

Anita Brookner's *The Bay of Angels* and Her Innovative Twist

Ms. B. Lakshmikantham, M.A., M.Phil., Part -Time Ph.D. Scholar

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Anita Brookner

Literary Master Anita Brookner's elegant style is manifest in every page of her brilliant novels. Born in London in 1928, she became the first woman to hold the Slade Professorship at Cambridge University in 1967. Since 1977, she has been associated with the Courtauld Institute of Art. However, since winning the Booker Prize in 1984 for *Hotel du Lac*, she has become better known as a novelist. Her fiction is mostly set in London, and often involves characters of Jewish extraction, like herself. Her works explore the alienation of a character, usually female, whose quiet, solitary lives are punctuated by destitution and disappointments in love. Her style has often borne her comparisons with Jane Austen and Henry James.

New Trend

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A Critical Study on Anita Brookner's *The Bay of Angels* and Her Innovative Twist 518

The Bay of Angels (2001) marks a commencement of a new trend in the works of Brookner by introducing a satisfied, free- bird heroine at the end. The succeeding novels *The Next Big Thing* (2002, US title *Making Things Better*), *The Rules of Engagement* (2003), *Leaving Home* (2005), *Strangers* (2009) have a fair end too. Kate Kellaway (2008) tells that in *The Bay of Angels* Brookner seems determined to turn over a new leaf. She declares her unusual intention: she is to investigate happy endings.



The first lines of *The Bay of Angels* echo to a surprising degree: “I read ‘The Blue Fairy Book,’ ‘The Yellow Fairy Book’ and the stories of Hans Andersen. . . . None of this was groundwork for success in worldly terms” (1). A few pages later, David Copperfield and his creator are cited once again as responsible companions in the little narrator’s faulty education. The first person narrator, Zoë Cunningham grows up fatherless in reduced circumstances at Edith Grove in London with her widowed mother, Anne, who hides a debilitating medical condition behind a life of passivity.

Brookner Land

Brookner very brusquely lays down her conceit of life as a fairy tale flawed at its very core. Brooknerland is confined mainly to London, with an important outpost in Paris and smaller ones in other European cities. But one cannot seek for it on street maps; although actual squares, avenues, department stores, parks and libraries are named, Brookner’s London is an alternative version that bears only a partial and deceptive resemblance to the real city. Essentially, it is very un-English, says Gillian Tindall (1998).

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Brookner's 20th Novel – London Setting

Anita Brookner's 20th novel is set in London and southern France, sometime in the 1950s. But in fact, we are nowhere so much as in Brooknerland. Zoe, and her widowed mother wait in splendid ivory tower isolation for a man to furnish them with a fairy-tale ending. When he duly arrives in the form of Simon, an elderly benefactor, their lives are changed forever. Simon whisks her home-loving mother off to foreign climes while, back in England, Zoe enters the spirit of free love by letting her unfaithful boyfriend walk all over her. Such happiness is naturally short-lived. Young Zoe is left to pick up the pieces, but finds consolation in an ugly, authoritarian doctor. Brookner's graceful, refined prose is in perfect harmony with her genteel, melancholy worlds. Moments of comic sharpness aside, this latest novel is as exquisitely dreary as ever says Lisa Allardice (2001).

Early Widowhood

There have been parties on some Friday evenings at their house. The guests are two of their relatives, Millicent and Nancy, the girls who are rich but they express sympathy towards Zoë's mother. Whenever they come they bring strawberries along with several kinds of fruits. The tranquillity of the flat is occasionally disturbed by visits from 'the girls', women married to remote cousins of Zoë's father. Though they are conceited, her mother likes them the most. Zoë wants her father to be alive as her mom has turned out to be sad whenever she finds her at home. The relatives invite her mom to come to their house and say to her that they will send a car. They do the same and Anne goes there to meet her second husband. Zoë does not know that her mom has been to see her step-father-to-be. Zoë's father is known to her only as a dim photo of a young undergraduate who has worked as a librarian.

Thus the opening pages review the calm pleasure of their early lives together after the mother's early widowhood. Zoë enjoys school, her friends and the ambiance of calm in the flat they reside in when she returns home. She is aware that her mother may be without a friend in the world, but they both share the pleasure of reading. Zoë does not

refer to Anne as anything other than ‘my mother’ until page twenty, reflecting how Zoë sights Anne in such a manner that her identity is delineated by her role as a mother. Zoë Cunningham draws from her reading “that I need make no decisions on my own behalf, for destiny or fate would always have had the matter in hand. . . . There were no stratagems to be undertaken. One had simply to exist, in a state of dreamy indirection, for the plot to work itself out” (1). Zoë believes in this redeeming feature firmly.

