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Female heroines in Anita Brookner's novels

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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ABSTRACT

Anita Brookner is one of the most successful modern women writers. She wrote twenty-four novels. I decided to concentrate on her Booker Prize winning novel *Hotel du Lac*, which is also her best evaluated novel by literary critics, and *Look at Me*, which is one of Brookner's early works. These two novels were chosen because one of them - *Hotel du Lac* is Brookner's most successful novel and the other one - *Look at Me* was written when she was not a professional writer yet.

Anita Brookner deals with the topics which will be always topical and interesting. These novels are about human loneliness, hope and disappointment, about values like friendship, love and marriage. She is also concerned with stereotyped behaviour of women, with prejudiced society and with the issue of liberal decision making of women.

INTRODUCTION

Anita Brookner is one of the most successful British contemporary writers and her novels are very popular and readable. Her novel *Hotel du Lac* won Booker Prize and the main heroines of her novels are often analyzed by literary critics. The reason why I chose Brookner's novels is that I was interested in what Brookner's typical heroine is like and why her novels are bestsellers. I also like the theme of relationship between men and women, which is one of the most important themes of Brookner's novels.

In the first two chapters I deal with the atmosphere of Brookner's writing and whether she was influenced by feminist movement of the time. Then attention will be paid to Anita Brookner's life and work.

The following chapters focus on the heroines themselves analyzing their relationship to love, to men and to the people surrounding them. The last chapters deal with the final decisions of the main protagonists which influenced their lives. The conclusion summarizes the personalities of the heroines looking for similarities in their opinions, attitudes and their way of live.

Most of the secondary sources are from the reliable internet websites because there are not many printed sources about Anita Brookner and her books.

1 WOMEN WRITERS, FEMINISM AND THE CULTURAL CLIMATE

Women's writing experienced a big growth in the 1970s and 1980s. In these years the space for writing was provided also for lesbian writing and for black and Asian women. Not all are feministic of course, but the feminism is a very important force in nowadays society. Anita Brookner belongs to the authors who started to write in the 80s. She does not belong to the older generation of women writers, and maybe this is the reason why she did not receive so much critical consideration and attention but this does not mean that she would be unpopular or unimportant. Her novels are considered to be very successful now. Her style is well-evaluated, according to the words of Alexander Flora; she is a writer interested in expanding the possibilities of realism.¹ She has a deep respect for the 19th century novel and she concentrates mainly on human emotions and personal life rather than on social change as some of her fellows.

The words of A.S.Byatt², who is a female writer as well, are very apposite. She said: "The writer's profession is one of the few where sexual-political battles do not have to be fought". For her, literature has been a way of escape from the limits of being female. These words are very close to the opinions of Anita Brookner. She states she likes the company of men more than the one of women. But she is not a feminist in the true sense of the word although some her opinions are feminist-like. But she also writes about the independence of women, her heroines are brave and although sometimes very shy and with low self-esteem, they usually do not subject to men. She considers women to be braver and less divided than men.

L. Lowen³ compares Anita Brookner also to Doris Lessing, who had been writing in the climate of feminism, and feminists claimed her to be one of them, but she did not consider herself as a feminist writer. Lessing made many men feel guilty about their gender and she wrote about brave women, but at the same time she said that women are often to blame for their circumstances. So it is difficult to file her into some exact category, as well as Anita Brookner.

¹ ALEXANDER, Flora. *Contemporary Women Novelists*. London : British Library Cataloguing, 1989. s.X. 103 s. ISBN 071316557.

² Ibid.

³ LOWEN, Linda. *About.com* [online]. datum neuvadenno [cit. 2011-03-19]. Women's issues. Dostupné z WWW: <http://womensissues.about.com/od/womenwriters/a/Lessing_Nobel.htm>.

To summarize it, Brookner claims that the feminism is good in the way that it helps women to earn their living and to control their destiny, but on the other hand the radical feminism which rejects the males entirely is absurd, because the only thing it would lead to is sterility.⁴

Some women writers do not like to be put into the category of “women writers” because they feel that it makes them immediately different and less significant than men. But of course, the gender always has some effect on the style of writing, on describing the emotions and on the perception of the world. And Anita Brookner had been writing in a cultural climate affected by feminism.

To introduce the topic of the cultural climate of Anita Brookner’s writing, it is important to know something about the history of feminism and about fighting for some rights by women. The situation of women had changed after two World Wars very much. They became more independent and respected. But they still were not allowed to do the work which was considered as “men’s”. They were supposed to be at home and take care of children. So “the second wave” of feminism came in the 70s and the 80s.

An important document in the history of feminism is Equal Rights Amendment written by Alice Paul in 1921. The main idea of this document is that there should be the equality of rights under the law that should not be denied by the USA or any other state on account of sex. But it failed to be ratified in 1972.⁵ But even so this was another important step to accepting women’s equal rights. So the feminists of the 1960s and 1970s achieved many goals, as improvement of education for women, new opportunities in work, art etc. This concerned also the area of literature and many female writers appeared.

⁴ GUPPY, Shusha. Anita Brookner, The Art of Fiction No. 98. *The Paris Review* [online]. 2011, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2630/the-art-of-fiction-no-98-anita-brookner>>

⁵ History. *Feminism and Women’s Studies* [online]. 4.1.2005, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://feminism.eserver.org/history/docs/era.txt/document_view>

2 ANITA BROOKNER

2.1 HER BACKGROUND

She was the only child of Maude and Newson Bruckner; the novelist's family were Polish Jews. Their name was changed in the period of anti-Semitism. Her parents brought her up in a very Jewish way and they were morally strict. According to her own words, her father was very Polish and he gave her to read all Dickens's novels at the age of 7. The purpose was to disclose the real English life, which could be found in the novels of Charles Dickens.⁶ So Anita had close relationship to books from her early childhood. When she was young she loved also Zola's books. She admired him for his courage and indignation. Other authors who had influenced her were Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert.

She attended the University of London, where she studied history and French literature and earned B.A., and then Ph.D. in art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art. She was a very smart student; she won a French government scholarship to write her dissertation on the French painter Jean-Baptiste Greuze. Anita Brookner is also known for being a very successful French art critic. She was the first woman who held the title of Slade Professor at Cambridge University in years 1967 – 1968.⁷

Anita Brookner has lived in London but she did not feel there as at home. She also lived in Paris for three years. She worked as an art critic for some time and she was also a teacher of French art and culture. She started to write in her fifties. She also wrote several scholarly books. But she has never dreamed about being a writer. In one interview she told, that she wrote in a moment of sadness and desperation and she thought if she could write about it she would be able to impose some structure on her experience.⁸ In her opinion writing is very lonely activity, and if she would be married and have children, she would never become a writer. But now she enjoys the writing. She expressed it accurately when she claimed: "Writing has freed me from the despair of living...Writing has made me softer, more understanding, and more observant."⁹

⁶ HAFFENDEN, John. *Novelists in Interview*. USA : Methuen & Co, 1985. s.68. 288 s. ISBN 0416375901

⁷ GALE, Thomson. Anita Brookner Biography. *Encyclopedia of World Biography* [online]. 2005-2006, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.bookrags.com/biography/anita-brookner/>>.

⁸ GUPPY, Shusha. Anita Brookner, The Art of Fiction No. 98. *The Paris Review* [online]. 2011, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2630/the-art-of-fiction-no-98-anita-brookner>>

⁹ Ibid.

2.2 HER PERSONALITY AND WORK

Some Brookner's opinions can be found very interesting. For example she claims that no one is really free, that most people do not have a choice and that the freedom means also loneliness.¹⁰ According to her, you have to play by the rules in your life; otherwise you will be the loser. This idea is voiced in some of her novels. When the main heroine decides to act differently than the entire crowd around her, when she wants to do the right thing no matter what the others think, it leads to her loneliness.

Another interesting fact about Anita Brookner is that she is an atheist. But on the other hand, she envies the belief of those who have it. It is easier to live when you believe that there is God who will take care of you.

When Brookner started writing she was not very successful. Her first novel 'A Start in Life' was rejected by three publishers before it was published in 1980. It became a bestseller then, but she was still labeled as a boring and unoriginal author by some critics. For example Peter Kemp stereotyped Brookner as the novelist of "migraines, flushes and female malaises"¹¹ Even some feminist writers criticized her for her heroines who were called outdated, because they were unmarried and childless as well as the author. She is not very popular among feminist writers, also because of some her utterances. On one occasion, she said: "A complete woman is probably not a very admirable creature. She is manipulative, uses other people to get her own way, and works within whatever system she is in."¹²

In the interview with Guppy¹³ Anita Brookner said that almost all her novels were written in the summer: "I only write in the summer holidays. Each novel has been written

¹⁰ BROWN, Mick. A Singular Woman. *The Telegraph* [online]. 19 Februar 2009, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/authorinterviews/4639980/A-singular-woman.html>>.

¹¹ MAYER, Peta. Anita Brookner : Charismatic Outsider [online]. 9th November 2010 [cit. 2011-04-02]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://petamayer.blogspot.com/>>.

¹² Anita Brookner Quotes. *Brainy Quotes* [online]. 2001-2011, [cit. 2011-04-02]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/anita_brookner.html#ixzz1EtKd6Evz>.

