

## FOREVER THE DECEIVED ONE IN THRITY UMRIGAR'S THE SPACE BETWEEN US (SHAKESPEARE) "Et tu, Brute?" (William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar)

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**Abstract:** Thrity Umrigar in her novel has clearly portrayed that betrayal comes from the one whom we love dearly. In her novel *The Space Between Us*. Talks about two women who are worlds apart. But are betrayed by the same person. Thrity Umrigar clearly portrays that no matter who you are what your background is betrayal is the same. This paper sheds light on how betrayal can come to the most gullible ones from the ones whom they trust. In this novel the main characters Sera and Bhima the owner and the maid are betrayed by someone whom they trusted with all their heart. Someone whom they never thought would betray them. Sera own son in law who she thought as her son likewise Bhima also trusted him like her own son. What these two women have in common is they both were betrayed at some point in life clearly portrayed by Umrigar. Both the women are always the target for betrayal until the final blow comes till the true space between them comes. This novel is criticism of how women are betrayed in the name of love in various forms and no matter what they are always the ones who end up Deceived.

**Key Words:** deceit, women, education, money, female bond, women and society, male chauvinism and ignorance.

**Introduction:** Thrity Umrigar is the best-selling author of the novels *Bombay Time*, *The Space Between Us*, *If Today Be Sweet*, *The Weight of Heaven*, *The World We Found* and *The Story Hour*. She is also the author of the memoir, *First Darling of the Morning*. Her books have been translated into several languages and published in over fifteen countries. She is the Armington Professor of English at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. *The Space Between Us* was a finalist for the PEN/Beyond Margins award, while her memoir was a finalist for the Society of Midland Authors award. *If Today Be Sweet* was a Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle selection, while her other books have been Community Reads selections. Thrity is the winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize, a Lambda Literary award and the Seth Rosenberg prize. Thrity was born in Bombay, India and came to the U.S. when she was 21. As a Parsi child attending a Catholic school in a predominantly Hindu country, she had the kind of schizophrenic and cosmopolitan childhood that has served her well in her life as a writer. Accused by teachers and parents alike of being a daydreaming, head-in-the-clouds child, she grew up lost in the fictional worlds created by Steinbeck, Hemingway, Woolf and Faulkner. She would emerge long enough from these books to create her own fictional and poetic worlds. Encouraged by her practical-minded parents to get an undergraduate degree in business, Thrity survived business school by creating a drama club and writing, directing and acting in plays. Her first short stories, essays and poems were published in national magazines and newspapers in India at age fifteen. After earning a M.A. in journalism in the U.S., Thrity worked for several years as an award-winning reporter, columnist and magazine writer.

She also earned a Ph.D. in English. In 1999, Thrity won a one-year Nieman Fellowship to Harvard University, which is given to mid-career journalists. While at Harvard, Thrity wrote her first novel, *Bombay Time*. In 2002 she accepted a teaching position at Case Western Reserve University, where she is now the Armington Professor of English. She also does occasional freelance pieces for national publications and has written for the Washington Post and the Boston Globe's book pages. Thrity is active on the national lecture circuit and has spoken at book festivals such as the L.A. Festival of Books, the Tuscon Book Festival and the Miami Book Fair International; at universities such as MIT, Harvard University, and Spelman College; and at literary societies, civic and business organizations and public libraries all across the country. *The Space Between Us*, Thrity Umrigar's poignant novel about a wealthy woman and her downtrodden servant, offers a revealing look at class and gender roles in modern day Bombay. Alternatively told through the eyes of Sera, a Parsi widow whose pregnant daughter and son-in-law share her elegant home, and Bhima, the elderly housekeeper who must support her orphaned granddaughter, the two women have a bond that goes far deeper than that of employer and employee. But Sera's seemingly privileged life is not as it appears; after enduring years of cruelty under her mother-in-law's roof, she faced physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband, pain that only Bhima could see and alleviate. Through their triumphs and tragedies, Sera and Bhima always shared a bond that transcended class and race; a bond shared by two women whose fate always seemed to rest in the hands of others, just outside their control. Told in a series of flashbacks and