The redeeming presence that would justify all of one’s vain striving, would dispel one’s disappointments, would in some mysterious way present one with a solution in which one would have no part so that all one had to do was to wait, in a condition of sinless passivity, for the transformation that would surely take place. (1)

The Nuptial

Simon Gould, Zoë’s step-father loves Anne very much. Simon is an aged man, who has lost his wife while giving birth to a child. The child has also breathed its last breath. Simon showers his love on both Anne and Zoë. Their nuptial takes place with all relatives. Simon is rich enough to inhabit two floors of a large house in Onslow Square in which he transfers Anne. He promises to purchase a flat for Zoë. After the marriage of her mother with Simon at Chelsea Register office in a ceremony that is rigorously secular, they settle at France.

Though Zoë has been left alone, she has been provided with the whole lot. She considers Simon as a “Santa Claus, a provider, a facilitator, an enabler” (16). Millicent and Nancy tells Zoë can live with them, but she declines the offer. Both of them grow to be jealous at Zoë and her mother’s sudden affluence. Zoë completes her schooling and goes to France during summer for the first time. Zoë is alienated by Simon’s house; Les Mouettes, a white villa with a flat roof and protruding central feature. Zoë does not like the traffic nevertheless she goes to the nearby town every day by bus and wanders in anticipation of a peaceful foliage. Zoë finds a miniature garden of the Musee Massena. She enjoys the natural world at Nice. Zoë goes to this garden and park where she meets

children with their nannies. Zoë makes friends with all of them and enjoys a lot to be with those kids. Zoë has been given complete freedom to come and go where she is pleased and so she spends a day on her own.

French Setting

France seems to Zoë a country of various liberties. Zoë admires the way in which all the men folk seem to be able to work with a cigarette in their mouths. Zoë is flabbergasted at the miraculous speed of the housekeeper on her moped, on which she arrives every morning at seven to make coffee. Her way of dressing has furthermore changed and she looks entirely like a French lass. Simon's friends Dr. Thibaudet and his wife Armelle come up to his residence often. The house keeper Mme Delgado habitually does all the house hold chores in this manner by making Anne free from all her work. This first summer is the happiest time in her life.

Back to London

Zoë comes from France to London on a dark Sunday morning in February and finds her flat in which she has lived till now has been expired of its lease. Hence Zoë requests to hang about there for a few days till she moves to a new flat. Money is not at all a problem to her because of Simon's fortune. Meanwhile Simon sells his house at Onslow Square saying that they could rent a house when they return to London. When Zoë moves to the new flat she has no difficulties but France appears to be the happiest place. "The only signs of life were the motorbike parked in the forecourt of the strange church opposite our flat and the light I could see dimly shining from its interior" (28). According to her it is an age old church with its truly valiant souls as they form a fellowship.

Zoë's Love

Zoë loves a boy, Adam Crowhurst away from the confinement of her mother, she enters into a relationship with Adam, a far freer spirit than that to which she has been accustomed. His mother does not prefer Zoë. She manages to have friendship with him.

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A Critical Study on Anita Brookner's *The Bay of Angels* and Her Innovative Twist 522

He searches a perfect lover and so he has been dating with quite a lot of ladies but she grows to assess the times he chooses to contribute to her. She in one way or another persuades him to be her lover. Once he invites her to come and lend a hand in preparing dinner for his relatives, the Johnsons. She takes everything that has been available in her refrigerator to impress them in two bags, but due to rain on her way to his house, she becomes awkward. When she enters his house she finds an elegant lady Kirstie Fellowes who is a physiotherapist. She is audacious and laughs at the top of her voice. Zoë is distressed to see her in Adam's house. Zoë returns to her flat in a bewildered condition as she has walked back in heavy downpour at late hours of darkness and feels her defeat by an antagonist. She plunges into a deep slumber. In order to ease herself presently she talks to her mother over phone and informs her new telephone number as she has moved towards a new flat.