¹³ GUPPY, Shusha. Anita Brookner, The Art of Fiction No. 98. *The Paris Review* [online]. 2011, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2630/the-art-of-fiction-no-98-anita-brookner>>

during a summer, over three or four months. Then I work every day all day and stop in the evening. I try to switch off completely and not think about it till the next day. “

Generally her novels have very similar heroines and it is usually about love and women. The similarity between the main heroine of any Anita's novel and her own life cannot be omitted. Some of them are completely autobiographical; in some we can find many autobiographical elements. But despite the fact that most of her novels are about love, they usually do not have happy endings. Nice comment about this was written by Ch. A. Malcolm: “Brookner's novels are devoid of the conventions such as a formulaic happy ending, and their author stands as firm as Edith Hope (main heroine of the novel *Hotel du Lac*) when it comes to her refusal to bow to popular tastes.”¹⁴

Mark Lawson¹⁵ made very interesting comment about her novels, especially about the last one – *The Strangers*. He was a sharp critic of Brookner; he stated that her narrations are action-free and he attacked her main heroines who were according to him without character. Lawson marked all her novels as plotless. But a few years later he wrote a new article, where he admitted a mistake. He confessed that he was too young to understand her novels, to understand the topics of loneliness, ageing and isolation. “For years I delighted in mocking this novelist. With the benefit of age, I see how wrong I was.”

A. Brookner wrote 24 novels, first four novels in four years. The other 20 novels were written mostly after her retirement from full-time teaching at the age of sixty. It dissatisfied many Brookner's fans when she announced that *The Strangers* was her last novel. “The retirement, as it would seem, of Dr Brookner brings to end a long period in which there was always something to look forward to, this year or next, from this trio of exceptionally gifted writers“, told Christopher Grey.¹⁶

As regards Brookner's style of writing and her technique it is very simple. She writes about ordinary women in the language which is very readable and easy-to-understand. Flora Alexander¹⁷ wrote that “Brookner makes use of traditional story-telling

¹⁴ MALCOLM, Cheryl Alexander. *Understanding Anita Brookner*. Columbia : University of South Press, 2002. s.22, 223 s. ISBN 1-57003-435-4.

¹⁵ LAWSON, Mark. Too young to get it. *The Guardian* [online]. 6 March 2009, 1, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/mar/06/anita-brookner-strangers>>

¹⁶ GRAY, Christopher. The end of the story for Anita Brookner fans. *The Oxford Times* [online]. 18th March 2009, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/gray_matter/4213020.The_end_of_the_story_for_Anita_Brookner_fans/

¹⁷ ALEXANDER, Flora. *Contemporary Women Novelists*. London : British Library Cataloguing, 1989. s.30. 103 s. ISBN 071316557.

techniques to give form to women's everyday experience." And this is exactly what Brookner's novels are about.

But despite this simplicity, an artistic form is very important for Anita Brookner and all her novels are well organized. She uses either first-person or third-person narration. In the novel *Hotel du Lac* third-person narration is used and in *Look at Me* appears first-person narration and according to words of T. Penner¹⁸ Frances often talks to a reader, which can be friendlier to reader, because it creates the impression that the main heroine herself is telling the story.

Anita Brookner is unmarried, childless as well as her main female characters. She uses red hair for her heroines, the same colour as she has. She is quite solitary and not very social type of person. She was brought up by Polish parents, and as she declared, her mother was a liberated woman.¹⁹ Brookner does not consider herself very feminine. When she was asked how she felt in the male-dominated atmosphere of Cambridge University, she answered: "Nobody looked all that male and I didn't look all that female."²⁰ She has always been very thin; she was very concerned about it. These are other aspects where we can see the similarity between Anita and her heroines. They had very often low self-confidence and did not feel beautiful or appealing. For example Frances Hinton, who is a main heroine of the novel *Look at Me*, has the feelings of loneliness, boredom and she wishes to be seen, to be interesting for the other people, to be "restless and critical and amusing",²¹ and to live more interesting and adventurous life than she does.

In one of the interviews Brookner stated, that she wrote her first novel in the period of desperation, when she felt very depressed and she hoped that the writing will help her and give her the feeling of being in control of her life. We can find this idea in her novel again. Frances starts to write more after her mother's death. It is the way to express her

¹⁸ PENNER, Tom . Performing Liminality : Anita Brookner's *Look at Me*. A *Thesis* [online]. August, 1999,[cit.2011-04-04].Dostupný z WWW:

<<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/mq51785.pdf>>

¹⁹GUPPY, Shusha. Anita Brookner, The Art of Fiction No. 98. *The Paris Review* [online]. 2011, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2630/the-art-of-fiction-no-98-anita-brookner>>

²⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.43, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448

²¹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.43, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

feelings, because she has nobody to speak with now. And also her work gives her “the only protection and helps her to compose herself.”²²

Anita Brookner considers herself as one of the loneliest women in London. The loneliness is also the main problem of her heroines. She is the author of twenty-four novels. The most successful is *Hotel du Lac*, which won the Booker Prize in 1984. In spite of being so successful and significant author, Brookner remained modest and humane.

²² BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.34, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

3 A SUMMARY OF LOOK AT ME

The novel *Look at Me* is Anita Brookner's third novel, first published in 1983. It is in the "Love" section of the Guardian's 1001 books you must read²³ and it is one of her most successful novels. It is quite a depressing book, because a reader can find there the feelings of loneliness, despair, unhappiness and yearning for better life. According to the article on *The Book Dissector* it is a story about loneliness in its deepest aspect.²⁴ But on the other hand, the main heroine does not make a big effort and she does not try hard enough to change anything.

It is interesting to think about the book's name. Why is it called *Look at Me*? A reader can find out while reading the book. This phrase represents the feelings of Frances – the main heroine. She thinks she is not interesting enough for the people surrounding her and every time she is in the company of some strong character, she wishes to be seen, to be more visible and appreciated. She finds strong-minded people fascinating and she says that she “finds them fascinating, she tries to please them, to attract their attention.”²⁵ She screams inside herself: “Look at me...”

This novel is mainly about hope and disappointment. Frances is almost a middle-aged, lonely woman. She is bored with her life and with her job. She works in the library and she also tries to write. But she suddenly gets an offer of friendship, companionship and happiness. She starts to meet a married couple, Alix and Nick, very often, they showed her a life that she does not know. Then they introduced her to James and she hopes that this will be a man for her. But everything ends in disappointment. James does not fall in love with her and Alix and Nick do not prove as real friends. So Frances returned to her old life. The novel ends very sadly, because she realizes that there is no happiness for her and that she is getting old on her own. “I realize that I sit in this room, growing older, alone, and very sadly.”²⁶

The plot is not the major theme of the novel which is about feelings. Anita Brookner managed to express the psychological state of a lonely, depressed and

²³ W., Dorothy. *Look at Me*. *Good Reads* [online]. 15th October 2008,[cit. 2011-03-25]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/35381818?utm_medium=api&utm_source=book_isbn>

²⁴ *Look at Me* by Anita Brookner. *The Book Dissector* [online]. August 2, 2010,[cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://thebookdissector.blogspot.com/2010/08/look-at-me-by-anita-brookner.html>>.

²⁵ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.15, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

²⁶ *Ibid.* S. 191

disappointed woman. Other characters are also interestingly described. Alix is selfish and passionate woman and her husband Nick adores her. Frances's best friend Olivia is also very shy and lonely. All these people are stereotyped characters caught in their lives.

4 A SUMMARY OF HOTEL DU LAC

The novel *Hotel du Lac* is the most successful piece of writing of Anita Brookner. It was published in 1984 for the first time. It is a Booker Prize winning book and is called a masterpiece. For example A.N.Wilson marked it as a beautifully crafted book and said that “each plangent, melancholy paragraph is, paradoxically, pure joy...”²⁷

The main character’s name is Edith Hope. She is 39-year-old spinster and she is in love with her married lover David. But she is not happy, because they are very seldom with each other. Then Edith gets a proposal from Geoffrey Long, who is also a middle-aged and lonely man. He offers her safe future and a new life in a new house. Edith decided to accept his offer and to get married. But on the day of their wedding she changed her mind and she ran away.

What she did was brave but also socially improper, so she was sent to the *Hotel du Lac* by her friends until the situation would calm down. According to G. Thompson²⁸ the first thing she tried to do when she arrived there was to write a letter to David. It shows that even though she should focus on a new place she is still thinking on David.

So Edith left and met Mr. Neville there. He also made a proposal to her, but it was very cold and calculated. Edith did not love him, neither Mr. Neville loved her. It was just because he did not want to be alone and because he found Edith reliable and submissive. Edith was thinking about his proposal for a long time and finally she decided to accept it. She wanted some certainty and background in her life. But few days after her decision, Edith found out that Mr. Neville was sexually involved with one of the guests in the *Hotel*. So she chose to come back home and live her old life again.

Edith is neither a completely innocent nor inexperienced woman as some other Brookner’s heroines are. She experienced love – with David. But despite the fact that she got two proposals she decided to remain single rather than to become “part of Mr. Neville collection.”²⁹

²⁷ GRAY, Christopher. The end of the story for Anita Brookner fans. *The Oxford Times* [online]. 18th March 2009, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW:

http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/gray_matter/4213020.The_end_of_the_story_for_Anita_Brookner_fans/

²⁸ THOMPSON, Gale. Anita Brookner : *Hotel du Lac*. *Novel Guide* [online]. 2006, 1, [cit. 2011-04-04].

