

# **'Mourning over the Past Is Negotiable If Today Be Sweet': New Diasporic Consciousness in Thrity Umrigar's *If Today Be Sweet***

**Bhanupriya Rohila**

Ah, fill the Cup: — what boots it to repeat  
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:  
Unborn Tomorrow and dead Yesterday,  
Why fret about them if Today be Sweet!

-OMAR KHAYYĀM

Indian Diasporic Literature has evolved significantly in the last few decades. Since the inception of the term 'diaspora', there have been radical changes in the semantics of the phenomenon till date. Dislocation remains at the core of the concept of diaspora and generically diaspora is the dispersal of people away from their homelands. In its generic form, diaspora meant a traumatic displacement which often was followed by a troublesome relationship with the host society in the new country or the country of the settlement and an acute longing for return to their homeland loomed large among the diasporic communities that had a collective memory or a group consciousness. With a departure from its classical meaning<sup>1</sup>, William Safran in 1980 used the term inclusively for 'expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities tout court' (83). Since, dislocation of people in most of the countries occurred due to colonialism, postcolonial studies consider the diasporic discourse as an important area of inquiry. Thus, Diaspora Studies has been a significant aspect of postcolonial discourse.

In order to situate the Indian diasporic discourse in the postcolonial context, it is important to understand the meaning of Postcolonialism. It is a multidimensional phenomenon and has been quite ambiguous in its meaning yet in common parlance, as an academic discipline, it analyses the consequences of colonialism and also presents a mode of cultural reception and presentation. Moreover, colonialism existed in different forms and shapes in different countries therefore, postcolonialism also has different connotations and interpretations for different countries. It, rather than a mere historical event, has become a 'reading practice' and a 'value' system.

The history of Indian diaspora, which is the second largest diaspora community of the world, is believed to have begun during colonialism when Indians were sent out of the country as the 'indentured labourers' for tropical plantation forcibly or deceptively. Nonetheless, even after the end of the Empire, most of those labourers refused to return and settled permanently in the countries they were taken to. Colonization enabled Indians to move to the European countries though Indians were looked down upon by them. England was the first choice of the Indian migrants until the Second World War but as the legacy of supremacy passed on to the US, the flow of Indians turned towards America and Canada. The myths of 'American dreams' created the image of America as the 'land of opportunities', 'the land of promises' and 'the land of reinvention' which suddenly became a desired destination for the whole world.

Although, like many other countries, America too has been a 'once colonized country', yet it is not called a postcolonial country since it is not a Third World Country. Thus, it would be an injustice to confine the term 'postcolonial' in the spatial-temporal boundaries. However, the postcolonial discourse evidently takes place within the binaries of First World Country and Third World Country; Mainstream and marginality; majority and minority; and Imperialism and Subalternism. Apparently the term "postcolonial" is related to the Third World countries that gained independence after the Second World War. Moreover, despite their freedom, their representations are still affected with their colonial past and the existence of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism still can be felt in the First World countries. Thus, the literature produced by the Third World diasporic writers is often infused with their struggle to explore and form their identities in the First World countries and their experiences which along with their diasporic consciousness are greatly influenced with their postcolonial identities.

However, as Ella Shohat in an article states that the term postcolonial also refers to "the Third World Diasporic circumstances of the last four decades- from forced exile to "voluntary" immigration- within First World metropolises" (102), it is true that with the changing time and pattern the Third World diasporic people in the First World countries especially in England and America now are held as academically and professionally successful people. Globalization and transnationalism have also played their role in this paradigm shift. In Indian context, the migration of people to America has increasingly become a symbol of their socio-economic upliftment. Unlike the old traumatic diaspora, the new diaspora are educated and migrate willingly. As a rudimentary concept, diasporic people struggle with nostalgia, identity crisis, uprootedness, longing for return to their homeland, alienation, marginalization and discrimination. However, for the new Indian diaspora, such experiences are not so painful or acute though they struggle with all this to a good extent. This new diasporic consciousness can evidently be perceived in the new diasporic narratives. The new diaspora is dominant and advanced whereas the old ones were ignorant and were forced and exiled. Their easy access to their homeland (in terms of physical and virtual) and their success and upliftment minimizes the mourning of departure from their homeland. The modern diaspora throughout the world has been facilitated by the scientific advancement in transportation and communication. The role of internet has increased drastically in the global era.

