiness for the protagonist;

Example 6

> … Ade's worn old boots there beside the amazing cowboy boots. Ade's boots are the shape of his feet. Laced through their holes, the green waxy string that keeps the boots on Ade's feet is knotted at its ends so it won't fray.
>
> (HW, 62)

The more detailed and in some sense even poetic accounts seem, therefore, to reveal some features of others with which Else identifies herself. She recognizes in other homeless people and people somehow outside society features similar to the ones she feels apply to herself. A comparable use of the elaborate accounts may be found when examining the depictions of Else's fits of coughing. The illness has become her constant companion, and even part of her identity. It is always present and, therefore, inspires Else to develop metaphors or, as in Example 7, similes for accounts of how it hurts;

Example 7

> … the combination of the coughing and the past gets her in its mouth like a dog gets a rag, and shakes her.
>
> (HW, 46)

It is the people and things close to Else that are worth further assessment and more complicated language use.

The illness has affected Else's ability to use language and, consequently, her identity. It has forced her to consider what is truly important enough to be expressed in speech, which has caused a differentiation of a similar vein in issues occupying her mind. When dealing with feelings of alienation and trying to cope with situations and actions unpleasant to her, Else tends to diminish the language used in her thoughts the same way her speech is diminished. This is the way her isolation from what could be called the mainstream society is expressed in the text. In contrast to this is the use of metaphors and vivid descriptions when giving

accounts concerning people and issues Else identifies with. Tracking elaborate depictions from the text creates a representation of a person quite sure of belonging outside the conventional society and culture.

5.1.3   Narratives

In Else's episode, narratives are often used to lead the reader to the protagonist's past and imagination. Reminiscing about her past life and creating stories in her mind offer Else a possibility to escape the present reality. On the other hand, viewing events as meaningful series of action and thus forming narratives seems to give Else a way to make sense of the world around her. Examining this process provides a view on the development of the main character's identity by presenting glimpses of her childhood and youth as well as by illustrating the varying degrees of confidence she goes through during the episode.

At times, Else seems quite determined to stay focused on the present moment and the very near future, and on just surviving to the next day. Her thoughts are, nevertheless, frequently distracted, since she finds some comfort and pleasure in the memories from a time when she was not alone, but shared the homeless life with her companion, Ade. Detailed descriptions of moments of affection attain a romantic glow as shown in Example 8;

Example 8

> He passed a ten pence piece into her mouth, in past the teeth and off his tongue, flat
> on to her tongue like a communion wafer, she held it on her tongue like it would
> melt, then opened her mouth and took it out. The date on it was 1992. God. They'd
> kissed all … the different sizes of coin they had on them, back and fore, like a game,
> to see what each felt like.
>
> (HW, 37)

 There are, furthermore, instances where Else lets her imagination take over and demonstrates a desire to flee beyond the borders of her reality. This use of narratives is observable, for example, in the depiction of Else looking at a statue of a winged head in front of the hotel in Example 9;

Example 9

> That would be something, if your head could detach from your body and fly about
> by itself. Else wonders where her head would go, if she could take it off and hold it
> in her hands and then fling it up and set it flying, leaving her chest and her stomach
> and her legs and her waving-goodbye arms, her head soaring by itself up past the
> huddles of freezing starlings. The sky would open. The roof of it would come off.
> She would be so careful up there. She would avoid aeroplanes. She would perch on

> her neck-stem at the very tops of trees, she would land on the spike of the top flagpole (careful not to let the spike pierce through her chin) and she would look down. She would survey the ground. The whole town would be below her.

<div align="right">(HW, 67)</div>

The narratives Else uses to relieve the stress caused by the pressure of surviving create a representation of a person defiant not merely of the rules of society, but also desiring to stretch the boundaries of time and space.