Dostupný z WWW:

<http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/nfs_0000_0023_0/nfs_0000_0023_0_00015.html>.

²⁹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.184, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

So Edith's life is the same at the end of the story, as it was at the beginning. She is disappointed and even more frustrated. Fortunately she has her writing which becomes the sense of her life. She can fulfill all her dreams, that can't be realized in a real life, through her novels. And Edith also figured out that love is not the only thing to live for.

5 THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE NOVELS

The setting of the novel *Hotel du Lac* is mostly the Hotel. The atmosphere of the Hotel, of the environment and of the whole book is quiet and monotonous and all Edith's surrounding looks deserted and isolated. The reader can also feel a lack of excitement. The novel creates that atmosphere at the very beginning where the author writes about the weather using the words as "grey, stiff, narrow or quiet". There is snow and it is late September which is a sad and depressing part of a year, it is the end of the season and the Hotel is empty and quiet. It is described as a traditional establishment, used to welcoming the prudent, the well-to-do, the retired...There is also absence of attractions.³⁰ And not only the Hotel itself makes that atmosphere – it is also its surrounding. There are lakes and it evokes images of mist, fog, damp and grayness. This grayness and quietness often represent also Edith's mood and her lifestyle.

The whole novel is written in this style. A reader can feel some kind of despair, everything is quiet there but on the other hand the heroine screams inside herself and yearns for some change, for anything that would make her happy and loved.

The novel *Look at Me* has very similar effect. When the main heroine Frances described her neighbourhood and environment, she spoke about it as anachronistic and isolated. The streets are always deserted and when she comes home in the evenings she sees no one. Anyway there live just old people.

The same feelings can be obtained by reading about Frances's job. She works in the Library, which is very quiet and reserved place by itself. She usually uses words as routine and boredom. But it is not only her job by itself that tells us something more, but it is also the field in which the Library specializes – problems of human behaviour. Frances enjoys this job, and Tom Perner wrote interesting comment about it, which helps to reader understand why: "As a writer, she is attracted to these visual representations of madness and melancholia, enjoying the manipulative control she seems to have over their potency...Frances sees herself...in control of the image."³¹ The whole novel's plot also makes a tension, because a reader still moves with Frances from the state of observing to the state of participation and back.

³⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.13, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

³¹ PENNER, Tom . *Performing Liminality : Anita Brookner's Look at Me. A Thesis* [online]. August, 1999,[cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/mq51785.pdf>>

6 FRANCES HINTON

This chapter will introduce the main heroine of the novel *Look at Me* as well as her background, her personality and life. Her name is Frances Hinton, who is a lonely, not so young woman. She lives in London, in Maida Vale in a block of flats with her nanny Nancy. Frances calls Nancy “a grieve and mourn woman”³². This is the first sign of her loneliness because it is not very common that a rather young girl lives with an old lonely woman.

Even though the flat belongs to Frances, she still feels that it does not, she is afraid to change anything because of her dead mother who did not like changes. She says: “I am hardly aware of this place as home, although I have always lived here.”³³ Also L. Restuccia³⁴ stated that Frances did not want to make any changes because she wanted to believe that her mother is still alive. The feeling of isolation and not identification with her surroundings is typical of all Brookner’s heroines. It is also an autobiographical element because although Anita Brookner lives in London, she has never felt there as at home.

So Frances is an orphan now. Her mother died but she did not overcome her death. According to words of F.L. Restuccia³⁵ Frances denied her mother’s death and therefore changed nothing in the room where her mum died. Frances has just Nancy, a friend Olivia and another two friends, Alix and Nick. Alix and Nick are a married couple but a reader would not call their relationship towards Frances as equal. It is an awkward friendship. Alix likes to watch Frances as some puppet because she is interested in people who are on their own. But she does not take Frances seriously. Contrariwise Frances is amazed by Alix, she loves the feeling of being taken over by her – by somebody with her strength and decisiveness. She is impressed by such strong characters all her life. Dr. Pickering called her “an observer of life.”³⁶ Frances considers such people like Alix as sovereigns who should be diverted. She also admires Nick. She considers him “a model of how ideal a man

³² BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.26, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

³³ Ibid. s.23

³⁴ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ PICKERING, Dr. Judith. An Experiment in Dialogue. *Australian Psychoanalytical Society* [online]. 2009, 1, [cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.psychoanalysis.asn.au/about_apas/an_experiment_in_dialogue/dr_judith_pickering>.

might be.” But she knows what her role is – “I was an audience and an admirer...and I was loyal and well-behaved and uncritical...and she found me dull.”³⁷

She has the feelings of not enjoying her life; she just tries to survive, to kill the time. “I never want to go home...In that way I manage to get rid of the rest of the day.”³⁸ As Restuccia³⁹ stated Frances found herself in a mood of lethargy.

A bit more can be found out about Frances’s character throughout the reading. She says about herself that she is a person who is sensitive to bad manners; she is not two-faced as for she claims she does not pretend anything and she also says that she is very strong.⁴⁰

6.1 FRANCES HINTON’S FAMILY:

An interesting fact can be the one about Frances’s mother. She was married all her life to one man and she was a kind of a reserved person. This might have influenced Frances in her relationship to men. She said: “The men in my mother’s life were like priests, ministering to her. They loved her in a way I hope I am never loved.”⁴¹ This had big influence on Frances because she is reserved and shy with men too. When dating James, she is very inexperienced and she does not know how to behave.

Frances is an orphan, her friend Alix usually calls her “Little Orphan Fanny”.⁴² Her parents died what was very difficult for her. So she lives just with her nanny Nancy, but she takes her as a family.

She also has Olivia and her family – the Benedicts. Olivia’s mother likes Frances very much and she considers her as her own and also Frances feels there at home. She used to have dinners at Benedicts’ every Sunday. Olivia has a brother David, who is a doctor. It has always been assumed that David and Frances will marry. Even mother of Frances wished that. But there is no chance for this, as Frances is not interested in him as in man, she considers him as her brother.

³⁷BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.56, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

³⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.18, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

³⁹ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

⁴⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.14, 31, 102, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448

⁴¹ Ibid. s.30

⁴² Ibid. S.76

Frances has also an aunt – her father’s sister. She visits her very rarely, because “she always wanted to discuss stocks and shares”⁴³ and Frances is not interested in money at all.

That is all Frances’ family, except of a few old friends whom she meets very rarely. She does not even speak about them in the novel very often. A reader can find out just a few facts. For example that Frances’s parents lived in the same flat, they moved there during the war. They were very peaceful people who cared about each other, were fearful for the safety of each other and also were kinds of superstitious people.⁴⁴ But they were loving parents and Frances had quite a good relationship with them both until they died.

6.2 MEN IN THE LIFE OF FRANCES HINTON

Frances was a different kind of woman than Edith as concerning men. She was innocent and she had almost no experience. But then James appeared in her life. It is necessary to describe James to get a better insight in him and his relationship to Frances. His whole name was Dr. James Anstey. As M. Cantwell⁴⁵ pointed out, he was a divorced man. Frances knew him from the Library and she found him attractive. She tells the reader something about his appearance: “His face was rather flushed, his voice sounded deep and rusty, as if he rarely used it...”⁴⁶ His character was more important. He did not seem to be a very amusing or strong personality. In fact he was very similar to Frances. She realized that and she even said that they were very similar in some manners. “Dr. Anstey and I had a great deal in common in the way of good behavior, moral stuffiness, and general lack of experience in the wilder and more interesting areas of human conduct.”⁴⁷ “I found him so ludicrously well brought up, so full of honour...”⁴⁸

So their relationship started to develop, but everything seemed to be under the control of the Frasers. The two of them were meeting mostly when there was a dinner with Frasers or when they both were invited to come to their place. They both were simply too

⁴³ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.62, 31, 102, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448

⁴⁴ Ibid. S.24

⁴⁵ CANTWELL, Mary. Not Hungry Enough. *The New York Times* [online]. May 22, 1983, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/22/books/not-hungry-enough.html>>.

⁴⁶ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.74, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

⁴⁷ Ibid.s. 75

⁴⁸ Ibid s. 94

shy to set some real date or anything. They did not even speak about some serious or intimate matters because of their shyness. “We were too shy with each other. I never asked him about his divorce...I never really felt that I knew him at all.”⁴⁹

Their relationship which appeared a little weird to people around them was probably a routine from the very beginning. And it seemed boring. They were just walking every day the same trek, sometimes not even talking, then they drank a tea at Frances’s apartment and James went back home. But Frances enjoyed that. She had the same opinion on liaisons with men. She did not want something dynamic and very passionate. She wanted simplicity of everyday life, a routine, a protection. She did not even love James, she just enjoyed him. And she appreciated the experience of something new. Her life changed since she got to know him, she changed: “...my new life started. I became sharper, funnier, more entertaining...In my new security I began to see it all in a different light...I breathe more deeply, slept more soundly, ate more heartily...I felt strong, I felt energetic, I felt young.”⁵⁰

This is a very nice description of what a man and falling in love can do. When somebody feels happy, protected and important, everything is different and better. And love can be very painful and complicated. Brookner experienced love without any doubt, so she could provide such characterization. She wrote: “I knew about love and its traps. How it starts well, how mistakes are made, how, in moments of confidence or unbearable pain, things are said that can never be unsaid...How cruelty comes into it. And terror. Suspicion...I knew all that.”⁵¹ And she knew what a woman needs, because her novels present very nice ideas: “The worst thing that a man can do to a woman is to make her feel unimportant.”⁵² She also emphasized the importance of being protected and having something reliable in our lives.