The concepts of 'home' and 'homeland', the much ambiguous notions with varied meanings implied to them by scholars, have also been changed for the new diasporic communities. Unlike old Indian diaspora, now there is no 'permanent displacement' and due to this temporariness of distance and technological advancement one need not carry a collection of memory within. Semantically, home is a connection between a person and his origin. It, "as an *idea*, stands for shelter, stability, security, and comfort ... [and] to be 'at home' is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves" (McLeod 210). For diasporic people home, a desired place with a hope to return, is an abstract entity which does not exist anywhere. It's a 'virtual' place with a history and culture. It is a 'mental construct' and every individual constructs it differently from the other on the basis of the collective memory

and personal experiences. It is a place that is "temporary and movable" and can be "built, rebuilt and carried in memory and by acts of imagination" (Naficy 6).

The diasporic narratives portray their characters being nostalgic or longing for the lost home. 'Nostalgia' which is closely associated with memory, is a "sentiment of loss and displacement" (Boym 7). Nostalgia refers to the temporal aspect of the real or unreal past or present and in order to escape from the discontent generated by present condition, it constructs an alternative historical reality using the images (which are a part of memory) from past. Unlike the vivid images and moments of memories, nostalgia is rather an idealized form of past which is always elusive and makes the past seem pleasant. Their physical return to the geographical place of home cannot fulfil their desire for the lost home which is an idealized place.

Diasporic writers too undergo such experiences but their experiences vary due to certain factors. Among the new Indian diasporic writers, Thrity Umrigar, a recently emerged Indian American novelist, has gained much critical attention throughout the world. She debuted in 2001 and now is placed among the writers like Rohinton Mistry, Bapsi Sidhwa, Jhumpa Lahiri and other diasporic writers. Umrigar was born in Bombay in a middle-class Parsi family. In order to earn higher degree from US, she left India at the age of twenty one and later settled there permanently and now she calls it her 'home'. Parsis who are a cultural minority immigrated to India a thousand years ago as refugee. Therefore, after her migration to America, she is a doubly displaced diaspora.

Being a diaspora herself, Thrity Umrigar takes up the issues of the diasporic identity and consciousness, and the related psychological concerns in her diasporic narratives. Though all her fictional texts have immigrants and diasporic people but the novel *If Today Be Sweet* stands exclusively as a diasporic text. In this novel she intricately portrays the diasporic consciousness. Thrity purports to underscore a few aspects of migration through this novel.

The novel *If Today Be Sweet* is based on the diasporic experiences of its protagonist Tehmina, a widow and her son Sorab who lives in Ohio, America. The novel portrays her first visit to America after her husband Rustom's death. Prior to this, she had been to America as a sojourner but now she is to decide whether to live in India or in America. The choice between the 'homeland' where there is no one to look after her in her old age and the 'foreign land' where her son along with his family lives, becomes a mental strife. Tehmina, who is accustomed to the Indian or precisely Bombay way of living, finds the American ways peculiar and due to her own inability to assimilate there she faces estrangement. Living in America, she craves for India as she never feels 'at home' in Ohio. Sorab lives an adequately luxurious life with his American wife Susan and their son Cavas. Though, Tehmina and Susan try to adapt each other's ways but it becomes difficult for them to put up with each other due to their cultural differences. Susan dislikes Tehmina's habits and practices and Tehmina, despite all her efforts, fails to adjust.

It makes her run into nostalgia and she often remembers her husband Rustom and their life in Bombay. Living in Ohio, she misses Bombay and frequently compares the two countries on every single occasion that represents their respective cultures. And on such incidents, Tehmina always seems to conclude Indian life-style better than