present day encounters, *The Space Between Us* gains strength from both plot and prose. A beautiful tale of tragedy and hope, Umrigar's second novel is sure to linger in readers' minds. The novel is set in a time where it is not specific. *The Space Between Us* takes place in modern era in Bombay which is now known as Mumbai. In the modern era the gap between the high class and low class was less compared to the earlier ages. But still the class discrimination is still predominant in certain areas in Mumbai. But in this novel there is not much class discrimination shown, it is portrayed in a way where the middle class people are like a helping hand to their lower class servants. The novel is set in Mumbai. "Bombay is the city of dreams and city of hopes, the financial and commercial capital of the country" (Katiyar, 2014). The novel revolves around two gullible women who are the subject of deceit no matter their status education and place in life. Sera Dubash an upper middle class parsi house wife whose opulent surroundings hide the shame and disappointment of her abusive marriage. She fell for the wrong man despite the warnings from everyone and she paid the price and paid the role for wrong choice. Bhima, a stoic illiterate hardened by a life of despair and loss, has worked in the Dubash household for more than twenty years. Bhima too fell in love with a man but did not face the same problems as Sera Dubash did. She had her own demons to fight; Bhima's ignorance was misused when her husband met with an accident and the second time by her very own granddaughter and the son in law of Sera Duabsh. This paper is to shed light on why women are always the targets of deceit is it because women trust blindly and love blindly and unconditionally The Deceived one who is the deceived one and women are always the one on the other side. This novel revolves around the life of two women who were deceived in their own way. Sera Dubash a middles class Parsi house wife chose the wrong man and her life went spiralling down from there. She lived a lie posing the perfect couple the perfect family until one day he died her husband. Bhima a servant for the Dubash family is very old and frail has too much burden for an old woman to bear. She has been cheated and stepped on all her life she always had to work hard for everything and never could enjoy the finer things in life. Her Life was always a constant struggle. She married like any other Indian woman had children until one dreadful day her husband met with an accident and she had something that would change their entire lives upside down. Her ignorance was abused in the absence of her husband and they lost all their family savings. Then after her daughter died and left her with their child Maya another woman who lives to be the proof of the deceit faced by both Sera Dubash and Bhima. Bhima has struggled all her life when compared to

Sera Dubash but each one had an arduous journey none the less. The betrayal or the deceit came from nowhere else but from within the house her own son in law. They both adore him for Sera Dubash he was a man to fill the absence she felt in the house and she viewed him like a son she never had and he a person cloaked in deceit and lies. To Bhima he viewed him like God cause for her the daughter of Sera Dubash Dinaz was like her own daughter. But time and fate have different plans to play in their life. It played its game on the already battered women. In the case of Bhima who was fed up with the entire circle of life. "She is tired of it all—tired of this endless cycle of death and birth, tired of investing any hope in the next generation, tired and frightened of finding more human beings to love, knowing full well that every person she loves will someday wound her, hurt her, break her heart with their deceit, their treachery, their fallibility, their sheer humanity." (Thrity Umrigar, *The Space Between Us*). There is only so much a person can bare and in the case of Bhima it as if life had so many games to play on her that at one point she felt that there was nothing more to take from her and she felt a coconut whose flesh was scooped out completely and left bare with nothing but the shell, that they discard after they have enjoyed the pulp. "Her hands were empty now, as empty as her heart, which itself was a coconut shell with its meat scooped out." (Thrity Umrigar, *The Space Between Us*). She felt helpless. When she found her granddaughter was pregnant all kinds of thoughts flooded through her rage, deceit, pity and even disgust. She wanted a different life for her but fate had written a different story all together. But still Bhima hoped for the best, that her daughter will live in a fancy house and enjoy the finer things in life which she could not enjoy. But Bhima's dreams were short lived till she knew who was the father of the child her granddaughter was carrying and got aborted. When she knew Bhima felt a pang of the familiar feeling deceit, she never knew that the serpent was right under her nose. "She always imagined that evil played out on large canvas-wars, concentration camps, gas chambers, the partitioning of nations. Now she realized that evil had a domestic side, and its very banality protected it from exposure." (Thrity Umrigar, *The Space Between Us*). It was none other than Sera Dubash's son in law who hid himself cleverly behind his mask of the perfect husband perfect son in law more importantly the money and the education. "It was strange how she found out, One moment she didn't know; the next minute she did. One moment her mind was as blank as the desert; the next minute the snake of suspicion had slithered into her thoughts and raised its poisonous head." (Thrity Umrigar, *The Space Between Us*). When she tried

to seek justice she was insulted and turned away by the family for whom she slogged for twenty years. “like a drop of ink in a glass of milk” (**Thrity Umrigar, The Space Between Us**). It is Maya who has to bear the weight of Viraf’s mistake and Sera Dubash and Bhima who will forever remember the truth and the curse of deceit. “Or perhaps it is that time doesn’t heal wounds at all, perhaps that is the biggest lie of them all, and instead what happens is that each wound penetrates the body deeper and

deeper until one day you find that the sheer geography of your bones—the angle of your head, the jutting of your hips, the sharpness of your shoulders, as well as the luster of your eyes, the texture of your skin, the openness of your smile—has collapsed under the weight of your griefs.” (**Thrity Umrigar, The Space Between Us**). I conclude this paper by saying no matter what it is always she who is Forever Deceived One. And she just learns to live with the scars that he has left as proof for her to bear.

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