Love Lost

Adam seems to have lost interest in her but she makes him agree to travel with her to France afterwards. She gets up early to write her essays as she is aware that she is not doing well in her studies. She has to complete no less than a degree. In the interim she gets a job from her tutor Dr. Blackburn to edit some thesis by checking grammar mistakes. She does this work at home or in libraries with which she is familiar. She has thoughts in relation to her future with Adam but he has rejected her. Hence she decides to win him back by taking him to France. Zoë tells about Adam that he is like a man in Anton Chekhov's story, 'The Lady with a Dog'

a cynic who is nevertheless touched by his mistress's tears and converted into a belated acknowledgement of love. Not that I wept, unlike Chekhov's heroines, who seemed to weep all the time, from guilt, from ecstasy, from remorse. Another of these stories, 'The Darling', should have taught me the dangers of excessive compliance. (39)

There is no possibility that Adam will acknowledge Zoë's wishes. She asks permission from her mother to bring him. Anne advises her to write a note about this plan to Simon

as he is old and the house is his. Adam is fearless and his parents seem to be relieved that Zoë is financially independent. He stays in Spain with her and she cheers him up and takes for a walk but he is not a guy who will love a lady in the company of whom he just walks. He is bored about the holiday. Normally he is, “an accomplished escapist artist, he justified his unavailability with elaborate generalizations about men and women” (41).

Simon’s Horrible Behaviour

Adam does not behave like a reticent boy before Simon and Anne. Adam appears to be talkative. Though he admires everyone, Simon resents his perpetual chitchat with Mme Delgado and his embraces and kisses to her stern face. Simon allots separate rooms but Adam sleeps in Zoë’s room. Zoë is horror-struck to hear Simon’s steps in the corridor which will be slowed down outside her door and a creak as she imagines him bending down to listen for illicit sounds. She is horrified to the extreme as she could not understand the sexual jealousy of the old who realize that their powers have gone without end. Adam knows nothing with reference to this behaviour as he sleeps soundly whereas Zoë remains awake. Thus Simon’s affection for his new family allows Zoë to pursue what she thinks is an independent life: her own apartment in a fashionable part of London, a university education, casual affairs, and carefree holidays at Simon’s villa in Nice.

Farewell to Les Mouettes

Anne has her own escapes from the house at noon though she is not familiarized to carry out so far in London. They bid adieu to Simon. Anne and finds a hotel. Zoë feels that the journey to France has not yielded fruits as she could not change Adam to be her lover. Zoë continues her life by attending university and taking up with her boyfriend, Adam, who teases her by frequent infidelities. Adam feels that Zoë troubles herself by thinking a lot about her mother, whereas he has left the matter of his mother’s happiness unexamined. They wander out into a beautiful greenish area. Despite their hunger they are not in a hurry to eat. When they feel the chill night they walk back to the hotel where

they stay before the journey. Both of them return to London after a brief stay. Zoë informs her mother about their safe arrival.

In vain Attempt to woo Adam

Zoë has completed her studies satisfactorily and now her working life has begun. Zoë works under Dr. Blackburn, a Japanese Professor by correcting his thesis on: “the grammar needed checking, hesitant English to be tactfully corrected” (50). This would keep her in London for the summer and postpones her visit to Nice. Anne talks to her every week and asks her to make a visit to France as they love to see her. All her attempts to woo Adam to her ends in vain yet she is unable to forget him. Therefore in order to redirect her mind, she works hard under her Professor and spends time in parks and at times eats her lunch in a nearby Café. It seems to be quiet as she has been left unaccompanied. Her time is no longer articulated by the academic year and this makes a change in her mind, “I felt rootless and invisible, and the invisibility, which had initially suited my purpose, was no longer an advantage” (53). Zoë begins to leave the flat at unusual times and rehearses the reception she will give to Adam if she meets him. These make-believe conversations turn out to be a category of comfort.

Routine Unhappiness

Her unhappiness becomes her routine and the secret dialogues with the absent Adam become the most important duty. Hence she decides to revolutionize herself by visiting several friends. The news from Nice will be of great interest to her if she does not talk to her mother for many days. Whenever she talks to her mother she fills her speech with the gossips, current affairs and the curious ones they like to share. Once Zoë talks to her mother over phone and learns that Dr. Thibaudet has been retired and Simon has given a grand party to his friend. Zoë feels Simon to be strange as he could not love Adam but is jealous of him. Adam has not even pretended to like Simon, but feels sorry for Anne. Zoë ponders everything. Zoë comes to a conclusion that both Simon and Anne are jealous that they have not lived like Adam when they are in his stage. Zoë feels that

Adam's rejection of her as his lover may be due to Simon's voyeuristic behaviour. He may have noticed certain signs that have escaped her.