Else uses the narrative manner of thinking in planning her actions and forming a conception of her surroundings, as well as the people around her. An example of going through the action in her head before actually executing it in practice is the instance of Else preparing to steal the teenaged girl's money as illustrated in Example 10;

Example 10

> When she does decide to get up, this is what she'll do. She will go across the road to that girl, like she's done the last twice, and pick up the money they've been dropping at her feet.

<div align="right">(HW, 41)</div>

Following this in the text is a detailed explanation of what exactly would be done, phase by phase, accompanied by some speculation of the best possible moment to perform the action. The planning of this sort offers Else a possibility to have some control in a situation which is actually rather hostile toward her. Another occasion of the protagonist utilizing narratives to rationalize her environment is found in her trying to understand the story behind the young girl, who does not appear an ordinary homeless person. In contemplating the girl's background, Else positions her in different kinds of possible storylines, such as a waitress waiting for a travelling salesman, who she met in a sales conference and who is now staying in the hotel. Organizing and categorizing, hence, allows Else to manage her being in a situation where she is placed outside the main functions of society.

Else's life is represented as being constructed from stories, which together form the grand narrative of her life. Events all the way from her childhood, with a strict mother not having sympathy for Else's feeling of distress, and her puberty, when she was abused by a family friend, to her years living in the streets have moulded Else into a cynic, distrustful of any human being approaching her. She has not, however, lost her capability to imagine and become fascinated by details, and even has the courage to give unexpected opportunities a chance. This is

exemplified by her taking up Lise's offer to spend the night in the Global Hotel. The friendliness of a stranger first makes Else suspicious, for her former experiences – earlier narratives – have made her reserved and cautious. When in the hotel room, the shock of suddenly finding herself within the world she does not really belong to anymore upsets Else. The functions of ordinary objects, such as taps, appear strange to her. She finally realizes that hotel rooms do not belong to her world, or to her story. Her narratives have transported her out of the mainstream society.

5.2 Lise

The second character, whose episode is a subject of study in this thesis, is Lise (Smith 2002: 79-122). She already appeared as a subsidiary character in Else's episode, but the examination of the representation of her identity is based on the episode in the book focalized mainly form her perspective, with a few paragraphs in the end of the chapter narrated from her mother's point of view. Looking from where Else's episode ended, Lise's is situated some time in the future. She is no longer working as a receptionist in the Global Hotel, but is suffering from a sickness affecting her mind. Trapped in her apartment, barely able to cross the room without getting exhausted and distressed, she is looked after by her mother, Deidre, who used to be a mediocre singer and is now enthusiastic about the artistic possibilities of her daughter's condition.

In the episode Lise struggles to focus enough to find a pen and fill in a form needed for requesting financial support. Her thoughts, however, constantly become bewildered and distracted by, for example, old advertisement tunes. When even an idea of social encounters crosses her mind, she has to endure anxiety severe enough to cause her physical pain. There is, nevertheless, a sudden moment of clear memory, when Lise remembers the evening she allowed Else in the hotel for a warm night. It is merely a glance, a haphazard instant opening a view to the past other vice confused and misty, but its details are recited with great care. The memory, however, fades and Lise falls to sleep. While she is asleep, her mother arrives and stays to watch over her.

5.2.1 "Future Conditional"

The heading of the episode in which Lise plays the main role is "Future Conditional". The relationship between the title and the content of the chapter is of a similar nature as it was in the case of Else's episode. Because of her illness Lise finds herself in a situation where she cannot be sure of her future. She is not even able to form a coherent depiction of the passing of time, which creates a contrast between her and the rest of the society, in which people continue living their lives according to the linear route they perceive time to have.

Lise struggles to remember, to force time back to its tracks. Her narratives and accounts are very detailed and attempt to find chronology. To be able to return to the ordinary life and the conventional society, Lise seems to believe her existence in time, or the existence of time to her, needs to be less conditional.