Frances’s relationships with men, however, were different than those of Edith. Frances was much more inexperienced. As F.L.Restuccia also noticed,⁵³ Frances was a

⁴⁹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York:Pantheon Books, 1983. S. 89, 192 s.ISBN 0394529448.

⁵⁰ Ibid. s.64,84,86

⁵¹ Ibid. s.95

⁵² Ibid. s. 83

⁵³ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

virgin. Her relationship with James was completely different. It can be said that it was just a platonic and never fulfilled relationship. Frances did not even love James, but she adored him, she loved to be with him and she liked the idea that she had someone to be looking forward to. A reader can find there her own words, when she was acknowledging her real feelings: “I was not falling in love. But now there was something to get up for in the morning...Yet I did not love James in the fatal sense. I enjoyed him. I watched him a lot.”⁵⁴

This can seem a little bit strange because it is love that everybody is searching for. But Frances was happy; she probably did not want anything more. She considered him probably more a kind of friend. She said: “James was my friend, and I held his hand as confidently as a child holds the hand of its parent. I told him everything...Oddly, I wanted nothing more. I had no thought of going on to the next stage, because I was enjoying this one so much.”⁵⁵

The reason why she did not want to move in their relationship was maybe also her fear. Frances was afraid to really fall in love because she knew how it can hurt. A very nice comparison of Frances’s fear was written in Book Reviews:⁵⁶ “She seems to exist in a kind of glass house, forever looking through the windows and yearning for a life that she is too afraid to get.”

But her fear was not the only one reason. A reader could notice the sentence cited above which describes that Frances held James’s hand as a child. This is not accidentally there. This fact evidences Frances’s barrier to get really close to a man as a woman. She is not able to make sexual tension between the two of them and she behaves like an innocent child. L. Restuccia⁵⁷ concentrates on this problem. She wrote that the reason why Frances is so restrained in the field of sex can be her mother. She pointed out: “She (Frances) is in no hurry for sex...That Frances resists the idea of sex at the Maida Vale flat-suffused with her dead mother’s presence- is a glaring confirmation that her blockage is the result of an incorporated mother.”

⁵⁴ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1. edition. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. S. 78, 95. 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

⁵⁵ Ibid. s. 96

⁵⁶ W., Dorothy. *Look at Me*. *Good Reads* [online]. 15th October 2008, [cit. 2011-03-25]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/35381818?utm_medium=api&utm_source=book_isbn>

⁵⁷ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

It is possible that James sensed that Frances would do it just on demand to fulfill his wish and not to disappoint him and also therefore he lost his interest. Frances probably still feels not mature enough. T. Penner⁵⁸ also noticed that and he called her a “child-woman.”

So Frances remained an observer henceforward. Frances herself made an interesting metaphor. She talked about everything that was happening around us and what we were watching as a “*human comedy*”.⁵⁹ And she felt like an audience to all that.

In a way this is really very apposite. We are really like actors and observers. Everything that is going on seems like a written drama, like a play in which everyone has its own role. It is typical of Frances. In the beginning she was just an observer desiring for more participation. Then the roles had changed, and she became the main actor who was observed by others. And then another change came again. She was humiliated, disappointed and was excluded from the company of her friends again. So she became a quiet observer, isolated and unattended once again.

⁵⁸ PENNER, Tom . *Performing Liminality : Anita Brookner´s Look at Me. A Thesis* [online]. August, 1999,[cit.2011-04-04].Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/mq51785.pdf>>

⁵⁹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*.1.edition. New York:Pantheon Books, 1983. s.132,192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

7 EDITH HOPE

Brookner's novels generally picture a middle-aged, lonely, intelligent and elegant heroine who tries to find happiness, adventure and at the first place love. This is also typical of the main heroine of *Hotel du Lac*, an unmarried and childless woman named Edith Hope. Her similarity to the main heroine of *Look at Me* is remarkable. It is possible that the reader might feel that she/he is reading about the same person, the same novel. This is not very praiseworthy and it is also what has been criticized about Brookner's writings as it was mentioned before. In one article for *New York Magazine*, the critic Rhoda Koenig called *Hotel du Lac* "a novel of whimsical detachment, muted hushes – just the thing for a reader with a bad cold..."⁶⁰

Other apposite words which describe the feeling that this novel can evoke in a reader were written also by Koenig:⁶¹ "The vigorous reader...may want to reach in and shake these people and tell them to get the lead out. The ideal reader, however, will drift amiably through this combination of coyness and despair."

Edith Hope is a 39-year-old spinster who came to the Hotel to finish her novel and also to get an emotional cure. She is an interesting character, sometimes full of contradictions. She gives a very nice description of herself at the very beginning of the book. She says that "she is a serious woman,...she is a householder, a ratepayer, a good plain cook, and a deliverer of typescripts well before the deadline, she signs anything that is put in front of her..."⁶² This tells a reader a lot about her and even about her self-esteem. She does not consider herself interesting; she puts everything about her personality and life into several sentences. The main feature of Edith's nature is, as Dr. Josephson⁶³ said, that she wants to love and to be loved. Edith is also quite shy, she does not like to perform herself in public, she does not even like such things as eating meals in restaurants.

⁶⁰ Koenig, R. *Vestigial Virgins*. February, 18., 1985.

http://books.google.cz/books?id=VMEBAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA104&lpg=PA104&dq=hotel+du+lac+anita+brookner&source=bl&ots=7gWZMkHrTj&sig=FkM2X6QBPaiZeR5_ifG6LLnkA80&hl=cs&ei=4-N4Td-DK832sgaP_eTZBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CBsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.8, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

⁶³ JOSEPHSON, Dr. Cinzia. *Hotel du Lac* by Anita Brookner. *Penguin Publisher* [online]. Datum nevedeno, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.volume5.com/dulac/hotel_du_lac_book_review.html>.

While staying in the Hotel, Edith met there several women and it can be interesting to read what impression she made on them. It also tells us something about her personality. “Seeing her, they had taken the full measure of her solitariness...and they felt pity.”⁶⁴

7.1 MEN IN THE LIFE OF EDITH HOPE

Edith is unmarried as was already mentioned before. She is searching for love but now she seems to be unhappy. Even one guest in Hotel du Lac told her that. “You are looking unhappy...Well, I think I am rather unhappy. I think about it – how to be happy all the time.”⁶⁵ But her situation was a little different than the state of Frances Hinton. Edith has a lover, a married one. The novel does not say a lot about him, it is just known that he lives with his wife whom Edith knows a little. She describes her as sexy but discontented. She saw them together at one party, which was very painful for her. “She saw that David was sitting with an arm on the back of his wife’s chair...she saw that they would make love that night.”⁶⁶ So Edith is not a typical paramour who is with him just because of sex. She has feelings for him, she is thinking about him all the time and she is probably in love with him. According to the words of J.McCalmont⁶⁷, Edith finds herself even “head-over-heels” in love with David. Even when she was staying at the hotel, she was just thinking of him. And Edith was willing to give up her own comfort just to be with him. They were having meetings at awkward time, sometimes they were getting out of bed after midnight or in such late hours. “It had seemed to her that the daylight hours were spent simply waiting for him.”⁶⁸

But their relationship had no future and it was just an illusion, because he was a married man and it would be unthinkable that he would get divorced because of her. And this is probably the reason why Edith decided to marry Geoffrey Long. He was a kind man, quite old-fashioned and traditional. G. Thompson marked him as “affable but rather dull

⁶⁴ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.44, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

⁶⁵ Ibid. s.94

⁶⁶ Ibid. s.86

⁶⁷ MCCALMONT, Jonathan . *Hotel du Lac* by Anita Brookner. *Ruthless Culture* [online]. 2. February 2011,[cit. 2011-03-20]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ruthlessculture.com/2011/02/02/hotel-du-lac-1984-by-anita-brookner-a-charnel-house-with-24-hour-porterage/>>

⁶⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.30, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

man.”⁶⁹ But he had many good qualities so Edith thought that she can be happy with him. But the marriage was not based on love. She knew that she is neither young anymore nor so beautiful. She did it because her common sense told her so. But the dissatisfaction can be clearly seen: “...this is my last chance...It is high time I forgot my hopes, the hopes I was born with and faced reality. I shall never have that for which I long with my inmost heart...And I was always a reasonable woman.”⁷⁰ This is not a good base for a marriage. But Edith wanted safe future and that was what Geoffrey could offer her. There was one more reason. She did not want to live her life just by waiting for David anymore” “...because he stayed away too long. And because he had not dissuaded her.”⁷¹

Another reason why she was not very enthusiastic about marrying Geoffrey was his attitude towards working women. He did not agree with that. He was old-fashioned as it was already mentioned and he thought that a woman should be at home and take care of the house, of the children and of her husband. He was making innuendos about her writing and about the amount of time which she was giving to her books from the very beginning. Edith was aware of the fact that she would probably never be able to write again after the wedding. “She would have that life that she supposed other women have: shopping, cooking arranging dinner parties, meeting friends for lunch...”⁷² A person for whom writing was so important could not possibly be happy without it. Edith herself was speaking about that on one occasion in the Hotel. She told: “I haven’t written anything for three days. No wonder I feel depressed. I need to get down to some work.”⁷³ So she felt depressed after three days when she was not writing and she would have to stop doing it forever. In spite of this she was decided to give up it because of the marriage.

