

**Significance of the ReVaTee campaign:** In Act II, the symbol of the mask takes on added significance when we get to know that a masked ball has been arranged for the launch of women's lingerie in the brand name of ReVaTee – a queer mix of a household female name that is commercially syllabled to develop an angle to the upmarket clientele who are supposed to shop women's undergarments tagged for the wealthy and beautiful. Lalitha, in the previous Act, enthusiastically outlines the idea of the ball in which a model (Shirley) in black cloak will at midnight take off the cloak to reveal the nightwear within. The board members of the manufacturing company, however, are least impressed by the audio-visual presentation of the promo in which it is the female body and not so much the product that gets highlighted. Even if it is women's lingerie, the onus of the advertisement is clearly on the sex appeal of the woman featured in it rather than on the quality of the product itself. As indicated by the signature line of the commercial, the predominant purpose of this nightwear is to "Light his fire with ReVaTee"; in a survey on the same, women strongly refute this unrealistic, "tasteless and degrading" notion, labelling it as "offensive". The fact that these women discard the ad film as demeaning and ridiculous, posits an alternative to the Trivedi women with their trivial pursuits. Dattani shows us that if sensible women reject the notion that they dress up only to please men, there are persons like Alka who still fantasize about dancing in the rain like a film heroine. Alka's fantasy is conditioned by male fantasy of a woman in wet clothing but when enacted it becomes a defiance of Jiten! It is this subversive power of mimicry that gives the Trivedi women's longings to be like Naina Devi, like the Rani of Jhansi, or like a Hindi film heroine, a new edge.

The advertisement is a pointer to the way the heterosexual male Jiten sees the essence of female. It works on the irrational belief that a woman is an object of desire and her role is to please her male partner. This 'male' notion of 'desire' as both physical and material is traced in the stage direction of Act II where we find the "huge photograph of a sensuous model with the ReVaTee logo." It is further emphasized when Jiten says, "She's modelling undies. Who the hell will notice the face?" Jiten's words – "Men would want to buy it for their women! That's our market. Men. Men would want their women dressed up like that. And they have the buying power." – project the masculine world of consumerism, advertisement and the consumerist value of the female body. The belief that a woman is an object of gratification of male desire is perpetuated by a patriarchal society, and unfortunately, many women (like Lalitha) actually adopt this belief unthinkingly!

The world of showbiz culture in Mumbai and Bangalore where people speak English and have a glittering social life, where fashions can be outrageous yet whose members have their roots in traditional family backgrounds is well portrayed by Dattani through the conversation about the masked ball. The dramatist's artistic use of *mise en scène* where the conversation of Baa and Nitin is projected shows how the condition of women is still the same with or without their flaunting of lingerie. In fact, the association of the mask gets a different dimension altogether because it is the hybrid identity born of the patriarchal structure and the capitalist economy that operates behind the masks of gentle veneer of consumerism to entertain itself on the female body. As a critic puts it, "they transform women into brand slogans that . . . titillate the viewers and in turn promote sales". She goes on to say that "the stripping of Shirley Girley would be the grand finale where nothing would be left for imagination anymore and the sexual fantasy of the buyers and organizers would then be complete". Thus, the advertisement campaign seems to be a kind of mask for male gratification.

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