CHAPTER IV

Ardashir Vakil-One Day into the writing Prowess of Vakil
Parsi writers have made significant contribution to the sphere of English literature. The Parsi writers during the postcolonial era can be categorized into two groups—stay-at-home writers and expatriate writers. Ardashir Vakil belongs to the second group. Although an expatriate writer, he is among those who have made themselves at home in the postcolonial world. He has been critically acclaimed by American and British critics for creating new waves in the field of Indian English fiction. Standing on the threshold of a glided career, he gives a deep insight into the subject he deals with.

IV:i  His Early Life:

Ardashir Vakil was born in the year 1962 in Bombay (India) in a Parsi family. He sought his education at the Doon school. Later on, he migrated to London (U.K.). He taught English at several London comprehensives. He also taught M.A. Creative Writing at Middlesex, Roe Hampton and Goldsmiths. Presently he leads a comfortable life in London with his wife and two daughters.

The fact that Vakil spent his early life in Bombay makes his writings about India authentic. His deep insight and analytic mind brings about the element of reality with a personal touch to his compositions.

IV:ii  Vakil’s Creative Works:

The two famous novels of Vakil are as follows-

1. Beach Boy (1998)

In addition to this, Ardashir Vakil has also penned a number of short stories, which have been anthologized in Mosaic (British Council, 1998) and Rites of Spring (Fourth estate, 1999). His short story ‘Soft Boy’ was broadcast by Radio 4 and B.B.C. world in 2004.
IV:iii  Awards:

His first novel *Beach Boy* (1998) won the Betty Trask Award and was short-listed for the Whitbread first novel prize. It has also been translated into many languages.

His second novel *One Day* (2003) was short-listed for the Encore Award.

IV:iv  Themes:

Multiple themes are projected through Ardashir Vakil’s works. He gives topmost priority to the Indian society with all its Indianness. Even when he deals with a particular subject, he universalizes it by focusing on human relationships. Vakil’s themes range from the microcosmic India caught in the crucible of customs and traditions, positivity and struggle, static and the change, ethnicity and multiculturalism, quest for the self, etc.

His debut novel *Beach Boy* deals with the pains and anxieties of adolescent living in Bombay, with all the aspects of fascination and innocence of childhood paving way for adolescence.

The second novel *One Day* is however different from the earlier one. Here he deals with the theme of marital relationships, honest relationships and infidelity.

Although Vakil portrays the love and hate relationship between the London based mixed race couple, he universalizes the same. According to Vakil, “it is a theme that represents the struggle of being in a fulfilling relationship.”

Talking about the themes frequently used by the Indian writers, with specific reference to Vakil, Herald Leusmann states:
Equipped with a good education, a willingness to adapt to a new environment and an eloquence to tell original stories, they (Indian writers) touch up on aspects frequently associated with postcolonial studies like nationalism, gender roles and the issues surrounding historiography. In the case of Ardashir Vakil............. one can add to this list problem of juvenile discrimination and subsequent identity crisis.

(http://social.class.ncsu.edu/jouert/v5i1/leusma.html)

The Stream of Consciousness technique is a literary device that Vakil has employed in his novels. This technique allows a character’s thought (mind) to wander about regardless of logical narrative sequence. He states:

*To be able to tell my story well, I thought such free association would be best.*

(http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

**IV:v  Stream of Consciousness:**

Laurence Sterne laid the foundation of the stream of consciousness technique through his novel *Tristan Shandy*. William James also recognized the technique in the 20th century denoting narrative technique of novels based on the mental processes and working of the protagonists. The other novelists who were associated with this technique were Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Samuel Richardson.

William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) used this phrase in order to describe the unbroken or continuous flow of
perceptions, thoughts and feelings within the waking mind. It has also been used to describe a narrative method in modern fiction wherein long introspective passages are included.

The narrator records details of what passes through a character’s awareness.

We get to know about the technique of the stream of consciousness through the words of M.H. Abrams who states:

> Since the 1920’s stream of consciousness is the name applied specifically to a mode of narration that undertake to reproduce, without a narrator’s intervention, the spectrum and continuous flow of character’s mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings and random associations.

(Abrams 299)

This technique focuses exclusively on the mind and within the mind of the protagonists.

**IV:vi Beach Boy:**

This first novel by Vakil is a very tempting one. It has been greatly acclaimed at the international scenario. To quote a few of the remarks:

Salman Rushdie remarked as

A highly original book………sharp, funny and fast.

(http://www.rediffspecial.com)
Leo Colston comments:

"it is a pleasure to return to the Bombay of Midnight Children."

(Colston Timeout, http://www.ciao.co.uk/ardashir_vakil_6714888)

John Updike wrote in the New Yorker the book,

"gives us an India remembered, a land like Nabokove’s Russia, glistening with the draw of early impressions…...a long ode to boyish hunger, and to the rich variety of stuffs that hold it at bay."

(http://www.rediffspecial.com)

It is a magical tale of the coming-of-age of an eight year old Parsi boy, Cyrus Readymoney. Vakil affirms:

*Whatever may be my character’s age, what interests me are relationships and how they work.
I think that aspect will be consistent in my novel.*

(http://timesofindia.indiatime.com)

Cyrus belongs to a privileged Parsi Zoroastrian class of Mumbai who have been largely westernized. This novel presents the Indian life with all its necessary Indian sensibility. The character that he portrays has his distinctive ethnic aspect, which on the other and gives the writer a unique identity of his own.
Commenting on the issue that Vakil deals with, V.L.V.N. Narandra Kumar states:

*Vakil gives expression to the juvenile experiences of a Parsi boy in Bombay whose zest for life is typical of the marginalized community of the Parsis.*

(Narandra Kumar 248)

This novel gives ample scope for the development and mental progress of the protagonist who steadily moves from his childhood to a distinct maturity. This movement helps to develop the character’s mental being as well. He goes through physical as well as spiritual crisis and in the process becomes aware of his self-identity and the larger role that he is supposed to perform in the world at large.

**IV:vi:i  Innocence-A Way of Experience:**

Cyrus grows up in the pulsating Indian metropolis of Bombay. It is in this mundane world infiltrated by western features that Cyrus experiences the growing up pains of adolescence. Cyrus’ passivity or introvert nature makes him stubbornly resist all kinds of socialization. Being totally guided by his senses, he tries out ever trick and trade to avoid ‘the fine web of education’. School does not interest him; and he prefers to follow the dictates of his heart, roams about beaches and other haunts best places for crisp uttapams or cooked hilsa. He enjoys cinemas and the ‘body-warm semi-darkness of cinemas becomes his home’.