Everything was already prepared. As A. Saha⁷⁴ wrote, Edith was expected to marry Geoffrey and all people around were telling her how lucky she was and her friends even pointed out that she should not take it for granted and that in her case it was not even deserved. She was reminding herself of it too. But she still did not feel cheerful; she was

⁶⁹ THOMPSON, Gale. Anita Brookner : Hotel du Lac. *Novel Guide* [online]. 2006, [cit. 2011-04-04].

Dostupný z WWW:

<http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/nfs_0000_0023_0/nfs_0000_0023_0_00015.html>.

⁷⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.118, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

⁷¹ Ibid. s. 124

⁷² Ibid. s.123

⁷³ Ibid. s. 149

⁷⁴ SAHA, Ashmita. The Dilemma of Edith Hope. *Ezine Articles* [online]. Datum neuvedeno, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Dilemma-of-Edith-Hope&id=2722106>>.

not looking forward to it. “As if the very prospect of a marriage unsettled her nerves.”⁷⁵ She knew somewhere inside her that this was not what she wanted from life. Even in the morning of her wedding day, she felt alone. So finally, when arriving at the church, she told the driver to take her away. That was all, so fast, so simple. She decided that she would not marry George. She decided to step out of line, to do something that she wanted and not that she had been told. “I changed my mind”, was her answer on all questions that came afterwards.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.124, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

⁷⁶ Ibid. s. 132

8 THE PROTAGONISTS' RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PEOPLE

The main heroines of these two Brookner's novels had the same characteristic features. Edith Hope as well as Frances were eager to watch people. The same idea about the interest in strong people was used in both of novels. Frances loved to watch them, to be in their presence, she tried to please them somehow. But it was not an ordinary interest or curiosity, sometimes she seemed to be even possessed by it, she felt inferior then. M. Cantwell⁷⁷ wrote, that Frances was fascinated When she was watching Nick and Alix, she had the feelings that they were something more. "So stunning was their physical presence, one might almost say their physical triumph, that I immediately felt weak and pale..."⁷⁸ Frances felt really attracted to these strong personalities and she did not like ordinary people. She said: "I do hate low-spirited people. I would even say I hate unfortunate people."⁷⁹ "I now require people to be viable, durable."⁸⁰

The same thing was typical of Edith. She was observing other people; they seemed to her very interesting and worth watching. While staying at the hotel she was watching two ladies – Iris and Jennifer Pusey, mother and daughter. They had some conversation and Edith "watched them as if under hypnosis, sorry to have missed a moment of this spectacle."⁸¹ J. McCalmont⁸² wrote a nice article about that. She noted that "Puseys needed a stage on which to perform and an audience to subdue." Puseys (mother and daughter) were such strong personalities that they needed to be observed and it was what attracted Edith. Edith was even making out their lives, she was thinking about them, she tried to guess what were they alike, which things they desire and how do they live. She had feelings for these two women immediately. She felt "curiosity, envy, delight, attraction, and fear, the fear she always felt in the presence of strong personalities."⁸³ But sometimes it seemed like madness because she could not stop thinking about all these people, it was

⁷⁷ CANTWELL, Mary. Not Hungry Enough. *The New York Times* [online]. May 22, 1983, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/22/books/not-hungry-enough.html>>.

⁷⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.37, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

⁷⁹ Ibid. s. 16

⁸⁰ Ibid. s. 30

⁸¹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. S. 18, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

⁸² MCCALMONT, Jonathan . *Hotel du Lac* by Anita Brookner. *Ruthless Culture* [online]. 2. February 2011,[cit. 2011-03-20]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ruthlessculture.com/2011/02/02/hotel-du-lac-1984-by-anita-brookner-a-charnel-house-with-24-hour-porterage/>>

⁸³ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. S. 33, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

sense of her life. She even had to say herself to stop thinking about them: “I must stop this...I do not have to make up their lives for them.”⁸⁴

They both – Edith and Frances, had the same relationship towards these strong personalities. They wanted to be in their presence even though they were not considered as equal. For example Frances’s friends were more like sustaining, regretting and tolerating her than anything else. And they felt bored by her after very short time. They just wanted to be entertained. Frances spoke about it later in the novel when she got to know them better. “Those friends had turned into spectators, demanding their money’s worth, urging their right to be entertained.”⁸⁵ So she knew it.

Also Edith’s new temporary friend Mrs. Pussey in the Hotel did not need her to speak, she was satisfied when she could talk and Edith was just sitting, listening to her and not criticizing. Brookner wrote about Edith and Iris: “Like many a star, she (Mrs. Pussey) could only function from a position of dominance; she held information at bay, so that Edith was not required to give an account of herself.”⁸⁶ Edith was aware of this too but she did not mind. She said that she “provides an audience for Mrs Pussey’s opinions...” The opportunity to be in her fellowship was an award for her. One would wonder why she did not find any equal friend who would also listen to her, who would be interested in her feelings and emotions and who would not talk just about herself/himself all the time. One of the reasons was that she could not stay in a company of the same personalities as she was. As mentioned before, she hated boring and sensitive people.

Frances and Edith needed to be in the company of people also because they made a self-analysis through the interaction with them, as remarked by Dr. Josephson.⁸⁷

Frances Hinton had the very same opinion. She stated this even when talking about her mother’s men. “I can no longer endure the lost look in the eye, the composure too

⁸⁴ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. S. 19,s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

⁸⁵ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.105, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448

⁸⁶ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.38, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150.

⁸⁷ JOSEPHSON, Dr. Cinzia. *Hotel du Lac* by Anita Brookner. *Penguin Publisher* [online]. Datum nevedeno, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.volume5.com/dulac/hotel_du_lac_book_review.html>.

easily shattered, the waning hope...No more.”⁸⁸ Frances even used the same words as Edith Hope. When Frances was talking about Alix, she acclaimed that she had been just an audience and an admirer, she had relieved some of Alix’s frustration, Frances had shared her esteem for her own superiority, and she had been loyal and well-behaved and totally uncritical. Yet Alix had found her dull.⁸⁹

But both Edith and Frances loved to observe people. On one occasion when Frances was talking about James, she called him her “life’s work to study”.⁹⁰ This quality of both heroines could seem strange but on the other hand it was useful - they could use what they learnt in their writing.

⁸⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. S.30, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

⁸⁹ Ibid. s. 56

⁹⁰ Ibid. s. 93

9 PROTAGONISTS' WRITING

9.1 THE REASON FOR IT

It seems that the main heroines of Anita Brookner's novels are living more by watching other human beings and writing about them rather than living their own lives. It was a kind of escape for them. Edith knew it and she confessed it while speaking with one of the guests in the Hotel, Mr. Neville. They were talking about being happy and she told him: "Suppose that you were a person who was simply bored with living their own life and wanted to live somebody else's."⁹¹

It is possible to see a parallel with Anita Brookner in the statement above. Her writing was also an escape from everyday life; she tried to heal herself through writing.⁹² The main heroines of her novels were in the same situation. Frances started to write more after her mother's death. She did not have anyone to talk to about her experiences, feelings and needs so she was writing it all down. As M. Franková⁹³ stated it was the way how Frances could express herself.

Edith was similar. On one occasion when she was talking to her agent Harold Webb, she expressed her annoyance about a real life. "The tortoise and the hare...The tortoise wins every time. This is a lie, of course...In real life; of course, it is the hare who wins. Every time."⁹⁴ So she was upset about the way a real life is and she wanted to run away from it. But she added that the hare never wins in her fiction. "The facts of life are too terrible to go into my kind of fiction."⁹⁵

Brookner speaks about the purpose of Edith's writing. The main intent of her fiction was to distance all real circumstances over which she had no control and she marked a fiction as "time-honoured resource of the ill-at-ease."⁹⁶ Edith could make her

⁹¹ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.96, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

⁹² BROWN, Mick. A Singular Woman. *The Telegraph* [online]. 19 Februar 2009, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/authorinterviews/4639980/A-singular-woman.html>>.

⁹³ FRANKOVÁ, Milada. *Britské spisovatelky na konci tisíciletí*. Brno : Masarykova Univerzita v Brně, 1999. 206 s. ISBN 80-210-2148-9.

⁹⁴ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.27, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

⁹⁵ Ibid. S. 28

⁹⁶ Ibid s. 66

dreams to come true in her novels. According to the opinion of T.Penner⁹⁷ she also wanted to invite the attention that she did not have in a real life.

Writing was also the only one thing which the main heroines really enjoyed to do. Nor Edith neither Frances had many hobbies, except of walking or occasional eating with friends. It was what Frances always did in the evenings when it was too early to go to sleep and too late to go outside.