American. She repudiates the idea of going to a grief counselor or a therapist and taking capsules to get over her sorrow inflicted on her by Rustom's death, and wonders "why to go to a therapist when you can talk to your grand-parent or an uncle or aunt" (8). Furthermore, she surprisingly ponders as to how everything in America has an expiry date, "even grief and mourning" (130). Tehmina compares the American life to 'Disney life' and the Indian one to 'Bollywood melodrama' with loss and sadness. She dislikes the fact that the Americans think "too much of laughter and play as if life was a Walt Disney movie" (8) that represents pursuit of happiness and money. She observes that in America the "humans have become the 'robots' carrying out the wishes of their mechanized gadgets" (27). She even dislikes her moniker 'Tammy' that she got in America and demands to be called 'Tehmina' (34). Perhaps, the name 'Tehmina' was something which gave her a feeling of rootedness and this lessened the intensity of her identity crisis. Her recurrent comparisons between the two countries even on the petty concerns like vegetables, markets, neighbourhood, ways of parenting, attitudes, behaviours etc. indicate her discomfort and her inability to feel 'at home' there. Tehmina, deeply rooted-in-India, due to her inability to mould herself in American ways, believes that in America she would always be a 'stranger.' She calls Bombay her 'home' and says that "in Bombay I feel like a person — a person whose life has meaning, whose life follows a path" whereas in America she feels herself as an "ornament" (32). The most difficult thing for her to muddle through was nostalgia. She yearns for Bombay as it was "her home, the city she had come to as a young bride. She had ridden in a thousand of its cabs; she had lived through riots and holiday celebrations" (154).

Similar to Tehmina, when Sorab had first reached America several years ago, he had experienced rootlessness; he felt "as if his head was touching the skies of America while his feet were rooted in Bombay, as if he was straddling two continents" (61). He missed his family and in their absence he felt himself incomplete. Being empathetic to Tehmina now, he remembers his own days when he would dream of his parents and on waking up the dream would change into a nightmarish experience. He tells Susan how "for years and years I felt like a man divided. And try as I might, I couldn't bridge the damn distance" (135). But, as Mishra opines, "all diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way" (1), Sorab due to his identical experiences, could understand her dilemma and pain but was unable to help her in any way. Tehmina who has been an indecisive and hesitant woman all through her life, realizes that it is a journey she has to travel alone.

The character of Sorab justifies aptly the split loyalty and divided self of an immigrant. Sorab, like numerous Indians had flown to America to pursue his studies but the American optimism, "its can-do spirit, its blithe shrugging off of the past and history" (68) fascinated him to settle down there. America had been a dominant influence on him since he was twelve and this led him to leave his happy and normal life in Bombay to seek "a new challenge, a new horizon, a new home" (84). He wanted to leave his 'doughy softness of childhood' behind and America "toughened him up, made him competitive.... single minded in pursuit of happiness... Whereas in India people were always telling him not to appear to be too ambitious, too hungry, here in America that ambition and hunger were revered, encouraged and rewarded" (138).

At the outset of her psychological journey, Tehmina finds herself unable to leave her 'home' and also to "give up the city of one's birth, old friends whom you grew up

with, an apartment that you've decorated and cleaned and furnished" (156). Her inability to abandon her '*Indian ways*' and readapt in America, becomes another problem. Sorab becomes helplessly aware of the unbridgeable gap between the two cultures. The factor that might be held responsible here for hampering the acculturation is the 'age' of the immigrants. The older they grow, the less they want to adapt in a new culture or society. Unlike the old ones, the younger people tend to assimilate easily and readily forgo the old place and notions related to it. For Sorab, his movement was a conscious effort and he had migrated to America for his greater visibility and upward mobility whereas for Tehmina it is not voluntary, though not forced too.

The novel presents America with optimism and forward-looking attitude. Witnessing a change in all those who migrated from India like Percy, Homi and others, Tehmina wonders how a country like America can transform their basic personalities. She becomes surprised when she notices that "kids who had been pencil thin, melancholy, depressed, quiet, and shy became confident, strong, talkative, happy" (151). She infers that America "gave them the freedom to feel they were worthy of happiness, that being happy was something they didn't have to apologize for or feel guilty about". In a way, living in America, even Tehmina also feels herself free from the deep rooted strictures of her mother –

How you should not look at yourself in the mirror... never complain about anything in your life...; cover your mouth when you laugh because otherwise men will think you are promiscuous; how you should be satisfied with ....your destiny; ...never eat on streets ... never boast about having money to avoid arousing the envy of your neighbours. (151)