This is evident when he says:
I loved the darkness and calm of the theatre, the comfortable seats, the fact that no one could see me and the certainty that for the next three hours I could abandon myself utterly to the twisting plot, the double roles, the comic interludes, the classic dialogue and the thrilling flight sequences at the end. For three hours, I could stop thinking about my poor marks at school, my parents’ fighting, the lies that blighted my existence or the tennis matches I should have won. That’s why I liked going to the pictures on my own. You never had to worry about the person sitting next to you and what they might be doing or thinking. The presence of someone I knew was always an irritating reminder of the real world…………………………………. I was much happier to be in an anonymous audience.

(Vakil 123)

He loved the peaceful dark of the theatres and longed to get lost within it. It gave him flight of fancy and took him to another world, beyond reality. Although there was someone sitting by the side, this anonymous identity took him into an anonymous world.

What he liked most about the cinemas were the actresses with their pink saris and heavy make-up. The sultry atmosphere lulled his senses. Other things that he experienced were the smell of bidies smoke and the crying babies silenced at soft breasts. Cinemas served as hiding places from the real world, a counter world with absolutely no demands.

Cyrus lives in a juvenile world of pleasures and sorrows:
What sustains his existence is fantasy. His fantasy life injects both humour and pathos in Vakil’s portrait.

(http://www.bookpage.com)

He further says:

This world, the world on our doorstep, the world on the street, the world on the hundreds of billboard advertisements around the city was as alien and as repellant as the underworld of rats in the sewers of the city.

(Vakil 52)

Therefore, films, which constitute an illusion, is more than life-sustaining for Cyrus. Narrating a failed attempt of making ball at the theatre, he says:

………there was something in the process of making that ball that I never forgot. An acknowledgement, perhaps, of the futility of human endeavour.

(Vakil 54)

The young mind of Cyrus makes it difficult for Cyrus to comprehend the implications of his own gesture. However, he begins to perceive the dichotomy between reality and the idealized, between factual and the imaginary. The experience that he has at the film shooting of Dev
Anand’s ‘Heera Panna’ is nothing short of a revelation for him. Reality now dawned to him and he says:

Going to see a picture is so much better than all this shooting nonsense. It was the opposite kind of experience.

(Vakil 123)

**IV:vi:ii  Drift towards State of Disintegration:**

Vakil does not merely describe the life or the daily routine of Cyrus. On the other hand, he dwells deep into the social aspects and makes the readers aware of the fact that the society is slowly but surely drifting into a state of disintegration. Cyrus’ part in the society and his growing disorientation in the disintegrating society are beautifully narrated through light episodes.

The inevitable crisis occurs and manifests itself not in the sudden eruption, but in a continuous erosion of his existence. This is presented through an array of personal and domestic episodes. A kind of emotional coldness engulfs his home. His parents are frequently arguing with each other. A sort of aversion creeps in and Cyrus prefers the neighbour’s houses to his own. He has dinner in the neighbourhood and sleeps there. He becomes a part of their lives. Cyrus was a free boarder at the Krishnan’s and often swallowed the insults of Mrs. Krishnan.

He admits:

I considered these insults a fee one had to pay for eating their food, for demanding their friendship, for sleeping in their beds, partaking of their quarrels, sharing their holidays, walking their
dogs, making love to them, even sharing in their dreams. Generosity is often spiked. Hospitality has its limits.

(Vakil 16)

However, Cyrus enjoys and accepts it all. Even the neighbours reluctant benevolence is a blessing for him as he gets here what is deprived of him at home. He looks at his neighbours to seek refuge.

(Vakil 105)

The atmosphere at home appears strange and he feels an alien. He is happy on those rare occasions when his family comes together and he longs for them:

*It was one of those rare occasions when whole family was sitting together round the table.*

(Vakil 93)

**IV:vi:iii  Carefree Life:**

Cyrus is the son of a well to do educated family, whose roots can be traced in the Iranian descent. They presently live by the sea in Juhu, a suburb of Mumbai. He is always away from all cares and concerns and leads a happy carefree life. The fact is actually nobody really cares for him. His father is a ‘globetrotting, unpredictable businessman’ whose presence is rarely found at home. His mother is busy with her own career. Cyrus yearns for their company, care and concern but goes unguided and without any discipline. This aspect of neglect does not merely stop at home but extends to his social life to (in the society). This feeling of
loneliness and neglect troubles him no end but he swallows all insults guiltily as he is busy with his onward journey-the journey of growth and maturity. This feeling of neglect is seen at the very beginning of the novel. Cyrus visits the cinema hall with Mrs. Verma and her children. He innocently states:

*I knew Usha aunty would offer me popcorn and drinks, which I would greedily accept, like the cinema ticket, without having the money to pay for them. But first she would take her time spoiling her children……………… I would have to wait, accompany her out, and accept her eventual offers with a shy shake of the head-as if to pretend that, I was not desperate with hunger.*

(Vakil 04)

Cyrus’ presence or absence was not felt in the house or by his parents. He was as good as a non-entity. He confesses:

*I know the chances were my place would be laid. It happened every other night, either here or at the Varmas. There had been no call from my family. They knew where I was, or my presence hadn’t been missed.*

(Vakil 16)

This feeling of neglect and alienation does not stop here. It extends to his school as well. This aspect of neglect is clearly brought out when
during the question-answer session; the teacher ignored Cyrus’ answer. Experiencing this feeling of neglect, Cyrus records:

*It is five, sir. I (Cyrus) smiled. “Yes, Sir. Five islands.” Mr. Machado (teacher) ignored my (Cyrus’) guess.*  

(Vakil 37)

His school Principal, a sadistic Jesuit, beats him severely and even threatens to expel him from school.

His parents fighting violently in their bedroom which Cyrus witnesses decide to separate from each other. Mother moves into a skyscraper in the metros, and he is left alone in the marvelous home. The stress being too much to bear, the father dies shortly of a massive heart attack in an American hospital in Chicago.

Cyrus, on his trip to old neighbours is acquainted with a Maharani, a divorcee, who has adopted five girls from villages in Rajasthan.

Vakil adopts the western standards while presenting the tale of initiation. He very aptly and accurately portrays teenage emotions, which gives way to adolescent feelings on one hand and the growing awareness of one’s own suppressed sexuality on the other.

Lively youngsters with their violent cultivation of a carefree life are seen on the verge of beaming adults.