5.2.2 Accounts

Lise's characteristic language is affected by her illness, as was Else's. She has difficulties attaching herself to the reality, and, therefore, her accounts are long and overflowing, as if she wanted to give an exhausting explanation of everything. This seems to be her way of rationalizing the world and her relation to it. Lise delivers lengthy accounts in her mind concerning the everyday processes going on outside her retreat. In addition, she makes attempts to follow the path of her own actions and to illustrate her personal qualities to discover her actual state at the moment. Furthermore, after the fragment of clear memory, there is a clarification of its details elucidating the recollection.

Lise is evidently aware of the division between herself and those she calls "well people" (p. 84). She is represented as painfully conscious of the actions ordinary and simple to most members of society, but impossible to her, as is observable in Example 11;

Example 11

> They could walk into a shop and not feel faint or dizzy or physically strange just because of the number of people buying things and the number of things available to them to buy all crammed inside the one roofed space with the noise of cash registers rattling out receipts for the bought things and the colours of all the products it was possible to buy swirling shelfily from aisle to aisle.
>
> (HW, 83)

After the flood of painstaking description Lise realizes, in Example 12, her estrangement from the language that she needs to organize her thoughts and that used to be an instrument of social interaction for her as much as for anybody else;

Example 12

> Shelfily. Was that a real word? She couldn't remember. She couldn't be sure.
>
> (HW, 83)

Because of her mental illness Lise has become separated from the surrounding society, not merely by the walls of her apartment, but by language, as well.

Lise seeks to confirm her place in the reality by giving thorough accounts of her condition. The act of finding something concrete that should provide a connection to society may, however, dissolve into doubt as depicted in Example 13;

Example 13

> She was holding the form in her hand. It could have been in her hand for hours; she didn't remember anything like picking a form up or getting a form out of an envelope. She could have been asleep for days and awake for days, holding it.
>
> (HW, 86)

The nature of her own personality is, likewise, in need of reassurance for Lise. She has to fill in a section of the form by describing herself, which leads to investigation of her inner qualities and to an attempt to decide between the words nice and sick as a more suitable description. She ultimately chooses "nice" as the best word for representing herself. To support this verdict Lise tries to remember as many occasions as possible that could function as confirmation, and lists instances of good behaviour ranging from holding doors open for others to not exceeding the speed limit when driving a car and to not killing spiders. Once finished with the search for evidence for the amiability of her personality, Lise, however, realizes she does not do any of the things mentioned anymore, as shown in Example 14;

Example 14

> … other than this bed she was lying in was into a different tense now. Now: I am a sick person.
>
> (HW, 88)

Lise used to be part of society, but has become incapable of the actions required for participating in it.

The exhilaratingly lucid moment of recollection which comes to Lise, all of a sudden, from the mists of her mind, covers a period of time from 6:51 to 6:56 p.m. on the day Lise encountered Else, and is situated to the Global Hotel's reception. The deceptiveness of time for Lise becomes evident from the pace it seems to pass for her. During one minute she manages to, for example, open a button, play with her name badge, hurt her finger, almost call somebody, go outside and come back in, and even attempt a conversation. The following three minutes, conversely, speed by while Lise merely glances away from the clock. The contents of the memory are then scrutinized detail by detail. Things varying from Lise's actions to features of the hotel lobby and language use are set into contexts connecting them to the society and the reality outside of the delimited segment of time constituting the memory. The reason for Lise dialling 9 after picking up the receiver of the telephone, for instance, is described in Example 15;

Example 15

9: The number which must be dialled first for an outside line from Global Hotels.

(HW, 115)

The accounts given of the aspects of the memory try to hold open the view to the past as long as possible. It functions as a proof of the fact that there was a time when Lise was connected to the rest of the world.

Lise's illness confuses her mind and forces her to be separated from the wider society. She tries to compensate the lack of social connections and certainty of events with her excessive use of language. The abundant accounts attempt to exhaust all meaning from the issues crossing Lise's thoughts, as if wanting to reveal the real state of affairs. Often they, however, manage rather to befuddle her, thus further blocking her access back to the mainstream society.