Thus, both Tehmina and Sorab become free from the restrained life that used to strain them in India. Tehmina's gradual acceptance of the American life style, her nostalgia and the frequent association with the other Indian Parsis living in Ohio make her feel less alienated. Her nostalgia embedded in her attire and her culinary arts give her the sense of rootedness in India. Anita Mannur in her research paper states that "the desire to imagine cuisine as authentic manifestations of national essences continues to haunt the psychic dimensions of immigrant nostalgia in South Asian American fiction" (Mannur 22). Culinary practices are considered to be the essential part of one's ethnic, cultural and national identity. She also states that "food signifies the cultural distinctiveness and acts as a palliative for dislocation" (13). Throughout the novel, Parsi cuisine and Parsi dishes make Tehmina feel rooted in her ethnic culture. Thus, it can be said that Tehmina's nostalgia also acts as an acculturation strategy. Specifically, her nostalgia minimizes her sense of dislocation or displacement and rebuilds the home.

Though, both Sorab and Tehmina, try to integrate themselves in the American culture and try to become a part of the dominant discourse that holds Asian American migrants as 'model minority', yet they uphold their immigrant identity where "neither dislocation nor absorption can be total" (Jain17). The diasporic identity is torn between "here" and "there", and fixed between the 'bicultural pulls'. Homi Bhabha in the introduction of his seminal book *The Location of Culture*, posits the lives of immigrants as 'border lives' (1) that occupy the 'in-between' space in the discourse of cultural identity. This 'in-between space' originates from the cultural differences. The

differences may be based on the cultural, racial, gender, religious or ethnical grounds depending on the situation. Bhabha proposes that 'borders' are significant as they signify the end of one place and the beginning of a new one simultaneously. He also suggests that people living in liminal stage are in transition that evolves 'new signs of identity' (1). Focusing on the different aspects of borders in framing the diasporic identities, Raghuram writes:

We emphasise the ability of diasporic thinking to play with boundaries— on their maintenance, reconfiguration, unsettling, and on boundary conflicts and negotiations. The types of boundaries traversed may be physical, political, social, cultural and emotional .... Importantly, these border crossings also bring up unexpected alliances and collisions with the politics surrounding other markers of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality, especially as they relate to nationality, nationalism and transnationalism. (5)

The protagonist Tehmina also struggles to come across one such psychological border which is enveloped with the emotional attachment with her home and homeland. Despite crossing the physical border, she finds herself unable to adapt the new place as her psychological border deters her to adopt the new place completely. Thrity Umrigar marks Tehmina's entry in America with her jump in Antonio's yard when she independently moves across the fence to save the troubled children. Thus, Thrity uses Antonio's yard as a synecdoche for America and the fence between the two houses as the metaphorical 'border' coming across which Tehmina finds her new identity and becomes an independent woman. Paradoxically, people like Tehmina despite having crossed the border, inhabit a liminal stage. For stepping into the new place completely, first they need to be accepted by the natives then to be rooted there firmly. However, in the absence of such acceptance in the new place they feel alienated and continue their connections with homeland which gives them an 'imagined' sense of rootedness and acceptance.

As aforesaid, border crossings bring up both "unexpected alliance and collisions" with reference to their various differences, it brings up the question of assimilation and acculturation in the new place. Assimilation and acculturation of a diasporic person is a two way process as it depends on both the immigrants and the natives of the host country. Traditionally, diaspora are not accepted by the natives of host country at once. Neither the diasporic communities want to lose their distinctive identities nor do the natives allow them to enter the mainstream by dissolving their identities. Interpreting some major scholars' views on diasporic experiences Jasbir Jain observes that "acceptability or rejection by a host culture depends upon the 'value' of a person, his use to new society, his educational level and his social milieu" (13) and that the 'value' depends on the usefulness of the individual to the host society.

Tehmina unknowingly becomes useful when she rescues the two children Josh and Jerome from their harsh mother Tara. The naive and innocent act of Tehmina leads her to become a valuable person in the host society and makes her feel 'being accepted' there. Her acceptability there reinforces her to feel 'at home' in America. As a Parsi, she takes the "ancient promise" (of making lives "sweeten" and "enriched" of the people of the country they adopt to settle) seriously and decides to live in America. However, "while faced with the larger choice of whether to stay in America, Tehmina

is confronted with another more urgent choice: whether to live in America as a stranger or as a citizen. Citizenship implies connection, participation and involvement", and she again finds herself confronted with two more choices whether to live "straddling between the two worlds and live in a no-man's land or jump into the fullness of her new life in America."<sup>2</sup>