Vakil invents the emotionally alternating hot and cold baths into which he dunks his protagonist. This constitutes a tough place of socialization. The life and personality of Cyrus is characterized by dichotomies: sensuality and severity, material abundance and disintegration, security and indifference. He is seen drifting aimlessly in
this wide world helplessly too without the slightest knowledge of what is happening and not in the least way responsible for his actions.

**IV:vi:iv Ethnic Identity:**

Cyrus, the central consciousness, a young boy comes from the Parsi elite of Bombay. The aspect of the ethnic identity of the protagonist occurs frequently and forms a prominent place in the narration.

John J. Macionis defines ethnicity as:

*Ethnicity is a shared cultural heritage. People define themselves-or others-as members of an ethnic category based on having common ancestors, language, or religion that confers a distinctive social identity.*

(Macionis 355)

Lipi Ghosh states the term Ethnicity very aptly. She states:

*Ethnicity is an organizing principle by a group of people in order to differentiate themselves from other groups in terms of race, kinship, language, culture and religion.*

(Ghosh 148)

Asserting one’s ethnic identity is an attempt by the minority community to seek attention and recognition in the host country.

Parsis living in India are mainly found residing on the west coast of the Indian subcontinent. There are the decadents of the Parsis of the ancient province (Iran) who fled their country twelve hundred years ago
to protect themselves and their religion from being Islamized by the invading Arabs in the 7th century.

Vakil also attempts at establishing distinctive ethnic characters, who can boast of an identity of their own.

In *Beach Boy*, the writer employs the first person narration. Cyrus, the protagonist in the novel, is also the narrator and the chief participant in the proceedings. He lives with the status of being an insider. As an insider in the Parsi community, he narrates all about the Parsi customs, cuisine and the westernized social life of the community. Cyrus’ ethnic identity is established at the very beginning. He informs:

*We are Zoroastrians, like the Topiwalas, the Bottle openerwalas, the Batliwalas, the lawyers (or Vakils), the Boxwalas and the Ghaswalas, who are all named after the vocation of their ancestors. We pray at agiarys-temples where the same flame has kept burning from hundreds of years................. we offer our dead to the vultures on the top of Malbar Hill in huge stadium-sized wells called the Tower of Silence. We come from Iran, even though my grandmother hates to admit it. We drink cows’ urine to purify our bodies, wear a sacred thread around our waists and muslin vest with a tiny pocket of wisdom sewn in its breast. People often talk of us as being honest. We built ships and colonies-bagh where poor Parsis can lead a decent existence.*

(Vakil 17-18)
Why do the Parsis so desperately cling to their ethnicity?
This is appropriately stated by VLVV Narandra Kumar, who says:

_Revival of interest in ethnicity, even for Parsis, acts as a survival strategy on an alien soil, the course of which is nostalgia. They cling to their own tradition, customs and language._

(Narandra Kumar 14)

Being a Parsi Vakil’s ‘operative sensibility’ is Zoroastrian religion. It is the tempo of the Parsi life that forges and fuses the themes. Being innovative, Vakil describes the esoteric rituals and the Zoroastrian customs such as the Navjote, the various myths and legends.

The rituals and customs of the Parsis in the novel _Beach Boy_ is presented through the character of Aunt Zenobia.

_Zenobia lived in ...................... A devout Zoroastrian, she said her prayers four times a day … Zenobia’s Gujarati servants wafted urns of burning sandal wood and frankincense around the flat, perfumed smoke which bars the evil spirits from our lives and purifies the soul ..................... looking out at the Parsi Towers of Silence and the vulture......................._

(Vakil 160)

Aunt Zenobia is unhappy about the fact that Cyrus has not had his Navjote ceremony. She reacts sharply to this and makes him recite the Parsi prayers.
Parsi and Westernization:

Parsis although enjoyed a place of prominence during the British raj, acquired a marginal position because of their small number. They were employed as agents, mediators and diplomats by the British. The Parsis looked upon and regarded the English education conferred by the British on the Indians as a blessing.

Westernization, which is an inclusive, complex and multi-layered concept, is seen in every sphere of human activity. It ranges from technology, historiography, and humanitarianism to intellectualism. It was during the colonial era that many changes took place. Even Zoroasterian institution, barring their religion, underwent a tremendous change. Vakil portrays the Parsi society especially from the angle of the wealthy or that of westernization. This aspect of the westernization was also in a way responsible/resulted in the uprooting of the Parsi life from the host country too. They were uprooted from the mainstream community and experienced nothing short of ‘alienation’.

Cyrus’ family lives in a glass house facing the sea. This is highly symbolic, for it suggests the peripheral status that the Parsi community have and further the glass house perhaps seems to suggest the fragile and delicate status of the Parsis that they earned during the colonial period.

India-Bombay-Vakil:

Although Vakil stays in London, his emotional home is in India. He is emotionally immersed in Bombay. The populous and varied metro Bombay, which is his birthplace, haunts him even in the West.
The Kirkus Reviews notes:

*London-based Vakil manages extra ordinary things in this debut as he conveys the sights, smells, and especially the tastes of his native Bombay through the voracious appetites of a movie-mad, sex-crazed, ever-hungry young boy.*

(www.rediff.com)

The erotic Bombay with all its sights and smells, tastes and sounds are brought to the fore by the fine portrayal of Vakil.

Paul Kafka remarks:

*Beach Boy is essentially a sequence of vignettes through which the narrator reveals his playful sensibility and explores his native city, a place that turns out at once familiar and exotic, accessible and unknowable, like Cyrus himself.*

(http://www.boston.com)

Vakil has attempted at exploring the native country. This country is at once familiar and strange, accessible and reachable. In many ways Bombay, the city and Cyrus stand synonymous to each other. Both appear familiar at one hand and unpredictable the next moment. The contrasting picture of the 1970’s is portrayed finely.

Although away from India, Vakil lives and breathes his native land every moment. His heart bleeds to see the deplorable condition and the many vices within the grip of which India is. The social and political
tentacles that has spread out with all its evils, is something that Vakil laments about. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening for which Vakil holds the incapable government responsible.

In an interview with Ziya Saleem, he states;

_It has been 20 years since I came to India. The infrastructure remains the same but there is much more conspicuous consumption than when I was a child. It worries me. The government and business areas are keeping each other happy. However, it is the masses that are being used as pawn in political games. The condition of the masses remains unchanged. Yes, today rich Indians are sending their kids to Swiss holidays but Bombay as a city is unrecognizable. There are multiplexes, skyscrapers. But deep down in the slums where I gone earlier, life remains the same._

(http://www.hinduonnet.com)

Vakil very aptly says that the long period that was away from Bombay did not bring about any remarkable change. Life has definitely changed for the rich but the poor are still neck-deep in the swamp and marshes.