In London the days grew darker. I no longer walked in the early mornings; that phase of my life was past. The streets made an attempt to be festive: Christmas decorations had been in place since October. I was almost glad to be leaving for holidays, although I knew that re-entry would be difficult. (60)

Travels

Zoë goes again to France. There are crowds at the airport. She retains from the time of departure a feeling of solidarity and of rightness. In the plane she congratulates with others as they have "got away on time, joked, were conversational" (60). Simon receives her in the airport. The couple looks older than ever. They love her with excessive care. Zoë appears to be irritated as well as touched by their affection. Her mother shows her the new bedspread she has bought for Zoë's room in order to make her pleased with them. They are there to woo her as they fear that she might desert them for other pleasures. The Thibaudets visit them and share their plan for the forthcoming trip to Philadelphia. Zoë stays away from home as long as possible during two weeks she has spent and returns to her flat in London.

Zoë informs safe journey and her mother expresses the happiness they have enjoyed during her stay. Simon too reveals his happiness and asks to be happy. Zoë later writes a letter to them to take great care of their health. Anne telephones Zoë that Simon has slipped on the terrace thereby spraining his ankle and has trodden heavily on his injured ankle and has fallen again. Hence his head is cracked on the marble floor. Zoë hears narratives from Dr. Thibaudet and Mme Delgado to know the fact that Simon has been dead while her mother has been sleeping near him innocently.

Miserable Anne

Dr. Thibaudet notices the troubled lady and decides to admit Anne in a clinic at Nice under the supervision of Dr. Balbi, as well as to arrange Simon's funeral. He completes the rituals and has left to the airport. Zoë informs Dr. Blackburn and travels to Nice to see her mother at a hospital under Dr. Balbi and the chief nurse, Marie-Caroline's care. They have given sedatives to make her sleep calmly for days. Mme Delgado returns to her home, Zoë meets her and pays her wages before visiting Anne. Zoë is not allowed to see her mother so she returns home to search thoroughly but she is able only to find a meagre amount for her to spend. She finds a note with a name 'Redman and Redman Solicitors' at Seymour Place. Zoë comes back to London to get an appointment to meet Mr. Clifford Redman and talks to Marie-Caroline on the subject of her mom. Zoë contemplates her current state.

I was not yet old I felt old, for I was now to be my mother's guardian, a parent to my parent. Later I came to understand that this too is the common lot. And yet I longed for my freedom. Deliverance was no longer possible. Even envisaging my mother's total recovery required an effort I could no longer make. And my own recovery? That, I feared, would have to be postponed indefinitely. (74)

Mr. Redman impresses her with his soft voice. Zoë hopes that Mr. Redman will do the same for her till she remembers that such a happening occurs only in Dickens. Mr. Redman is well-mannered. Zoë longs to work in an office like this. She wants to turn up every morning with a handbag and a briefcase, to hang her, "coat in a cupboard and to be only dimly aware that outside the window a whole area of activity, in which I would have no part" (76).

Mystery Unlocked

Mr. Redman puts in the picture that Simon has left wealth to Anne in a Swiss bank account in Geneva. The house in Nice belongs to his first wife, Margaret Spedding. After her death, at this moment it belongs to her nephew Anthony Spedding. Zoë is absolutely puzzled at the state of the affairs and makes her mind up to find out the

address of Mr. Spedding. Zoë's thoughts also envelop the bill she has to pay for the clinic as her mother has to be in the clinic for three weeks according to Dr. Balbi. As an urban child she used to consider London as her birthright. Her mother has taken to all the significant places. The home to which Zoë returns after these travels makes her to feel stable as it is. But now the current scenario has forced her to be in Simon's house as a tenant or in a temporary flat in France or London. Her walks, "in the dark streets would prepare me for a night which would be sleepless" (85). The mild sunshine seems to be lost in the cold and damp weather.

Those streets which had witnessed my childhood now seemed to me to be infinitely kind. Even the darkness was welcome, for it concealed me. I walked through the drizzle for about an hour, without paying attention to where I was going ...images of other people's domesticity affected me; I longed for such a setting for myself. (85)

Driven by Fate to Accept Sad Reality

Her flat seems to her "infinitely welcoming, and, more important than that, discreet, tactful, asking no questions, respecting my right to be there" (86). She prepares coffee and eats her bread and cheese. Despite her energizing food, she sleeps for a while. She is sad to look at her friends who are enjoying their level best, while she has been driven by fate to accept a sad reality. In her flat she has two dreams. In the first dream her mother seems to be dishevelled as she has never been in the past and carries her possessions in two plastic bags. Her face bears a resemblance to Anne.

In the other dream, Zoë is in a chemist's shop where two, of their working Staff who are outstandingly handsome gentlemen are talking with one another as they are in love. She grabs the first thing that comes to her hand and moreover lays money on the counter and leaves without disturbing them. Zoë could not find any special meaning but she knows that she has only two days left to come to terms with her situation. "Though I knew that a whole lifetime might not be sufficient" (86). She has no desire to return to Nice. She is so reluctant that she does not catch an aero plane until afternoon. This is

because she knows what awaited her there. There are numerous arrangements to be made and her greatest task would be to oversee all those responsibilities individually.