9.2 THE TOPICS

But what was Edith writing about? She spoke about it on one opportunity. The main thing which is teasing her is “the question of what behavior most becomes a woman – the question around which she had written most of her novels..., the question she had failed to answer and which she now saw to be of the most vital importance.”⁹⁸

Love and relationships between men and women were the main topics of Edith’s books. She was listening carefully to all women in the Hotel when they were speaking about their own affairs. There were some women, who had stereotyped and even unhappy marriages or they were on their own. Edith tried to find out more; for example Mme de Bonneuil had a husband who has always been travelling; or Mrs Pusey – a seventy-nine year old lady who always spoke about her husband, who was dead for a long time. But Edith was interested in all this because it was something she did not know personally and mainly because she wanted to use it in her novels. As M. Cantwell⁹⁹ said, Edith got a material in this way and she made comments about the people around her.

Frances did not feel so confident about her writing. She did not want to show it to anyone until it was finished. She felt that it should be “kept under the lock and key until it had resolved itself. She was superstitious about letting anything escape.”¹⁰⁰ And even when she decided to tell a little about her characters to Alix, she was disappointed about her reaction; Alix told her that they were boring and nobody would like to read it.

⁹⁷ PENNER, Tom . *Performing Liminality : Anita Brookner’s Look at Me. A Thesis* [online]. August, 1999,[cit.2011-04-04].Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/mq51785.pdf>>

⁹⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.40, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

⁹⁹ CANTWELL, Mary. Not Hungry Enough. *The New York Times* [online]. May 22, 1983, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/22/books/not-hungry-enough.html>>.

¹⁰⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.53, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

But despite this she did write. And her main topic was also love. When she felt unhappy about James or in the very beginning when she was platonically in love with Nick, she could write it all down and it helped her to deal with it as for she had almost nobody to speak with. And one more fact about her writing is very interesting. Frances did not feel the need to write when she felt happy. As Dr.Pickering¹⁰¹ stated, writing brings isolation and when Frances fell in love with James, she felt “revulsion against writing.” This state lasted for the whole autumn. Frances said about it: “There were no images in my head. I did not write. I was happy.”¹⁰² And the other way round. When her relationship with James had broken and she realized that she is lonely again and that she will probably never find a man to be happy with, she was writing even more than ever before. And she found it much easier. “I made notes for my novel, and I found that it was going very well and very fast, that the characters emerged very naturally and...I found the right words with which to describe them.”¹⁰³

Anita Brookner told the very same thing about her writing. She wrote when she felt depressed, lonely and unloved. This is why the topics of her writing are ageing women and unfulfilled need for love. She told in one interview for Paris Review: “If I were happy, married with six children, I wouldn’t be writing.”¹⁰⁴

There is one more interesting feature regarding the writing that both the heroines had in common and which was used by Brookner as an autobiographical element again. It is that both Edith and Frances have their names changed for the writing. They used pseudonyms because it represented the fictional world of literature. It is well described in the book ‘Understanding Anita Brookner’¹⁰⁵ where the author gives his opinion that “Brookner uses the feature of names changing repeatedly as a symbol for belonging, whether real or wished for”.

¹⁰¹ PICKERING, Dr. Judith. An Experiment in Dialogue. *Australian Psychoanalytical Society* [online]. 2009, 1, [cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.pschoanalysis.asn.au/about_apas/an_experiment_in_dialogue/dr_judith_pickering>.

¹⁰² BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.96, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

¹⁰³ Ibid. s.190

¹⁰⁴ GUPPY, Shusha. Anita Brookner, The Art of Fiction No. 98. *The Paris Review* [online]. 2011, [cit. 2011-03-31]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2630/the-art-of-fiction-no-98-anita-brookner>>

¹⁰⁵ MALCOLM, Cheryl Alexander. *Understanding Anita Brookner*. Columbia : University of South Press, 2002. s.3, 223 s. ISBN 1-57003-435-4.

One of the characteristics of Brookner's novels is that they usually do not have happy endings. And she refused to write differently even though her endings were not very popular among her readers in the beginning. A very similar situation is used in *Hotel du Lac* where Edith spoke about her publisher and agent. They both tried to "get her to bring her books up to date and make them sexier and more exciting." But she did not allow others to change neither her nor her books. She stated: "I believe every word I wrote."¹⁰⁶

Writing was useful to Edith in one more situation. It was when she had to lie about David. He was her married lover so she could not talk to anybody about him. And she found herself lying very well. A. Brookner made a comment about that: "She lied well, unpretentiously. She sometimes thought that the time spent working out the plots of her novels had prepared her for this, her final adventure, her story come to life."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.181, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. s.85

10 EDITH'S AND FRANCES'S APPROACH TO LOVE

Edith was convinced that all she needed to be happy was love. She felt excluded from the around world when she had nobody to love. A. Saha¹⁰⁸ wrote that love eluded Edith. Edith was envious of love between people she knew, as well as Frances Hinton. Frances yearned to be in company of Alix and Nick because she could watch their relationship, their love. She said that what interested her far more was their intimacy as a married couple. She did not know what was that like so she wanted to watch it at least.

But these heroines did not wish any kind of extravagant passion; they did not feel the need to perform their love to people. They wanted simple and clear love. Dr. Josephson¹⁰⁹ found good words to describe it. She wrote that Edith “had the courage of claiming the simplicity.” Frances did not want to demonstrate her happiness to others as Nick and Alix did. They both, Edith and Frances, were longing for a long, stable, secure relationship with a man who would love them deeply. Edith even marked herself as a “domestic animal”.¹¹⁰ There can be seen an autobiographical element of Anita Brookner. She was also such type of woman who wanted simple and clear love. In one interview for Mick Brown¹¹¹ an interesting fact about Brookner's family can be found. She said that her mother, who was a professional singer, was not happy. She thought that she had married the wrong man. This can explain much about Brookner's attitude towards men and relationships. She was simply afraid of being unhappy as her mother, she was also afraid of choosing the wrong man. She preferred to be alone to living with somebody whom she would not really love. But it was not the only reason why Brookner did not get married. She thought that if she got married, she would have to give up her work. “I have no desire to be taken over by a man.”¹¹²

But it does not mean that she would not long for love. She has always wished to have a big family with lots of children. She just has not found the right man.

¹⁰⁸ SAHA, Ashmita. The Dilemma of Edith Hope. *Ezine Articles* [online]. Datum neuvvedeno, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Dilemma-of-Edith-Hope&id=2722106>>.

¹⁰⁹ JOSEPHSON, Dr. Cinzia. Hotel du Lac by Anita Brookner. *Penguin Publisher* [online]. Datum neuvvedeno, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.volume5.com/dulac/hotel_du_lac_book_review.html>.

¹¹⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.98, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

¹¹¹ BROWN, Mick. A Singular Woman. *The Telegraph* [online]. 19 Februar 2009, [cit. 2011-03-19]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/authorinterviews/4639980/A-singular-woman.html>>.

¹¹² Ibid.

The state of Edith and Frances was identical. Anita Brookner created these characters according to her own feelings and experiences. Edith could not live without love. Brookner worked out a beautiful description of love in *Hotel du Lac* when Edith was talking to Mr. Neville.

I cannot live without it. I mean that I cannot live *well* without it. I cannot think or act or speak or write or even dream with any kind of energy in the absence of love. I feel excluded from the living world. I become cold, fish-like, immobile. I implode. My idea of absolute happiness is to sit in a hot garden all day, reading, or writing, utterly safe in the knowledge that the person I love will come home to me in the evening. Every evening...What I crave is the simplicity of routine.¹¹³

This is really an artistic characterization of her attitude and her feelings. A reader can learn a lot from this one paragraph. It changes the opinion of Edith which a reader could have till now. Edith made an impression of a boring and bored uninteresting woman who did not know exactly what she wanted. But the reality is different. She was not cold, she was not 'fish-like', she was dreaming, she was burning inside, she knew what love could be like and even though she wished simplicity and routine she knew that it would fill her with new energy, with stamina, with new inspirations for her writing. She actually had a lover, David, but it was not enough for her. A. Saha¹¹⁴ wrote about Edith that she saw no future with him. There was no security, no real relation. She wanted to be faithful and loyal to someone. Frances in *Look at Me* was the same. She said that she liked to maintain a certain loyalty to a man who had, or had had her love and affection; she regarded herself as being concerned with his honour.¹¹⁵

Love was not the only thing that Brookner's heroines needed. It was also an act, a proof, and it was a marriage. They needed a social position of a married woman which would give them the feeling of safety and shelter; especially in the society of their times, where a woman's evaluation was based on her marital status. M. Kaeter¹¹⁶ deals with that

¹¹³ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.98, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

¹¹⁴ SAHA, Ashmita. The Dilemma of Edith Hope. *Ezine Articles* [online]. Datum nevedeno, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Dilemma-of-Edith-Hope&id=2722106>>.

¹¹⁵ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.12, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

¹¹⁶ KAETER, Martina. Romantic ideals and disappointing reality in the fiction of Anita Brookner. *Thesis* [online]. 1992, [cit. 2011-04-06]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/theses/09AR/09art123.pdf>>.

issue and she said that “spinsterhood, according to society, occurred by default.” If a woman was middle-aged and unmarried and childless, people would consider her as a regrettable, undesirable and unhappy woman no matter what was the reason for her state. That was also the reason why Edith’s friends wanted her to get married. Nobody wants to have a friend who is considered an outsider or an old spinster.