Vakil presents this same reality very authentically. Cyrus portrays the poverty-stricken Bombay, its street-dwellers, squalor and dirt and the roaring population. He describes the city as:

_The buildings were yellowing dilapidated living on the pavement in tents made of cooked dal and_
grilled chapatis for their children. There were families who lined in huge wrought – iron drainage pipes lying abandoned on the roads. There were no jeans, T-shirts and snits in this part of town yellow-and –black taxis and lost of BEST buses, cycles and trucks but very few private cars the seen. Men on bikes who held on to chain at the back of a truck for a free wheeling ride……

(Vakil 53, 54)

Among the various other things that do not escape Vakil’s microscopic eyes are bureaucratic red tapism, height of corruption, unwillingness to work, the Indian railways and offices, and the various levels of mal-practices that literally hamper the all round progress and development of the country. This is clearly reflected through the words of Cyrus’ father whose attempt to get an air ticket for Cyrus’ journey fails. He asserts.

I tried my best; believe me, if there was any way possible. I would have done it. I even asked Pandu to offer him something, which I am dead against doing, but the man is just a stubborn bureaucratic swine.

(Vakil 127)

IV:vi:vii  Autobiographical Element:

Is Cyrus Ardashir? This question looms large in the readers mind.
Set in the early 70’s, this novel is undoubtedly autobiographical. Vakil’s own adolescence does not closely parallel Cyrus’. However, the luxurious details of the story reveal the memory of the writer with all its sights, sounds, taste, touch and smell. Like Cyrus, Vakil too studied at St. Mary’s in Byculla.

Talking about the evident personal touches in the novel, A Ross in his review states:

*Many of the short chapters are obviously semi-autobiographical, and many events read like personal experiences, not fiction.*

(http://www.amazon.co)

Vakil confesses and admits that the novel is personal and autobiographical in parts. The novel opens with the protagonist, Cyrus, watching a film. A whole vista opens up for the readers and they begin to see the world through the eyes of Cyrus, and not Vakil. Similarly, the end of the novel is also different from that of Vakil’s life. Vakil admits to this in an interview with Nonita Kalhra by saying.

*Cyrus’ end is not my story. People close to me found it difficult to accept that end. And a lot of people were offended. Lost of things are not true. The only truth is that memories lie……………..
Cyrus was the Boy I was in the 70’s.*


**IV:vi:viii  Order versus Disorder:**
A sharp contrast is drawn between Minoo, Cyrus’ father and Mr. Krishnan, their Malayali neighbour. Minoo is a rich aristocratic person; whereas Mr. Krishnan is his simple, industrious counterpart. However, Minoo’s life is not organized and in a scramble. The quality of punctuality is missing from his life, which makes him miss his flights and reach late at marriages and other socials.

Appreciating the order and discipline of Mr. Krishnan and his family, Cyrus records in his diary:

*The Krishnan’s existence is happily circumscribed. I liked the routine in their lives-the order it offers, as compared to the chaotic freedoms of my own home.*

(Vakil 31)

When Cyrus is all alone, he unlocks his heart to himself. His dreams and fantasize are not sufficient to sustain him. For long, he strives to cling to something emotionally and this results in his attachment with the Krishnans.

Matter begins to move away from the right track when Cyrus’ father begins an affair with an airhostess. In vengeance, his mother starts a liaison with a prosperous man. Betrayal from both sides brings to an abrupt end a ten-year successful marriage. Both parents separate which takes its toll on the young mind of Cyrus. He remarks:

*My life too had been transformed. My parents had split up.*

(Vakil 112)
The element of nostalgia creeps in repeatedly. The Krishnans on the other hand continue to be bond together by love and concern for each other. Cyrus craves for love, affection, and this he receives from the Krishnans family.

**IV:vi:ix Satisfying Hunger:**

Food, one of the necessities of life forms a prominent theme in the novel. There is a lot of evocative description of food, which creates an almost irresistible impulse for Indian food. He says:

*If I went to the Krishnans’ at twelve, the Vermas’ at one-thirty and the Maharanis’ at two-thirty, I could manage to have a bite at three houses*  
*.............................. mutton korma, thick gravy full of cardamom, poppy seeds, tender uttapams, cheese toasts with tomato and garlic, shriveled baby brinjals that look like mice, aloo parathas flaky with ghee, mint chutney, cool milky curds.*

(Vakil 114)

Cyrus’ preoccupation with food goes on to take metaphoric dimensions. It appears that he is trying to take in all the experimental delicacies that the world has to offer him visual, emotional, musical, athletic, sexual and culinary. Certain feasts fulfill expectations; others turn out to be better in anticipation than in attainment.

**IV:vii Multiculturalism:**

Multiculturalism is a set of beliefs and practices in association with which a group of people understand themselves and the world at large. This also helps in organizing individual and collective lives.
Multiculturalism helps as a useful tool and device to avert and dislodge antagonism brewing inside minority cultures. The term is better comprehended by using terms such as plural societies, cosmopolitan, multiethnic and polytechnic societies. The term also refers to all the facts related to cultural diversity.

Cultural diversity forms one of India’s most important attributes. It is within the borders of this cultural diversity that the entire Indian globe is found.

Vakil explicitly portrays the Multicultural perspective of the Indian society, which cherishes the cultural diversity. It encounters a creative inter-cultural dialogue with its moral visions representing and respecting its members’ rights to their culture. It also increases their range of choices and helps to cultivate their power of self-criticism, self-determination, imaginative, moral and intellectual power and sympathy. All this go a long way in the development of a person’s well-being.

Describing and portraying Bombay as a multicultural city, Vakil says:

*There were Krishnans from Kerla, the Vermas from Delhi, the Hussains from Agra, the Ericssons from Sweden, the Maharani from Bhatnagar, the film star from Poona, the Sausage dogs from Germany, the one-eyed Cocktoos from Australia, the red-plumped parrots from Africa, and us, the Parsi Bawas from Bombay.*

(Vakil 17)

In addition to this, Vakil mentions various ethno-religious groups. While focusing on the diversity of India, Vakil’s mind goes back to Rajasthan, a state in India. He states:
They spoke in Marwari, a language of Rajasthan that I couldn’t understand.

(Vakil 85)

Describing the Bhaiya at the instance of eating bhel, he writes:

Bhaiyas come from a particular caste of traders in Utter Pradesh. They dress in kurta and dhotis and often have distinctive twirled moustache.