She lingers in the airport while she is tempted to buy a magazine like an ordinary tourist. She craves to sit on the beach lazily without any thoughts. She laments, “I wanted to live a life like that enjoyed by everyone else, with only normal duties and demands to fulfil” (87). She aims to have a peaceful and comfortable domestic life which will be a life of study. She hopes to such a life which will provide privacy.

Privacy and protection: perhaps the sort of life my mother had once known, until removed from it by the gallant stranger. That this had once seemed a good outcome was now seen to be incorrect. No woman of my time was allowed to think in terms of total withdrawal from the world, although this was now my dearest wish. (87)

As Mr. Redman has already been in charge of Simon’s financial affairs she devises a plan to instruct him to continue the job. Zoë goes away in the direction of Nice to reach her destination at Les Mouettes and comes across Anthony Spedding in the company of his family. She requests them to allow her to stay for a time being as her mother is ill in hospital whereas they ask her to take her things within fifteen minutes and sends her out. They ask her to stay somewhere else and to forget the house. For this reason she carries that entire of hers furthermore her mother’s to her hotel room in two big suitcases. Unlike them the Hotel in-charge, M.Cottin is kind and graceful enough to obtain food and even agreed to note down all her calls and allowed her to use the telephone. After a while she sets off to the hospital and gives the new number to the Chief Nurse. Then she talks with her mother but Anne could not remember that Simon is dead. Within minutes she becomes unconscious again. Therefore Zoë is left alone to dwell in her turmoil.

Anne Regains

The very next day Anne is alive to Zoë's words. Zoë tells her that Simon is deceased and so they could not cross the threshold of the house. Anne is very in high spirits that there is no need to go to the home but asked twice whether Zoë is sure that Simon has been dead. Mr. Redman does his level best to help Zoë. Dr. Balbi has been away for a long time so Anne is not cared properly. When he arrives he informs that they could not keep Anne in the hospital but gives the address of a Residence which occupies ladies abandoned by their children. Residence Saint Therese is in rue Droite, near the church of Sainte Rita. It accommodates ladies who belong to all classes of French. According to Dr. Balbi, "it is a place for those who need a certain amount of care and attention" (109). Mme Levasseur is the head in charge with a few maids and there are many women like Jean-Claude's grandmother who longs to be with him as it is one among the common situations in Today's World. Every Sunday visitors are allowed to congregate with their relatives. So there will be an enormous crowd of sons, daughters and grandchildren. Zoë has no other way than to admit her mother in this Residence. Anne accepts what on earth happens at hand and adapts herself to be in the world there.

Anne's Reminiscence

Zoë makes her realize her past and asks about David, her first husband. "He worked in the library of the House of Commons. He loved it, though he was only a clerk I dare say he would have stayed there if he had had the chance" (119). Her mother also replied that he has gone to meet his maker due to a heart attack and asked her not to talk anything else about him. In Residence women are given checkups and treatment by Dr. Lagarde who does not seem to be impressive. He is stoic and does not mingle with others. Sunday evenings make Zoë to remember her mother and visits her regularly. Zoë has been, "brought up to regard men as potential saviours, guardians, preservers, but this attitude was no longer viable" (122). Yet when she sees Dr. Lagarde, she is dumbfounded of his habit of making no impression in anyone. Zoë later comes to London to meet Redman. Zoë goes to bank to put up the shutters on the accounts of her and her mother as she is in the necessity of money.

Zoë's microcosm

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A Critical Study on Anita Brookner's *The Bay of Angels* and Her Innovative Twist 530

Zoë informs Dr. Blackburn that she is available to accomplish the employment she has done on behalf of him. Zoë goes to France and lives in the same hotel which seems to her more or less her domicile. She wanders as many streets as possible and finishes her wanderings by entering into a Café. Zoë finds Dr. Balbi, who is eating in addition to waiting for his friend, “a woman, one of those discreet liaisons which take place off limits, and to which there are no witnesses” (132). Normally he does not like anyone to see his meal so he appears disturbed and evades from her while she has no idea about hurting him. Zoë’s mother seems “to have acceded to the prevailing belief that a daughter was of lesser value than a son, which was why I was so eager to attach a masculine presence to my own” (135). Meanwhile Mme Levasseur suffers a stroke and is dead. This makes the whole Residence to be disappointed. Zoë offers her condolences, since Anne has been loved and cared by the departed soul. Zoë takes her mother to Café to drink coffee but she declines as she not in a mood to drink coffee. Hence they return and Zoë asks the maids at Residence to bring tea for her mother.