5.2.3 Narratives

The narratives in Lise's episode are remarkably less hesitant in comparison with the accounts. The protagonist makes attempts at determination and confidence when structuring short narratives of her planned actions. Furthermore, thoughts claiming a central place in her mind emerge often in a narrative form. Remembering through narratives seems to offer Lise a way of attaching herself to society.

Due to her sickness, the world has become an unreal place to Lise. She is unable to trust even her own thoughts and actions. She tries, nonetheless, to create some organization in her life by preparing her activities in her mind before performing them. This is illustrated in Example 16, which portrays the plan for beginning to fill in the form for requesting financial support;

Example 16

> In a minute she would sit up. Then after she had recovered from sitting up she would try to find the pencil in the folds of the bedclothes, and then she would write the words on the form.
>
> (HW, 81)

This, in fact, is the action Lise is attempting to complete throughout the episode. Giving events an organisation in her mind demonstrates that Lise is struggling to make sense of the reality in the conventional manner. Her ailing mind, however, prevents her from succeeding.

Recurring distractions for Lise are old commercials with their cheery tunes and happy people. They emerge to her mind performing the same narratives they did years ago, presenting images of an idealized world. A case of this is the advertisement for Mazola, corn oil, in Example 17;

Example 17

> The pictures of the oil bottle and then the hands of a lady, delicate and ringed, letting chips fall on to kitchen paper and then shaking them off again, had demonstrated in a moment to millions how ungreasy the chips were, how little oil they left on the paper.
>
> (HW, 82)

In other words, narratives illustrating perfect adaptation to society torment Lise. The contrast between her and the surrounding society is, in fact, a persistent theme in Lise's thoughts. This is evident in Example 18, which shows the comparison of the words well and unwell;

Example 18

> Well: a word that was bottomless, that went down into depths which well people estimated, for fun, by throwing small coins then leaning with their heads over the mouth of the hole and their hands cocked behind their ears listening for their coin to hit the faraway water so they could make a wish. What could well people wish for, having everything already? Unwell: the opposite of well. It ought to be a place where things levelled out, a place of space, of no apparent narrative. Nothing could be possible there. Nothing could happen there, for a while.
>
> (HW, 83-4)

Narratives, hence, seem to function as representatives of the society to which Lise is trying to find her way back.

Remembering is important to Lise. Narratives conveying glimpses of her past self, such as the one presenting a moment spent in the Global Hotel's reception and its surroundings, offer her a view to the environment and way of life she used to identify herself with. She seems to recognize the narrative form as an opportunity to follow the track of events and maybe, in consequence, to find her way out of the confusion blocking her access to life as she used to know it. Lise uses short narratives, like orders to herself, to force back the bewilderment of her mind, as may be observed in Example 19;

Example 19

> In a minute she would sit up, in a minute find the pencil.
>
> (HW, 86)

It appears, therefore, that she is not willing to form an identity as a person delimited from the mainstream society and culture by her illness. Lise does not, however, return to her former life, even after her health is restored. This is revealed by a quick peek at the future, when she will visit a Global Hotel in Canada, as depicted in Example 20;

Example 20

> … as she enters its lobby [she] will unexpectedly remember small sensory details of her time spent working for Global, details she would never … have imagined she even knew, and which remind her of a time in her old gone life before she was ill and before she got better, a time which she has almost completely forgotten she had.
>
> (HW, 111)

Lise is, therefore, altered by her illness, since she does not identify herself with the same things she used to. She has, nevertheless, succeeded in joining the conventional society and culture. The illness becomes merely a twist in her story.