(Vakil 110)

For him Krishnans who hail from Kerala are:

Everyone had the same fig-coloured skin as the Krishnans. Most of them wore shirts and lungis folded double and tucked up just above the knee.

(Vakil 137)

IV:viii  Language:

The advent of English in India is surely a historical accident. It was the language of the rulers and it exercised a deep impact and influence on the Indian psyche. Gradually English became a medium and instrument of intellectual discussion and creative expression. Over the years, the language underwent a remarkable change, which distinguished it from the other varities. The changes came about mainly due to the intense interaction of English with other modern Indian languages at linguistic levels. English is now ingrained in the fabric of the Indian sensibility and thought process. Today’s Indian society is largely a multilingual society
where English is placed as the second or third language. This has definitely affected and influenced the linguistic behaviour of its users. The speech and writings of the Indians clearly exhibit a stamp of the English.

The usage of language is at many levels. It transmits the culture, tradition, norms, and values of its users. In addition to this, it also communicates the experiences and expectations of its users. Every experience of a person is unique in it and is described in terms of situation, context, topic, locale and participant-all of which are unique to every culture and society.

**IV:ix Bilingualism:**

A hybrid variety of experience and the expression that it results is generated by bilingualism. A flavour of both the cultures to a certain extent is found. The interaction between the cultures and languages in contact play a significant role in modification of languages. The culture of the native language is definitely dominant and it influences the secondary language. The other language in turn also influences the native culture and language through its users. This leads to a hybridity of two languages and culture.

A linguistic-cultural landscape is provided by tradition. It is here that a work of art is produced, understood and appreciated.

When we move away from language and its tradition and in its place use a different language, a hybridized literature results. In view of the Indian scenario, this hybridized literature can be termed as the ‘Indian English Literature’.

Any language is vitally and intimately related to the basics of its ‘natives’, the native culture, the native tradition and so on. It is a common belief that the natives have a common understanding and an intuitive
sense regarding the appropriateness and feasibility of that language functions.

If the language is employed by a non-native with an improper understanding and a lack of appropriateness, there surfaces a rift, a clash, or a gap. It is very essential that this rift has to be either resolved or at least bridged up. This bridging of the ‘gap’ can be done through various means such as lexical borrowings, syntactic adjustments and semantic additions or change.

The present writer, Ardashir Vakil is an expatriate Indian, writing in English. He uses the medium of English to express his native culture with its varied experiences. All the above-mentioned methods are something that he resolves to. Eventually, this process leads to the ‘Indianization of English’.

Vakil’s intentions are fulfilled by employing various aspects of the lexico-semantic device, words from the native language is also used liberally. In addition to this code-mixing, translations from Indian idioms, translations from mother-tongue expressions, collocation and usage are all effectively employed.

We are well aware of the fact that Indian English writers of the first generation also used word/vocabulary from their mother tongue. Raja Rao has provided an appendix of around 60 pages to his novel Kantapura, wherein he explains words from is mother tongue. This is done to help the non-native readers to comprehend a word; it is meaning and cultural implication.

Ardashir Vakil is a diasporic writer who does not provide information as per the above stated. This poses a danger regarding the non-comprehensibility of a non-native reader. Vakil although aware of the fact tries to universalize the local Hindi/regional words during this
time of globalization. This method also increases the suspense and curiosity within the readers.

A close study of Vakil helps to trace some of the means that he employs to universalize the regional dialect.

**IV:ix:i  Use of Hindi Words:**

Some of the Hindi words Vakil uses are listed below:

- Sambhar, chutney, thalis, chapattis, rotis, dal,
- dhobis, goonda, paan, chuna, kholi, bhat,
- badmash, bhel puriwallah, bhajias, bhel, tikha,
- baqwaas, laathis, khaki, musti, chai, pallu,
- baccha, sahib, chowkidar, etc.

**IV:ix:ii  Code Mixing and Code Switching:**

Vakil very effectively and efficiently switches on from one language to another. He quickly moves from English to his mother tongue and back from mother tongue to English—all this depending upon the context of the situation, the topic of the discourse, the relationship between the speaker and listener and so on. It often results in an inability to convey their views or feelings.

What we notice in the professional environment is that specialization on English is often acquired; however, the everyday mother-tongue discourse is often interspersed heavily with terms and expressions borrowed from English. It is the case vice versa. When a discourse is being carried out in English which deals with daily life, Hindi/regional language or the mother tongue expressions are often interpolated in the English sentence. In this way, they might completely switch over from one code to another (called code switching).
Words or phrases might be borrowed from another code and used in between the code being used. This is called code mixing. The former is largely used in oral communication; whereas a lot of the latter is used in written communication.

Some of the examples of code mixing and code switching in Beach Boy communicating similar ideas are:

- **Aao beti, aajao idher.** (02)
- **Prem Chopra aya re……..dekho re prem Chopra………..villain number one sala!** (03)
- **Arre, Sharmila! tum idher?** (03)
- ‘Chulo bhai, jaldi karo na, film start hone wala hai’, I called out. (06)
- **That’s what you wanted, na, Avnish?** (07)
- **Sethi Sahb ne kaha hai, pukka, he will get the tickets for next Friday’s show.** (07)
- **Aaii aaii yo Amma. Are we having uttam today?** (15)
- **Hurry, up, bhaiya. I want three bhels and four sevpuris, two fo them tikha and one mild………………. It must be my turn. I told you my order, no?** (111)
- **Hum do, hamare do.** (124)
- **Chaaaiiiii, chaaaiiiiiiiyyyyya, chaaaiiiii, chaaaiiiiiiiyyyyya! Samosaay garaam, garaaaaam samosaay!(131)
- **Stop your buk-buk yaar.** (170)

IV:ix:iii Translations from common mother-tongue expressions and Indian idioms:
While rendering thoughts, feelings, emotions, ideas, deep-rooted Indian psyche, and the socio-cultural ethos into English, we need equivalent terms to aptly express them.

An idiom is a device used for expression. At times, it stands to be irrational and even grammatically wrong. Idioms as a language are peculiar to people or a particular district, community or class. The expressions that are therefore used either are peculiar grammatically or may have a meaning not derived from the con-joined meaning of its elements. It is also used to express any culture related ideas.