The fiction we all entertained of the return home was simply that: a useful fiction, to which she clung as I had once clung to those fictions I had pursued in the days of my early reading. Such reading was optimistic; that I saw now, though I had once not thought so. The illusions, or delusions, which I had so eagerly accepted, would no longer serve. (145)

Zoë feels that her own homecoming will not be the end of her exile but the beginning of it. She comes to rue de France where she stays. Zoë asks permission to have a radio and at once M.Cottin, the landlord accepts and selects a radio for her to buy. Zoë switches on the radio to listen for some two minutes and switches off. Zoë has an idea to give the radio and other modest ones which Zoë has managed to collect to France in her life anymore. Zoë has grown to commune with herself. “My task was now to wear a mask with my mother, in order to protect us both. I should be the competent daughter, and if I felt any uneasiness, as those dutiful sons so obviously did, I should dismiss it as an unenviable necessity” (148).

A New Friend

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A Critical Study on Anita Brookner’s *The Bay of Angels* and Her Innovative Twist 531

Dr. Balbi is kind enough to take Zoë to the Café to have coffee. He tells her about his divorced wife and so he has come to live with his mother. Zoë walks to seashore alone. Zoë notices Dr. Balbi who follows but does not open his mouth as she seems to be reticent. In a late evening Dr. Balbi and Zoë talk as she wants to know whether he could treat her mother but she refuses firmly since Dr. Lagarde has been appointed to be there. He reveals to her that the Residence belongs to Dr. Thibaudet but Dr. Balbi will have it after the death of the former. He accompanies her to her flat and goes in his way home. Zoë visits her mother. There are also the relatives of others. Zoë asks her mother to come for a coffee. Zoë accepts it but later tells her that she needs rest. Zoë leaves her and

rejoices in the sun, the crowds, the blaring traffic, yet at the back of my mind was the ineffaceable image of my mother sitting back in her chair with her eyes closed...I felt less burdened at night, when the darkness would be universal, and I would count on sleep to efface the memory of the day. (163)

Sleep has begun to evade Zoë. It is easier to stay awake, to work and to go out. Zoë is not tired. Zoë feels that she has been kept in this state of wakefulness for some special purpose. It may be because of her mother or even for herself. On Sunday Zoë walks “for a couple of hours, not paying much attention to where my steps were taking me” (164). Late at night she finds herself in the beach. The air is calm thereby making the night beautiful. Similarly Zoë walks in the seashore on all days but she does not find Dr. Balbi.

Zoë likes to think that the Baie des Anges has been inhabited by the angels once upon a time and she voluntarily involves her thoughts in her imaginary world of angels. Zoë could even visualize their phosphorescent assent and dissent to perform a limited as well as “brief spiritual dance on the shore, before heading inland to stimulate the economy. That economy was now thriving, but at night, on the edge of the sea” (164). These angels might have been entrepreneurial as they may have an eye on expansion. Their vacation on the shore before carrying on their duties could have been “the only trace of their otherworldly origin” (165). Within a limited period they transformed

themselves “leaving behind only the beautiful appellation they have bestowed on a large area of pebbles” (165). Zoë senses that there are no such angels in Nice. Their activities are appeared to have passed into the hands of M. Cottin, Sœur Elisabeth, and Dr. Lagarde who are angelic. That is why Zoë relies on them as she believes that they would not let her down. Zoë has been informed by Sœur Elisabeth from the Residence that her mother is not eating properly and at times she is refusing to come out of the room. Zoë considers it to be a normal weakness.

Zoë feels that the major shareholder in the angelic enterprise is Dr. Balbi. During their walk at the sea shore he informs Zoë that his sister is unmarried and she takes care of their mother and so he is free to study. He comes till the entrance of rue de France and disappears soon to his house. Zoë begins to perceive the advantages of living in more than one room. Zoë has a dream which alarms her. In the dream:

I had been consigned to a small room, not unlike the room I currently occupied, but with one essential difference: it was in an advanced state of dilapidation, with strips of paper hanging from the walls... there was a breach in one of the walls, rather like a cat-flap, covered with yet another strip of wallpaper, but of a different pattern. (168)

Once Zoë has seen the breach and the wallpaper covering over it, Zoë becomes uneasy in her dream. But the urgency of her mission has brought her to the place as Zoë has to fulfil her obligations. Zoë has “to return to the room, with its gap in the wall, and await the outcome of whatever it had in store for me” (168). Thus the dream ends and Zoë wakes up in a horror. Her childhood friend, Mary is getting married. Consequently Zoë decides to attend thereby Zoë can check her determination and test her ability to adapt herself.