5.3   Views on Marginal Identities

The two characters examined are evidently marginal within their social and cultural surroundings. Moreover, they both acknowledge their separation from most of the other members of society. Both the characters suffer from an illness affecting their language use, which functions as illustration of their relation to society, in which language is the main instrument of communication. They have,

consequently, developed distinctive methods of using language to come to terms with their situations. The marginality of the identities is, thus, made perceptible through language use in the cases of both Else and Lise.

The two characters do not, however, share their attitudes towards marginality in every respect. They both experience their separation from other people very strongly, but this has had differing effects on the development of their identities. Else has made marginality a defining aspect of her personality, while Lise is trying to reach out toward the conventional society. These differences are, furthermore, evident in their language use, with Else elaborating her inner world and Lise attempting to find a connection to the social reality.

In the following chapter, the marginal identities of the two characters represented in the novel are utilized in an examination from the extra-diegetic point of view. The linguistic elements that make the identities appear as marginal on the level of the story are analysed with the help of approaches of epistemic constructivism and critical multiculturalism. The marginalization represented in the novel is, thus, set into the wider context of society and culture. In addition, the special features of a fictional approach to the subject are studied with views on the methods of fictional representation of marginal identities.

6   DISCUSSION

The aim of my study was to discover how the marginality of identities can be represented through language use. In addition, I was interested in the methods an author has for creating the appearance of marginality when fashioning fictional characters. In the previous chapter the viewpoint of the diegesis was utilized to illuminate the way the identities were built within the text functioning as the data by concentrating on how the characters were represented as forming their self-images in their particular contexts. In this chapter the concentration is on the extra-diegetic perspective. In other words, the results of the research are examined with the help of views from discourse studies and epistemic constructivism, and in the context of cultural studies and critical multiculturalism. This provides an opportunity to determine the features of language use which cause the representations appear marginalized.

6.1 The View of Epistemic Constructivism

The way the characters studied in the research, Else and Lise, use language is revealing of their manner of constructing reality. This is in accordance with the objective of epistemic constructivism to elucidate how the world, which is understood to be, in a sense, non-lingual, is actually constructed through the use of language (Jokinen et al. 2002: 162). Else and Lise use accounts and narratives in building their self-identities. As Barker (2003: 222) points out, the way people see themselves varies according to situation. Consequently, the characters in the novel adjust the development of their identities to the progression of the story, or their lives. Finding various points of identification in accordance with the shifting of circumstances ables the characters, thus, to adapt their self-identities to their environments.

Furthermore, their specific subject positions supply the characters with instruments to rationalize their existence. The signifying order within which a person functions affects the methods of processing knowledge and experiences (Danesi and Perron 1999: 69). Accordingly, Else and Lise use conceptions acquired while occupying the society created for them in the novel. They are, therefore, able to apply the concepts of mainstream and marginal in specifying their roles in society. This points to the notion of identities as constituent parts of signifying orders (Jokinen et al. 2002: 68), which exposes the multidimensional interplay on individuals and society. It is possible to use discourses attained within a specific society and culture to construct one's identity, while simultaneously shaping those discourses.

6.2 The Context of Critical Multiculturalism

As demonstrated in the chapter above, there are elements in the way language is used in the data which may be viewed as illustrating the marginality of the characters' identities within society. Both Else and Lise are restricted in their means of expressing themselves by their conditions, which place them in marginal positions in their respective situations. Critical multiculturalism is interested in the production of difference and, hence, marginalized identities. Within theories of this branch of cultural studies the stability of language use and linguistic depictions is questioned. (McLaren 1994: 53, 55.) In accordance, the way

language is used by both the characters studied displays insecurity in relation to the established manners of linguistic expression. As McLaren (1994: 55) claims, language as a presenter of significance may be seen as "part of an ideological struggle that attempts to create a particular regime of representation that serves to legitimate a certain cultural reality." In other words, language plays an essential role in the process of determining which features of an identity grant it an access to the mainstream of society and which, on the other hand, transfer it to the margins.