To quote some examples from the *Beach Boy* are:

- *I said in a sugary voice.* (33)
- *The vacant stroller eating air, the lovers along the beaches, the vendors turning up their gas lamps and primping their snacks.* (50)
- *I’m begging you, sir. Don’t beat me.* (88)
- *I could tell they loved hearing these stories again.* (142)

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**IV:x  ONE DAY:**

The novel *One Day* was published in 2003, after a gap of 5 years, after the publication of his first novel *Beach Boy*. Talking about the role of a writer and the concerns, he underwent during the period after his first novel to the penning down of his second novel, he states:

*A writer is like filter. The world has to go through you. They are your recipients. I have set high standards for myself. As far as this book is concerned, the theme was always there since ‘Beach Boy’. The story was always there but it*
has been much harder to write. I am more confident writer now. I know what I can handle.

(http://www.thehindu.com)

One Day is an account of grown up people, who time and again exhibit adolescent traits. One thing noteworthy is that, this novel does not mention Parsi characters like the first novel Beach Boy.

The writer himself in the following words brings out the difference between the two novels very effectively. He states:

Beach Boy was lighter although it too had painful passages, things pass much more quickly there. But some thing here (One Day) are more universal than Beach Boy.

(www.rediffspecial.com)

IV:x:i Theme of the Novel:

One Day narrates a day in the lives of the chief characters Ben and Priya. The entire novel spans a period of just 24 hours. The narration is covered in 24 chapters and we get a peep into the material lives of an ordinary couple, the product of mixed-marriage. They are all set to celebrate the birthday of their only son.

The readers are taken with great precision on a journey filled with compassion and hope into the heart of this marriage and its crisis; the result of which are devastating. Their marriage is falling apart, nothing seems to go the right way and the rift between them only keeps increasing day after day. Somehow, the norms of the society and their only son keep them together. This story revolves round the basic triangle of humanity-
man, woman and child. Every element of joy and sorrow, tension and trauma, sympathy and compassion all find its way in the novel.

The novel deals with and meditates upon the relationship of an Oxford couple and their fractured marriage.

The other issues dealt with are the mixed race couple, middle class life, multiculturalism and its effects and the diasporic concerns.

It is worthwhile to look at the various reviews to understand why this novel has been critically acclaimed.

_The Guardian_ in its review writes about _One Day_ as:

_A hilarious and keenly observed comedy of North London manners._

(www.rediffspecial.com)

_The Observer_ sums the review as:

_An ironic master piece._

(www.rediffspecial.com)

**IV:** ii  **Middle Class:**

_One Day_ looks into the middle class lives of Ben and Priya. The trials, tribulations and temptations faced by a middle class couple are very deftly presented. Although Ben and Priya are a modern middle class, North London couple, theirs is a sad story filled with worries and tensions. They lead a normal life to outsiders. The novel opens with Ben and Priya attending a party. The details of the party are stated in the following way.

_Quarter past midnight, 15th March, 1999. They had returned from a dinner party. A party,
thought Ben, where once again so much time, too much time, had been spent talking about the problems of getting one’s child into the right primary school.

(Vakil 01)

Middle class marital life goes into a series of adjustments, day-to-day accounting, compromises and a nagging sense of guilt. Priya contemplates this feeling of guilt.

............................ While away a half-hour in her pyjamas—should she feel guilty? She didn’t, or thought she didn’t. Guilt was an emotion peculiarly suited to the English middle classes.

(Vakil 94)

This feeling of guilt is something that one cannot do away with. It keeps haunting the person repeatedly.

IV:x:iii Autobiographical Element:

A close analysis of the book throws light on the fact that the writer has thrown himself into bits and pieces in here. The writer’s traits are found in a number of characters.

To state a few examples:

Ben like Vakil is a schoolteacher. Priya like Vakil shares the good fortune of being born in Mumbai and having spent a number of growing years in India before moving to England. Arun Sengupta, again, like Vakil is an Indian writer in English, ‘a well-known member of the new breed who kept getting short listed for awards’ (Vakil’s Beach Boy won
the Betty Trask award and was short listed for the Whitbread first novel award). Often Sengupta stands to represent any other Indian writer in English or could even represent a fusion of many such writers. Even Jenah, who is writing a book on self-gratification, could be the real Vakil.

In an interview to *The Hindu*, Vakil confesses:

*Since I am a teacher, I have drawn quite a lot of my real life experiences for this book.*

*(The Hindu, 24th April, 2003)*

He admits to have drawn from his real life. It is this personal touch, which makes the narrative more lifelike and authentic. Vakil doesn’t appear to be writing of something that is away or detached from him. He pours the aspects of his personal life into his characters.

Who can better comprehend teachers than Vakil, born in Bombay and presently teaching in London where he is well settled with his wife and kids.

Vakil contemplates and complains about the condition of the teachers in India. Taking a sympathetic stance towards the economic status of the teachers, Vakil states:

*The status of teachers is still low in India. It is not always possible to earn a good living simply as a teacher.*

*(The Hindu, 24th April, 2003)*

**IV:x:iv  Diaspora:**

This term refers to a movement or migration (by force or choice) away from one’s homeland into a new land. The term ‘Diaspora’ traces
back its origin from a Greek term, which is used to refer to any people, or ethnic population who are forced or induced to leave their traditional homeland. Diaspora talks about the dispersal of such people and the ensuing developments in their culture, the questions regarding the idea of ‘home’ and ‘nation’.

Nostalgia, schizophrenia and nagging sense of guilt are often the preoccupations of the Diaspora; and they seek to locate themselves in the new land, in new cultures. People seek to negotiate the cultural space of the countries adopted. The people in Diaspora carry with them the ambiguous status of being both an ambassador and a refugee. As an ambassador, it requires them to project their culture and the ability to enhance its understanding, and as a refugee they relate more positively to the host country and seek protection there. The diasporic community being varied attempts at homogenization.

Ardashir Vakil is a part of this varied and complex Indian Diaspora, and exhibits the typical diasporic features of mobility and adjustability.

Some of the prominent diasporic features found in the writings of Ardashir Vakil are-nostalgia, displacement, identity crisis, multiculturalism, stigma of alienation and cross fertilization of ideas.

The Diasporas try to re-create homeland in the host land as per their needs. This migratory movement is responsible for creating a new person whose mental set up works with dual epistemologies of the perception of a destroyed source of comfort and stability.

Dr. Annie John states:

_The immigrant finds an aspect of ‘doubleness with in self’. He now, as a part of the expatriation act, belongs to two homes, communities, cultures,_.

and alternative realities. The immigrant’s movement is from one country to the other, from one space to another and from one time to another. What he supposed to do is to strike the right cord and maintain equilibrium between the two contrasting forces that has to encounter time to time ........... However, he does not fully realize that this act of belonging results not out of force but has to be willed for.