Zoë telephones Sœur Elisabeth to inform her departure and also to give her new London phone number. Zoë assures to ring to the Residence every evening about her mother. At the wedding Zoë meets her former friends who are now successful professionals and Zoë meets her lover who is still handsome. He tells her that he is a

trader with an old fashioned and highly regarded firm. He loves work, money about that he seems to be unapologetic. He even loves the pressure. Sometimes he manages to get away for a weekend but that is always rare. He too is still unmarried. Zoë escapes from his view as he looks at another girl. When Zoë arrives at home Zoë comes to know about the phone call from M. Cottin who informs her that a phone call from Residence expects her to call back. Zoë rings to hear the death of her mother. Zoë feels strange.

My life had become a stasis I was unable to alter in any direction; that was why every other enterprise seemed beyond me, beyond even my eventual possibilities. My timid affections for that very reason; they were prevented from moving forward, for I was a prisoner in that room, and until the gap widened I could not proceed. (173)

Sorrowful Residence

Zoë finds her mother in bed beneath a black wooden crucifix. She is taken aback by the beauty of her mother's expression. Anne's eyes are open, but her head has been turned a bit to one side as if Anne is listening to any of the inner voices. The inmates pitied Zoë and Dr. Lagarde makes her to comprehend that the death of Anne is due to heart failure. He asks Zoë about her decision to her mother's body as he has to make arrangements for her funeral. Zoë replies that she is not willing to take her body to England. Zoë wants him to quit her in order to relate herself with the events surrounding her.

Zoë informs the condition of herself by borrowing the words of David Copperfield, "I lost her. In the street the weather was unclouded; there was a smell of coffee and washed pavements" (175). Zoë has to empty her mother's room which contains a suitcase which Zoë wanted to avoid as Zoë wants to be empty-handed and to be out of touch and unavailable. Zoë spends the day in the garden of Musée Massena. The sight of the clinic alarms her so Zoë turns into a Café and orders coffee. Zoë thinks about her mother's spiritual death that has happened long time ago as Anne has been changed to unfamiliar places one after other.

Zoë wipes her eyes and looks up to see Dr. Balbi takes her to the clinic. Zoë resolves to be stoic but she is not within her grasp so she breaks into tears and informs them to do the needful as early as possible. Dr. Balbi soothes her. Everyone in Residence is sad and the tributes they pay to her mother reveal her their warm-hearted soul. Zoë contemplates her personal loss. Zoë has no reasons to stay back in Nice but she has already paid for a month so she decides to stay there. On a sudden prompting she seems to be determined to keep the room till the end of the year. In the mean time she plans to make arrangements in London for her future. Zoë returns to London to meet the list of work to be done. The first is to clean her flat and she does it with no urgency as she has no other engagements. Zoë washes her hair and goes to a hairdresser.

Zoë checks the balance in her mother's account and decides to keep it safe for future along with her earnings. Zoë informs Dr. Blackburn about her permanent availability. Purchasers are ready to buy the remaining property in Walthamstow. She returns to Nice to pay the final accounts at Residence and clinic where she could not meet Dr. Balbi. Zoë remembers the Thibaudets and reaches their house but they are not there. Zoë sees the house of Simon where she and her mother have enjoyed a brief stay. To her Simon is always there to be a part of her life. The house signifies an enchantment to her but it has "never been more than a sort of fiction" (191). According to her the duty of fictions is to supply life and it has done so. Zoë feels that she is the only one among the three, that is herself with her mother and Simon, who has believed the fictions to be true. Zoë walks for a distance of five to six miles but Dr. Balbi does not pursue her now but Zoë wants him to follow her. Zoë thinks, "a man should pursue a woman" (192). Zoë confesses that she has not got rid of her childish imaginations and she has to live without happy endings as many people do so. The disadvantages of fictions are

Fictions exert such a power that one comes to accept them as revealed truth. But they were always fictions, and must remain so. And one's powers are limited, for that is the unarguable truth of the matter. That was the whole point of the fairy godmother in the Cinderella story. That is why one longs to believe in some kind of intervention. (192)

Zoë continues her walk till a few heavy drops of rain begins to fall. It is so dark and misses a pale disc of a known face. Later Dr. Balbi asks why she leaves without waiting for him. Both of them walk back together. Zoë's eventual arrangement with Dr Balbi is an equitable one and a life-long occupation, not a moment of rapture with an ending. She is able to find this accommodation of hearts and lives because she is a woman of a later generation than her mother's. Zoë is also an adult. Any attempt to counterfeit the condition of childhood is dishonest. It is also immoral as she says, and she is quite right. Brookner's novels are definitely novels for adults.