People exist in social realities, and are, therefore, presented with social identities. The concept of a social identity opens a view on how resources of a signifying order affect the representation of a person. The way readers form their perception of a character in a novel is, consequently, guided by the cultural competences they have in their specific cultural contexts. (Barker 2003: 222; see also Korsisaari 2003: 296.) As Trinh (1991: 12) implies, meaning is formed in the interaction between an individual and a story. Applied on multiple levels, this argument may be used to illustrate both the relationship of the characters to their environment within the novel, and the way the identities represented in the novel relate to the signifying orders in the contexts of which the book was written and is read. As established in the chapter above displaying the results of the research, the characters recognise their statuses as marginal within their society and culture. When the characters are analysed from the point of view of the signifying order within which the novel was written and I as a reader observed them – i.e. the Western culture – it is possible to note how the specific types of language use contribute to the creating of the contrast between the characters and their environment. The characters attributed with marginal identities seem to call into question the traditional manners of using language. They are, thus, asserting their difference within their social reality (see Trinh 1991: 18).

6.3   Representation of Marginality

When surveying the way language performs the function of representation in a fictional text, it is possible to observe some methods the author has used in creating the wanted effect. In the data for this study, the most prominent means for making the identities of the represented characters appear as marginal were the style of using language in a manner differing from the norm and the displaying of

the development of the identities through personal histories. The way the representation of marginality was established may be viewed as revealing some cultural assumptions affecting in the background of the story.

In the context of the mainstream society, meanings are often created through the use of dualisms and binary opposites with one part of the pair understood as the norm and the other as an exception, an incident of the margin (McLaren 1994: 55; Trinh 1991: 12). In other words, in the conventional society and culture language is expected to operate according to a standard organization. The representation of Else and Lise through language that is fragmented, confused and, at times, somehow out of control, places them in the non-standard end of the dualism of mainstream and marginal. That is, when viewed from the standpoint of the traditional social and cultural expectations.

In the novel, the linear structure of time is broken with episodes leaping to the future as well as to the past. Similar movement disturbs chronology within the episodes, as was illustrated above in the examination of the chapters focalized by Lise and Else. The traditional way of viewing the development of identities is, however, narrative (Barker 2003: 220) and, therefore, needs to organize events within the dimension of time. This is also evident in how the characters see their lives as stories, or processes the end-products of which their current identities are. It seems, thus, that observing the personal histories of the characters reveals two methods of representing marginality. On the one hand, disturbing the chronology adds to the depiction of the characters as non-standard. On the other hand, the way Else and Lise insist on constructing narratives to illustrate the development of their identities offers a view on the events leading to their current situations.

The representation of marginality in the novel is, thus, accomplished through atypical manners of using language and treating time, as well as through illustrating the experiences the characters draw on in constructing their identities. It seems, therefore, that a reader needs to be aware of the norms of the conventional Western society to recognize the characters as marginal within their context. Certain kind of marginality may, consequently, be established only in context with a certain society and culture.

6.4 Margins and the Centre

The way language was utilized in the novel *Hotel World* (Smith 2002) to represent marginality both defied some rules of the conventional language use and exploited some conventions of standard storytelling and social discourse. The methods implied nonconformity within society, however, principally because their use could be recognized exceptional in their context. What is considered marginal, thus, depends on what is regarded as the centre. To represent the marginality of identities through language use it is, therefore, important to understand the relation of the centre and its margins and the existence of margins within the centre. These relations are expressed and developed through social and cultural discourses.

This thesis has not been exhaustive of any aspect of its subject. Both the novel and the representation of marginalized identities could be studied to a much greater extent. What could, nevertheless, be concluded from my research is that marginality is not really a phenomenon alien to the society conceived as the mainstream. Even though conventional discourses create an illusion of the existence of a standard society and culture, exceptions to the rules may be found merely by taking another approach to the language use. There is, hence, a need for further research that could advance the acceptance of difference of all kinds existing in the dialogue between the centre and the margins.

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