(Annie John 22)

The status of a disporic person is well portrayed by Salman Rushdie. In his Imaginary Homelands, he states:

_It may be that writes in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge-which gives rise to profound uncertainties-that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind._

(Rushdie 10)
The Diasporic person is the one with a double identity. Thus, dual personality works at different levels. Admitting the same Vakil justifies this aspect of the double identity in an interview in *The Hindu*.

He says:

*I am happily divided. I like the ideas of half and half. I am somewhat an orientalist, somewhat a Londoner.*

(The Hindu, 24th April, 2003)

These same diasporic features are found in the characters of Vakil. Priya and Farida go on surviving on the same ideas. For Priya London is her home. She says:

*It was the first time I truly realized that India was no longer my home. I felt so empty because I hadn’t fixed myself here either. I had no sense that I wanted to stay here, although I was enjoying my life in London. But, yes, after that time, and you wrote me such a beautiful letter about it, I began to think not of English, but of this city as my home, and I also began to think of parts of it as mine, my places my place.*

(Vakil 52)

Priya keeps shutting mentally between the two homes; she is torn down between the idea of two countries, two lands and two homes. Attempting to assimilate in the adopted land, Priya is also haunted by the memories of her motherland (India). Repeatedly she lives in the past and
harps on memories for the same. She goes back to her homeland in Delhi and visits different locations in the city.

Priya was haunted by various places of her motherland. Her mother’s small hometown in Poona, her boarding school, life in Kashmir, the Darjeeling tea, all these places and events come back to her through memory. In London, Priya goes nostalgic and utter:

*How far away I have moved from my roots.*

(Vakil 221)

Farida, Whaka’s teacher is equally nostalgic. She was born in a Muslim Hospital in South Bombay. She is well aware of the fact that India is her past and she has severed her relationship with India for all practical purposes. Still many events send her down the memory lane and she takes a nostalgic journey to her motherland. For her it is the sweet memories of her childhood and her motherland, which is a source of sustenance, support and survival. Farida’s survival in the present is based on her memories of the past. Her memories take her back to her school days; she visualizes herself in front of a mirror as a minor Bombay girl, dancing with her pigtails hopping with delight. She imagines her Abba and Ammi standing beside her in their traditional clothes, looking at her with feeling of proud.

An urge to live into the past surfaces:

*Could she ever experience that uncaged feeling again if they weren’t there to catch her? A tear pricked the corner of her right eye. She wiped it away and carried on.*

(Vakil 137)
In spite of all the memories, Farida is aware of the fact that reality is different from the memories, and she lives up to the present by making adjustment in the host land.

Creating one’s motherland in the host land on the foundation of nostalgia is a diasporic tendency. Although the character harps on his memories to get back to his native land which is very distant, these memories are none the less real.

Priya, a BBC broadcaster remembers the sight and scenes back home (India). No doubt, things have changed, but for her the memories synonymously stand for reality. She recalls:

*In a small villages in India, a group huddled round a portable transistor was listening to the news in Hindi or Urdu, spoken by someone who, at the end of their working day.*

(Vakil 125)

The people in diaspora are equally concerned about the problems prevailing in their homeland. Priya is aware of the slow growth and progress of India and the fact that the nation is in the grip of varied problems, which hamper her growth. She is not ignorant of the high-level problems like terrorism in Kashmir, red tapism in beauracracy and unemployment. These problems arouse her concern for her motherland but she finds herself helpless.

**IV:xi  Multiculturalism:**

Term such as plural societies, cosmopolitan societies, multiethnic and poly-ethnic societies all contribute towards comprehending the term ‘multiculturalism’. Multiculturalism aims at the cultural diversity and the
culturally embedded difference. The multicultural perspectives cherish this diversity. A creative dialogue is also encouraged between the different cultures and their moral vision, thereby respecting its member’s rights and their culture.

London being a multicultural city, has been a hub of the people from different ethnic groups, and cultures from all over the world residing peacefully. These groups believing that all citizens are equal ensure their identities.

*One Day* attempts to do this for the present-day multicultural London. This novel presents all the chief conceit, the insistence that a single day in one’s life can be all revealing and that you can tell the story of an individual or peep into the affairs of a family and look at what is happening within a short span of 24 hours. This one day proves and shows that life is not always, as it appears from outside and this 24 hours could also be very crucial for a person.

**IV:xii  Marriage:**

Marriage is a social institution and more or less universal. Marriage imposes certain rights, duties and even restrictions upon both the husband and wife. The institution of marriage requires both partners to support each other. The bond of marriage brings two individuals together and there develops intense feelings of love and affection towards each other. A companionship develops between the two, which is strong thread by strong emotions. In addition to this intellectual co-operation also develops between them. This beautiful union between man and woman becomes a marital bond, but this requires the final approval and sanction of the society.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defines marriage as:
Marriage is an interpersonal relationship with governmental, social, or religious recognition, usually intimate and sexual, and often created as a contract, or through civil process.

(www.wikipedia.com)

John Macionis defines it as:

*An legally sanctioned relationship usually involving economic co-operation as well as sexual activity and childbearing, that people expect to be enduring.*

(Macionis 462)

The institution of marriage is a social institution, which requires not only the social approval but also religious sanction. Both the man and woman concerned is bond to perform some duties with certain rights involved. The function of marriage does not merely stop here. It also involves childbearing and child rearing; and the children born only strengthen this bond. The family now stands on the foundation of love and sacrifice and continue to stay together through thick and thin-joy and sorrow, health and sickness, pleasure and pain and so on.

However, not all this happens all the time. Sometimes lack of understanding brings about a lack of compatibility between the partners. To have a successful marriage and keep it going both partners has to keep working at the marriage wheels. It takes two to make it successful with all the relentless efforts. A successful marriage is like a good recipe, the chief ingredients of which are love, commitment, understanding care, concern and togetherness.
A happy married life calls for constant commitment and concern for each other. However, when there is a crisis in the marriage, the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness creeps in and couples look up to divorce as the only alternative.

Ben and Priya’s marriage is a cross-cultural marriage. It is a mixed marriage. The term ‘Mixed marriage’ originated in the Catholic Church, where it refers to a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic.

The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy defines mixed marriage as:

Marriage between two people who come from different cultural, national, racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.

(http://www.bartlyby.com)

Ben is a Londoner and Priya is from India. They are probably a mismatched couple right from the beginning. There is a crisis in their eight-year-old marriage. The day presented in the novel happens to be the third birthday of their son, Whaka, and the readers learns more about the crisis and turmoil that has affected their marriage.