Zoë usually stays in Nice during May, July, October and December in her usual room. M. Cottin accepts her as a permanent Lodger. She befriends Antoine and his sister Jeanne apart from Dr. Balbi as they are his son and daughter. They have their dinner together whenever it is possible. Jeanne appears to be worried that her brother may forget her by loving Zoë but he always keeps his decency. Hence they are always friends.

Zoë's time with Antoine is always pleasant for both of them. He is interested in photographing architectural curiosities. This makes them to come to know with each other and to witness each other's intimate life. Zoë is in peace at last, "I have a certainty in my life. He is my certainty, and I am able to accept the fact that I am his" (196). As Zoë approaches middle age she notices the families of her friends, remembers the brother and sister who will discuss about her.

As for Antoine, he is grateful to us both for preserving the decencies. This is how we conduct our lives together, and there is no particular cause for regret: voices have never been raised, objections never voiced. In time she will come to accept me more whole heartedly, knowing her brother to be as much in my care as he is in hers. (195)

Zoë thinks about helping Jeanne if she falls sick, there are only two possible things. To stay there with them, otherwise the next is to take her leave of Antoine and come home for ever. Thus Zoë succumbs to the fact that acceptance is all that matters and she lives a peaceful life. Zoë realizes that it is not time to shut down her life with worries.

Finally, a Free-bird Heroine

Kate Kellaway (2003) tells that in *The Bay of Angels* Brookner seems determined to turn over a new leaf by introducing a satisfied, free-bird heroine at the end. The succeeding novels have a fair end too. Brookner declares her unusual intention of investigating happy endings. In *The Next Big Thing*, Herz receives a letter from Fanny, who is now alone and has support, and enter into an unusual courtship by mail. The heroine of *Leaving Home* is always leaving; she can neither settle in one place nor relish the joys of her rootless life, as she has been liberated into behaving like men. In *The Rules of Engagement*, Elizabeth becomes a Volunteer in a hospital and now with her female friends. Her sleep is not disturbed by any dreams. She lives peacefully. The recent work of art, *Strangers* is also in the same boat.

Analysis

Trauma and despair can be considered as the heartrending feelings, when an individual feels that there is no hope of survival due to the lack of amenities. Loneliness can be divided into two types; Loneliness devoid of responsibility and Loneliness with responsibility. The former is always a blessed state without a helper. The lack of a helper does not mean that it could be considered as a curse. It is a state of pleasure and bliss accompanied by a diminutive irritation, which may be explained as a sugar coated pill to convalesce the person not to enter into the world of trauma and despair. Whereas the citizens of the world today expect sugar candies instead of sugar coated pills.

Solitude helps an individual to analyze the action of fellow human beings along with his or her consign and importance in relation to others in any event in life. It provides time to retrospect oneself every now and then. It is therefore a gratifying twinge and not an awful pleasure. Loneliness with responsibility too belongs to the same category but the one who is enduring are in danger of acquiring trauma and despair easier than others. Anita Brookner is one of the best examples to the glory of both the stages of loneliness the former in her early life and the latter after her retirement from her job and the death of her parents. Being alone makes her to think and rethink any matter and so

she does not lead a single minute with a moment of aberration or a minute's madness. In the contrary the citizens of the world accomplish several deeds with those two qualities.

Winding up

While reading this novel the readers may get an impression of watching the patient gray donkeys that descend along steep paths to the floor of the Grand Canyon. Their motion is deliberate, practiced and exact, each advance scrupulous because the whole journey depends on getting it right. One rash move and the fall would be absolute, so there is never a careless step. The ledge is too narrow for extravagance, and yet the bare progression, without fanfare or wasted motion, is breathtaking feels, Penelope Mesic (2001). Based on the analysis of the characters of Brookner, it is obvious that they are victorious in their opinion to an astonishing end in her works of art as they are the incarnation of their own whims and fancies but they are not allowed to be victorious in their social life and career forever by their inborn nature, which pervade around them against their initial idea of life so as to reveal themselves as Vanquished Victors. Her innovative twist in the end of *The Bay of Angels* divulges to the world that the novelist has turned a new leaf in her career.

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Ms. B. Lakshmikantham, M.A., M.Phil., Part-Time Ph.D. Scholar
Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University
Tirunelveli 627 012
Tamilnadu
India
margaretrubkutti@gmail.com