But on the other hand the main heroine of *Hotel du Lac* is not so desperate that she would accept either to marry a man whom she does not love and even does not fully respects or a man who would aspire love and sex everywhere. Also Frances from *Look at Me* was not willing to solicit James when she understood that he had no feelings for her and when she found out about his affair with Maria. So both these women were desperate for love and security but not to the extent that they would humiliate themselves or that they would completely submit to a man.

11 FRIENDSHIPS OF THE MAIN HEROINES – WERE THEY REAL?

It was dealt with this issue in the chapter “Relationships to other people” a little. Both Edith and Frances felt lonely. But then Frances met the Frasers and they became friends of a vital importance to her. They were almost the only friends she had and they were kinds of strong personalities she admired. But later on in the novel a reader can notice several indications that they did not behave like real friends should.

For instance when Frances was dating James, her friends Alix and Nick were interested in their relationship just for a moment, especially Alix. She enjoyed to listen to Frances about her new relationship because it was something new, it was something she could watch, they were like actors to entertain her. But soon it became a routine. And Frances knew it, she felt that her friends were disappointed in their relationship. Alix and Nick expected something more interesting and scandalous, they did not understand that somebody enjoys long walks, sitting at home and drinking a tea... And Frances and James knew it. “We felt that they are disappointed with us, irritated by us. We felt that we had bored them, or, rather, not diverted them in some essential way.”¹¹⁷ Real friends would not act like that.

Another situation showing that Alix was not really interested in Frances was when Frances brought her an article she wrote. When she came a few days later to Alix’s apartment, she found the newspaper, which Alix was supposed to read, dirty from a mug of coffee. Alix did not even touch it. It was a big disappointment for Frances.

Dr. Pickering¹¹⁸ has an interesting opinion of that. She wrote that Frances just “played a mirroring role to narcissistic people.”

Also Edith Hope experienced a disappointment in her friends. It was when she ran away on the day of her wedding. Instead of supporting her, they sent her away. They wanted her to get married and when she did not do what they wanted, they simply got rid of her. Even though what she did saved her from unhappy life and she had good reasons why she did not marry Geoffrey. If they were real friends they would rejoice that.

¹¹⁷ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.99, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

¹¹⁸ PICKERING, Dr. Judith. *An Experiment in Dialogue*. *Australian Psychoanalytical Society* [online]. 2009, 1, [cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://www.psychanalysis.asn.au/about_apas/an_experiment_in_dialogue/dr_judith_pickering>.

J.McCalmont¹¹⁹ wrote a nice conclusion about it in one article about Brookner's novels. He described properly how did Edith's friends regard what she did. He resumed their thoughts about her: "Tortoises who do not realize that they are tortoises pose a threat to the hares. They create turbulence. Edith was not placed in exile at the Hotel du Lac, she was sent out for slaughter."

¹¹⁹ MCCALMONT, Jonathan . Hotel du Lac by Anita Brookner. *Ruthless Culture* [online]. 2. February 2011,[cit. 2011-03-20]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://ruthlessculture.com/2011/02/02/hotel-du-lac-1984-by-anita-brookner-a-charnel-house-with-24-hour-porterage/>>

12 THEIR RESOLUTIONS

12.1 FRANCE'S FINAL RESOLUTION

Every heroine of Anita Brookner's novel had to experience a situation of disappointed hope. An accurate comment had been made by Ann Fisher-Wirth in the article for *Hunger Art*.¹²⁰ She wrote: „The tragedy of her heroines, in fact, is partly the wholeheartedness with which they buy into the symbolic order that excludes them -- excludes them not because they are unattractive, ungifted, or unlovable, but precisely because they want so much to be included.“

But finally they have to experience some humiliating and disappointing situation of which they were the most afraid.

That was exactly the case of Frances. She enjoyed her new relationship with James and she was very happy but it became to be weird, she felt that something was wrong. It was mostly since James moved to Frasers to live with them. As M. Cantwell¹²¹ said, James was “installed” to live there. Frances felt that he did not want to be with her as often as he did before, he did not want to break away from new intimacy which he had with Alix and Nick. They were entertaining and it was something completely new for James. But Frances was able to understand that because she had experienced exactly the same when she got to know them. So she tried really hard to stay calm, to pretend that nothing was going on even though he had changed. He was occasionally rough with her and sometimes he was having bad moods. But she was that kind of a woman who does not want to make a man feel guilty. She said about herself: “I did not want to be the sort of futile woman who complains, in public, over trivialities. I wanted him to feel free...Fortunately I am very strong and my looks never alter, so that James did not notice anything.”¹²²

So Frances tried to keep going on even though she did not feel happy anymore. She knew that she was losing him, but did not know exactly why. There can be seen another

¹²⁰ FISCHER-WIRTH, Ann. The Novels of Anita Brookner. *Hunger Art* [online]. 1995, [cit. 2011-03-25]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n1_v41/ai_17180240/>

¹²¹ CANTWELL, Mary. Not Hungry Enough. *The New York Times* [online]. May 22, 1983, 1, [cit. 2011-04-05]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/22/books/not-hungry-enough.html>>.

¹²² BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.101, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

feature of her nature. She did not argue with him in order not to risk a quarrel with him or to make him feel bad. She learned “not to notice”.

But despite all her efforts she was about to experience a bitter rejection, which was already mentioned. It just was not her destiny to be happy. It was when she tried to seduce James. A few times earlier when he was supposed to go back home from her apartment, she asked him, tentatively, to stay. He waited and hesitated but finally he refused. But that was not all. After a few weeks they were in Frances’s apartment again. There was something strange in the air and Frances knew that it should happen. So she took him into her bedroom and he started to tear her dress. But suddenly he stood up and said: “Not with you, Frances. Not with you.”¹²³ And he said nothing to explain it.

It must have been very humiliating and embarrassing. It was not easy for her to take him into her bedroom and she was making this decision a long time before she did it. And what was the result? She was rejected. It made her feel even less self-confident, even less worthy of love. And what was the worst she started to doubt her ability to inspire love. She considered herself to be unattractive and uninteresting. And she realized that she was wrong when she thought that James loved her. She said: “I came to understand that he had found me not suitable in that way; that he had looked on me only as a friend, that this was a friendship that must be preserved in its nursery simplicity, with its healthy walks and cups of coffee.”¹²⁴

But she probably knew what the reason was that he considered her more like a friend or like a child than an attractive woman. Ann Fischer-Writh¹²⁵ explained what happened between them. She wrote that Frances wanted to keep their relationship pure, in a wish to reproduce childhood and then she realized that she has made him accessible to others but not to her. Her approach to men was strange. Many literary critics claim that Brookner’s heroines suffer from Oedipal Complex.¹²⁶ This is because they had an unfulfilled relationship with their mothers, because they were either dead or selfish and cynical, and they could not even compensate it on the relationship with their father because

¹²³ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1. edition. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. s.127, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

¹²⁴ Ibid. s. 129

¹²⁵ FISCHER-WIRTH, Ann. The Novels of Anita Brookner. *Hunger Art* [online]. 1995, [cit. 2011-03-25]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n1_v41/ai_17180240/>

¹²⁶ Ibid.

he was also dead or childish and pathologically depending on his wife. Also L. Restuccia¹²⁷ was interested in this topic. She wrote that “any fulfillment of desire...would be a potentially traumatic ripping out of a deeply embedded “maternal Thing.” Frances’s attitude to men could also come from this source. As already mentioned before she felt with James like a child protected by its father, she did not even want to move further with their relation because she wanted to have it innocent and pure. And it should be acknowledged that this is not exactly what men want.

So that meant the end to everything that she enjoyed so much and what seemed so promising to her. She did not tell about that incident to her friends because she felt too ashamed and neither did James. They just pretended that nothing happened.

A. Brookner managed to describe the feelings of a person who experienced a huge disappointment in love and sexual humiliation. A reader can feel sudden emptiness, loss and despair. Everything that was hoped for so deeply is lost. Also the theme of betrayal appears there. It is not only that she was refused by James – the man whom she loved as she realized after she lost him, but she was also betrayed by Alix and Nick, her only friends who knew that James started to be sexually involved with their friend Maria.

Frances ended very disappointed, she felt into “the state of total regression”. She found apposite words to describe her feelings, her disillusion: “I think this is one of the cruelest tricks we play on ourselves, this inability to banish early expectations.”¹²⁸ But Frances does not fall into deep sadness, she tries to settle with this loss. And it is very interesting how. She recalls her mother. She probably needed to come back to something what was secure at her life, to someone who loved her deeply. Frances L. Restuccia deals with that issue¹²⁹. She wrote about Frances’s fight: “Instead of a transformative recognition of loss, Frances inhabits her dead mother’s flat so fully as her mother that she dons her mother’s white nightgown and sleeps in her bed...Her mother is enwombed in Frances, and at the end Frances reenwombs herself in her mother.”

¹²⁷ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. s. 40, 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

¹²⁸ BROOKNER, Anita. *Look at Me*. 1.edition. New York : Pantheon Books, 1983. s.177, 192 s. ISBN 0394529448.