W.W. Adam refers to psychiatric expert Dr. Baucom, who explains:

When there is a crisis in a marriage, ......................... No marriage crisis appears overnight. Rather, the crisis slowly builds over time, with one person often caught completely off
guard, and the other claiming that he or she is
tired of trying and trying, with no change.

(http://www.savethemarriage.com)

Both, Ben and Priya stand on the threshold of a tremulous marriage. They forget that marriage is teamwork and a conquest, which finally leads to fulfillment and self-discovery.

Vakil using a good deal of subtlety and intelligence explores these themes and ideas. The physical aspect plays a very important role in Priya’s life and she reads the world through her body; whereas Ben searches for coherence in outward signs. They represent those couples who lack a conversation that each conducts in a different language.

The rift between Ben and Priya is created at various levels and due to various reasons-cultural and personal differences, public school education, cautious Ben, spontaneous ambitious Indian Priya—all these aspects contribute towards their rift. All these aspects are used to vilify and condemn each other. The overt wound, which turns out somewhat unsurprisingly is sexual infidelity. This is something, which directly attacks faith and trust. This is what Vakil unflinchingly explores to the core. However, ultimately the real and paradoxical enemy of happiness is none other than the challenge of intimacy itself.

Ardashir Vakil takes the readers down a literary journey with great compassion. With accurate precision, which is more the less devastation he dwells deep into the heart of this marriage and its crisis. It also throws light on the fact that two people who love each other can also unknowingly succeed in hurting each other. Vakil peeps just into a single day into the lives of the characters and successfully brings to the fore several factors that have gone on to stretch this marriage, beyond all proportion, to the breaking point.
Various factors that contribute towards the same are-the instinctive racism of Ben’s parents, Priya’s ineptitude in domestic affairs, Ben’s standstill career, economic worries and concerns.

There is another stark truth, which haunts them both. Priya has undermined her husband in the most fundamental way that a woman can. Ben is frustrated and this frustration goes on to take a metaphysical stance. He can rightly be considered to be an unsuccessful recipe writer with failed recipes. He thought material relationship to be similar to making a recipe. However, the recipe of his marriage turned out to be distasteful and a failure too.

**IV:x:xiii  Love and Hate in Marriage:**

Ben and Priya are both disappointed with each other and with themselves too. They refuse that they both are equally responsible for their failed marriage. Theme of conjugal relationship is a universal theme, which is not only very challenging but also makes readers to think about the very concept of love and hate in a marriage.

It is difficult for many people to acknowledge the fact, which is, as he says:

*But sometimes we hate the people we love.*

(http://www.rediffspecial.com)

He further states:

*Love and hate are very close. Experiencing both isn’t necessarily bad.*

(http://www.rediffspecial.com)
What stands out prominently and what is significant is how couples forge an understanding on the foundation of which new relationships can be built. Marriage being a union of opposites:

*Some people can survive well through love and hate.*

(http://www.rediffspecial.com)

**IV:x:iv Regeneration:**

Marriage is a challenge, the conquest of which depends upon teamwork and mutual fulfillment. Ben and Priya’s marriage, which is on the verge of a break up, do not realize the above.

Ben plays tennis, the *inner game of tennis*. There are insights into what has gone wrong with his game. There is a need to understand what has gone wrong and how they have reached to the point of mutual unhappiness and mistrust.

The game of tennis suggests Ben with solutions:

> Each game is composed of two parts, an outer game and an inner game. The outer game is played against external opponent to overcome obstacles, and to reach an external goal. *Mastering this game is the subject of many books offering instructions on how to swing a racket …………. to achieve the best results. But for some reason most of us find these instructions easier that to excuse.*

(Vakil 02)
Sarcasm comes in when we notice Ben becoming more and more concerned with his tennis strokes than the strokes of self-love resorted to by his wife, at midnight, within the confines of their bedroom. This naturally sets the tone for frustration.

However, life does not stop here. It has to be continued and not only accepted but also moulded according to one’s expertise.

Vakil refers to the *Bhagwad Gita* and Arjun (Whaka), which connects to the idea of the karma. Man’s life on this earth goes on in fulfilling the task designated to him by destiny and this he is supposed to complete to the best of his capacity and ability.

*Bhagwad Gita* and Arjun seek metaphorical meanings of duty, fulfillment, honesty, loyalty and priority.

Vakil’s recipes and the prerequisites for a happy life depend upon the role played according to one’s capacity and mutual understanding. Further, it is the ‘middle’-that is the middle way or a moderation that prevents one from frustration and separation.

Priya says:

> ‘Sometimes’, she said, ‘we behave as if there are two columns: “Right” and “Wrong”, “fault” and “faultless” …………… What is in the middle? …………… The space between right and wrong.

(Vakil 288)

Ben accepts the middle way and feels that all the clouds of doubt and suspicion were cleared with the midway understanding and adjustment.

Priya realizes:
Her mind had been pricked by a new thought.
The middle way. All her life she had shunned the idea. It reeked of mediocrity.

(Vakil 190)

A successful marriage does not merely depend on finding the right mate. It is essential to be a good mate as well. It requires moving beyond the self and loving everything around you. Loving and accepting one’s partner, as is very significant aspect.

Love that sound. The way it rips at the glass, tears at the sill, sucking up stains and drenching the moaning sorrows of London sleepers. Love the sound of raindrop. Love the sound of people sleeping……………. the sad yesterday and the may be tomorrow.

(Vakil 292)

IV:xv  Conclusion:

Vakil very successfully presents the juvenal world and the juvenal problems associated with it. He finely portrays an authentic portrayal of the society drifting towards disorientation and disintegration.

The Parsis are very particular about their race and its ethnicity from time immemorial. Like all Parsi writers, Vakil also asserts the ethnic identity of his community. Being a diasporic writer, he presents all the diasporic elements typical. Although, he is in diaspora, Vakil is attached to his native land, India emotionally and spiritually.
Presently, he is away from India, however, his microscopic eyes delve deep into the Indian psyche and he portrays India in all her fineness with all her sense/sensibility, emotions/intellectuality, vices/wises, pains/pleasures and the like. He has the best of both the worlds and the multiculturalism of the west literally lures him. Well settled in the West and unlike other Parsis, Vakil tries to assert his multicultural identity too.

Vakil’s power of determination, intellectual prowess and critical outlook makes his works worth pondering. We find a lot of personal touch and his writings are not void of autobiographical (features) elements. Marriage as a social institution in given priority by Vakil and is the foundation on which a community and society rests. Vakil also believes in the aspect of the regeneration. Failures occur but that should be looked upon as a sure step towards regeneration and revitalization.
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