The different cultural identity and their physical attributes make both the dominant groups and the immigrant (often marginalized) groups aware of their differences which further consolidates the 'otherness' of the immigrants. The dominant discourses and the identities formed through a history of discourses place them separated from each other. It cannot be denied that where there are immigrants there has to be 'fluidity' i.e. cultural interaction between the two groups. In Esman's words, "The diasporic communities with their different rituals and religious practices, their different languages and ways of living and above all, their demands of non-discriminatory access to higher education and employment and special rights create tension and conflict with native groups" (8). The 'visible immigrants'<sup>3</sup> who belong to a different race and culture are vulnerable to the hostility and racial discrimination. Though Thrity herself repudiates to have met any such hostile treatment personally by the natives yet her characters become victims of casual racism sometimes.

After the arrival of Sorab's new boss Grace Butler, a snobbish white woman, he undergoes racial discrimination and mental harassment which were hitherto unfelt by him. Similarly, Tara, Sorab's neighbour, also passes remarks like 'Indian', 'brownie' etc. that emphasize his non-native identity and reflect her contempt for the non-natives, though she tries to conceal it. They highlight both her superiority and her claim on her country. They are the stereotypical characters who are hostile towards the non-natives and 'construct' the 'otherness' of Indians there. Besides the skin colour and their accent, the 'otherness' of Indians there is constructed with their cultural markers too. As stated by Avtar Brah that "the cultural difference can and does form the basis of inferiorising imperatives inscribing hierarchies within and across cultural formations" (231), the social categorization of cultural differences is constituted by political interferences. The Indian diaspora, since long, have often been an object of such inferior inscriptions by the West and their 'otherness', constructed by the natives, has always been a matter of concern.

Notwithstanding the older ones, the new diaspora rarely bemoan this 'otherness', instead, to some extent, they enjoy their distinctiveness in both the countries. Their identity as the 'other' in India is highly privileged and in America also it is not pitiable. Sunil Bhatia notices that "their economic success, educational accomplishments, and membership in professional societies have propelled them straight into Connecticut's middle and upper middle suburb" (15), hence their 'otherness' is not essentially regarded there as dishonourable. The economic and professional success of the migrants like Sorab and others signposts their middle class positions in American society. Moreover, their living in the suburban city reaffirms their privileged otherness. Tehmina's act of saving the two children wins her the title of 'model minority' and a 'valuable' immigrant in the US. Nevertheless, her act also propagates her belief in universal humanity like most of the Indians in diaspora.

Tara's racial remarks startle Tehmina and she wonders that Sorab "despite his pressed clothes, his groomed fingernails, his American accent, his gold watch, his good job, his many degrees" (*Today* 19), has experienced some sort of discrimination there. It elucidates that though, racial discrimination is not in an intensified form, yet it has not been completely erased from the American society even today. Despite their successes, the immigrants from the 'third world countries' into the 'first world countries' often become the victims of discrimination and are often treated with disdain. Their post-colonial identity affects their immigrant identity greatly. The writers from the 'third world countries' are commonly categorized under the purview of post-colonialism as their writings carry the impacts of the colonial impressions. Their 'post-colonial' background prevents them from becoming a part of the mainstream in the First World countries.

Colonization of India has played a great role in demoralizing the national identity of Indians. The colonial era despoiled Indians of their cultural, social and economic richness. Amartya Sen rightly states that "the colonial experience of India [has] the effect of undermining the intellectual self-confidence of Indians" (77) and that since the colonial rule, India, on the basis of its intellectual, cultural or economic achievements, has been presented either incorrectly or manipulatively by the West. He observes that though Indian diaspora is "keen on taking pride - some self-respect and dignity - in the culture and traditions of their original homeland", yet there is some ambiguity of grounds for their pride in being an Indian that requires the answer of "what should the Indian diaspora be proud of?" (Sen 73). He notes that a great number of writers from or under the influence of the West have discarded the Indian intelligentsia openly and have remarked over it contemptuously. Such writings prevailed in the whole world for long and cemented the manipulated ideas about it. Colonization has impacted adversely not only the self-identity of India but of all those countries that have the history of colonization. Despite the end of its political dependence, India is still considered to be a neo-colonized<sup>4</sup> country by the West since the West is always a place of power and privilege. The new diaspora who is quintessentially captivated by the 'greener pastures', tries to fit into the western values and standards, and as a result, often imitates their contempt towards India. Rita Joshi observes this attitude in the immigrants and states that:

The contempt the colonizer taught the subjugated in the colonial era in the colonized territory is now encouraged in the immigrant who crosses over to the First World believing in the myth of equality in the Western world in a post-colonial era. (Joshi 84)

The character of Tehmina witnesses that the affluence and success that has grown leaps and bounds further strengthened the faith of migrants like Sorab, Percy, Homi-Perin Jasawalas etc. in "American dreams". Moreover, she notices how bitterly they criticize India for its "education system, the corruption, the postal service, the slow moving traffic, the bureaucracy" and wonders: "is that why they left in the first place—because they were so angry about everything?" (*Today* 148). She finds that they more often highlight the downsides of the social or cultural practices in India and hate them.



Living in America for long, even Sorab cannot resist the satisfaction of his luxurious life that is entirely opposite to the life he and his parents had in India. Though he belonged to the middle class in India, in his initial days in America he was aware of the fact that "even when he was a poor graduate student, he enjoyed a standard of living that was higher than that of his parents" (174). He assesses his success in America and tries to justify his migration from India. His diasporic 'self' who is 'divided' between the homeland and host-country dissuades him to criticize America also. Tehmina notices that Sorab got a "pained, defensive expression" on his face "if she said anything critical to America" whereas, his friends criticized India open-heartedly. Thrity's portrayal of Sorab's gratification and Tehmina's observation about Indians in America clarifies that Indians in the US often tend to denounce their home in order to validate their act of migration. It is their post-colonial awareness that forces them to justify their dispersal from a third world country to a first one. In the end, Tehmina gradually realizes and experiences her transformation into a new and confident woman and more than that she becomes an 'American Hero' there. She ultimately decides to live in America with her 'family of choice' and on her own terms. Her decision signifies her emerging belief in American ideals. She realizes that she belongs to Bombay but she can now make Ohio her home.

Tehmina and Sorab represent the new diasporic consciousness. The new Indian diaspora do not long for their homeland acutely nor do they live a miserable life there. In fact, they enjoy a privileged position in both the old and the new country. Their greater visibility in the old country, and their professional success and the pursuit of happiness in the new place compensate their pains if there are any. What they mourn for is probably their unreturnable 'past' and not their 'home' because the new diasporic psyche constructs their 'home' where they live happily feeling 'at home'. Their nostalgia is both an escape from the bothersome present<sup>5</sup> and, at the same time, a source of contentment<sup>6</sup> with a more comfortable and thriving present life in comparison with the past. This might be the consequence of their postcolonial consciousness that the contemporary Indian diaspora in America both embrace and justify their act of migration. However, they do not wish for a permanent departure from their homelands too. It is evident that like Rushdie, Umrigar presents the brighter aspect of diaspora. The epigraph above is the source of the title of Umrigar's novel and her portrayal of the new diasporic psyche that the two characters substantiate it.

### **Notes**

1. The classical notion of diaspora, spelled with the capitalized 'D', signifies the Jewish exile from Palestine which is often marked with grief and sorrow.
2. The lines have been taken from the cover page of the novel.
3. 'Visible immigrants' or 'visible minorities' are the terms used for the people who are different from the majority race. It often carries a negative connotation for disadvantaged group of people in America and Canada. Basically the term is used in Canada for non-whites but is equivalent to the American term 'people of colour'.
4. McLeod, in his book, writes that "according to some [scholars] postcolonialism may wear a radical or oppositional face, but this only masks its complicity with the continuing oppression of people in the present" (246).
5. Both Tehmina and Sorab become nostalgic of their past in Bombay when they face troubles in their present lives. Tehmina, heartbroken due to her husband's death and unable to adjust in the new place make her run into nostalgia. Similarly, Sorab, unable to cope with his professional and

personal life (after the arrival of Grace Butler in office and indecisive Tehmina at home) seeks respite in nostalgia.

6. For Sorab, his present life, due to his professional and financial success, is much more luxurious and gratifying than his past in Bombay. On the other hand, for Tehmina, her past is full of restrictions from which she freed herself in America.

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