¹²⁹ RESTUCCIA, Frances L. *Melancholics in love: Representing Women’s Depression and Domestic Abuse*. USA : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. s. 40, 147 s. ISBN 0-8476-9828-9.

12.2 EDITH'S FINAL DECISION

Edith is in a different situation than Frances. It is not so platonic and unrealistic; she actually obtained two serious proposals. She decided to accept the first one but as already mentioned before it would not be a marriage out of love, she accepted it just because she wanted to obtain a social status of a married woman. But on the day of wedding she had run away.

Then the second proposal came. It was in Hotel du Lac where she met Mr. Neville. He was an older man than Edith, probably in his fifties and he was divorced, looking for a wife who would be a kind of certainty for him. His wife left him three years ago with another man. He was quite wealthy, he owned an electronic firm which was doing well. Mr. Neville's character is described there a little. He was "a man of few words, but those few words were judiciously selected."¹³⁰ Edith felt seduced by "the power of his language, his unusual eloquence."¹³¹ She called him a man of quality; he was well turned out, even good-looking and intelligent.

They were going for a walk together several times and then he proposed to her. It was just like expressing some unimportant idea, he just said: "I think you should marry me, Edith."¹³² Then he made himself clear, he explained his reasons. "I need a wife, and I need a wife whom I can trust...I am proposing a partnership of the most enlightened kind. A partnership based on esteem."¹³³ So this was a proposal which Edith got. Cold and impersonal, just like establishing some terms of trade. As also G. Thompson¹³⁴ stated, Mr.Neville thought about it as about some kind of arrangement. What's more, he added that if she wished to take a lover, she could – in a civilized manner.

Edith explained to him that she did not love him and that she knew he did not love her either. But that was not important for Mr. Neville. "All this can be managed without romantic expectations,"¹³⁵ told her.

¹³⁰ BROOKNER, Anita. *Hotel du Lac*. 1.edition. New York : Vintage, 1985. s.91, s. 183. ISBN 0394542150

¹³¹ Ibid. s. 96

¹³² Ibid s. 163

¹³³ Ibid s. 166

¹³⁴ THOMPSON, Gale. Anita Brookner : *Hotel du Lac*. *Novel Guide* [online]. 2006, 1, [cit. 2011-04-04]. Dostupný z WWW:

<http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/nfs_0000_0023_0/nfs_0000_0023_0_00015.html>.

¹³⁵ Ibid s. 169

So there was another possibility for a marriage. Edith had to think. Mr. Neville offered her security, comfort and social position. She would have a new house, enough money and what was important and different from the first proposal – she would be allowed to write. Mr. Neville would not mind that. But what he did not proffer was love, passion, tenderness, care and a real interest in her. And these things were very important for Edith.

Lesley Lanir¹³⁶ described Mr. Neville and generally the men in Edith's life in one article about Brookner's novels: "Like Geoffrey, he proffers a marriage of submission and convenience, a social position. Both David and Mr. Neville want Edith to subsist as an object at their disposal - a satellite that orbits around them. Edith, insecure and in search of emotional security, considers both options".

Finally Edith made a decision not to get married. It can seem as an unhappy ending because she remained on her own, without a husband and she came back to the empty house from the Hotel. But she did a right thing. Edith refused to marry just to obtain a social status of married woman, she opposed to the society, to her friends who expected her to find a husband and this was a big proof of her strong personality. Another reason was that she found out that Mr. Neville was sexually involved with Jeniffer – one of the guests in the Hotel. Even though she would not have to mind, because he clarified all the conditions under which they would get married, she determined to be lonely rather than humiliating by unfaithful husband. It means that the end of the story is also a surprise for the reader, because Edith is portrayed as a weak and uninteresting personality throughout the whole novel, but finally she showed to everyone that she is not willing to sentence herself to unhappy life with a man whom she does not love and who does not love her neither just to satisfy their expectations.

The novel ends with the telegram which Edith sent to London from the Hotel. She wrote: "Returning." She wanted to write "Coming home", but then she changed her mind as for she knew that an empty house is not really a home. As Fischer-Writh¹³⁷ wrote, Edith wanted to "replace nothing with something" and she did not manage it. But she was

¹³⁶ LANIR, Lesley. The spatial impact of social pressure in hotel du lac. *Modern British Fiction* [online]. 3rd March 2011, [cit. 2011-03-27]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://www.suite101.com/content/the-spatial-impact-of-social-pressure-in-hotel-du-lac--marriage-a355222>>

¹³⁷ FISCHER-WIRTH, Ann. The Novels of Anita Brookner. *Hunger Art* [online]. 1995, [cit. 2011-03-25]. Dostupný z WWW: <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n1_v41/ai_17180240/>

coming back as a free woman who was lonely indeed but on account of her own decision. She was looking forward to her garden which was so important for her and to her writing during the long, lonely evenings.

13 CONCLUSION:

Anita Brookner's main heroines are very often marked as stereotyped examples of lonely, ageing women. After studying a few of her novels and literary criticism a reader can find out that almost every protagonist of Brookner's story fulfills this expectations.

This thesis dealt with the two main heroines in detail– Frances Hinton and Edith Hope. After analyzing various aspects of their characters, the ways they behaved in various situations in life and their relationships with men and also women, several main features could be recognized. One of them is the protagonists' inability to inspire love. All men they loved or wanted to be with finally left them. Neither Frances managed to make James to fall in love with her nor was Edith able to be with her lover David. Even the two men who made a proposal to Edith confessed that they did not really love her.

A fear to express themselves, shyness and difficulties with making new friends, subjection to strong personalities and also some inferiority complex of being an orphan – all these features characterize the main heroines.

On the other hand neither Frances nor Edith is just inferior woman who would be willing to do whatever she is told. Throughout and mainly at the end of each novel a reader is surprised by their strong attitude and brave decision not to do anything just because of the opinion of society. Edith refused to get married just to obtain a social status even though it would assure her of safe future. Frances managed to deal with the loss and a kind of betrayal from James and she decided to live her life in the way she was used to and not to do an audience and to function as a plaything to anybody.

Despite the opinion of several critics and readers that Anita Brookner's novels are boring and have nothing to say¹³⁸, they can be very instructive and eye opening. A reader can become aware of the fact how easily a person can become just a victim of society and its prejudices and expectations. It is important to listen to the heart and to do the things that will make us happy. As Brookner showed, people and especially women should not try to satisfy the expectation of men and the whole society at all costs.

¹³⁸ MAYER, Peta. Anita Brookner : Charismatic Outsider [online]. 9th November 2010 [cit. 2011-04-02]. Dostupný z WWW: <<http://petamayer.blogspot.com/>>.

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RÉSUMÉ:

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na díla současné britské spisovatelky Anity Brookner. Je autorkou 24 děl, tato práce se zaměřuje na 2 z nich. Román *Hotel du Lac*, což je nejúspěšnější autorčin román, který získal významné literární ocenění a román *Look at Me*, který je jedním z raných děl. Pozornost je soustředěna na hlavní hrdinky románů – Edith Hope a Frances Hinton, které reprezentují typickou Brooknerovskou hrdinku. Jsou rozpracovány některé rysy jejich osobnosti, které jsou u obou hrdinek nápadně podobné, a je podán náhled na jejich poněkud smutné životní osudy. Určitou paralelu je možné zachytit rovněž mezi situacemi a názory hrdinek románů a vlastním životem Anity Brookner.

Vzhledem k tomu, že o této novodobé autorce nebylo vydáno mnoho tištěných publikací, je v této práci hodně čerpáno také ze spolehlivých internetových zdrojů, na kterých jsou uveřejněny články významných literárních kritiků, přispívajících do periodik jako např. *The New York Times* nebo *The Paris Review*.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Andrea Fůchsová
Katedra nebo ústav:	Katedra anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	PhDr. Milena Vodičková Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2011

Název práce:	Hrdinky románů Anity Brookner
Název v angličtině:	Female Heroines in Anita Brookner's novels.
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce pojednává o dílech současné britské spisovatelky Anity Brookner. V úvodu je věnováno několik stran životu a dílu autorky a společenskému a kulturnímu prostředí, ve kterém tvořila. Dále jsou rozebírány její dva romány – Hotel du Lac (Hotel u jezera) a Look at Me (Pohlédni na mě). Cílem je srovnat hlavní hrdinky, jejich povahy a životní úděly. Je zde také poukázáno, na některé autobiografické prvky, které A.Brookner použila.
Klíčová slova:	Hlavní hrdinka, spisovatelství, láska, vztahy mezi muži a ženami, manželství, zklamání, přátelství, samota, štěstí.
Anotace v angličtině:	The bachelor thesis deals with the novels of the contemporary British woman writer, Anita Brookner. There are several pages about author's life and work and about social and cultural climate of the time when she was writing. Further there is the analysis of two novels by Anita Brookner – Hotel du Lac and Look at Me. The main aim of the thesis is comparison of the main heroines, their characters and lives. Some autobiographical elements that Anita Brookner used are also pointed out.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Main heroine, writing, love, relationships between men and women, marriage, disappointment, friendship, loneliness, happiness.
Přílohy vázané v práci:	0
Rozsah práce:	50
Jazyk práce:	angličtina