

**THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE TITLE *THE OLD PLAYHOUSE* AND ITS THEMES  
FAILURE AND FRUSTRATION**

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Abstract

The numbers of candle may differ but the light they give is the same, likewise, the name Kamala Das is heard by many but the approach given here in this paper is attempted less. She is a Poetess of blundered vision, brutal truth, and candid attitude she known for her poems that are the reference and a lucid torch for many inspiring women of India. Kamala Das is not just merely a love poet craving for a deep fulfillment through love. She is not merely a confessional poet making no secret of her privacy. She is not merely a liberated poet leading an attack on senseless restrictions and conventions and pleading for the liberation of her sisterhood from the charges of conservative roles from

The reality of the world for Kamala Das finds as the sex-obsessed world of the domineering male. And in the poem *The Old Play House* she considers her husband as a freak. She is just a submissive creature in front of a sex-obsessed giant. She projects a monstrous image on her husband. She looks world through soul and appetite hence she emerges as a poet of blended vision. Her intermingled vision can be seen in her use of images noted for rich suggestions, and multi-leveled meanings. The title suggests that there are some traditional and conventional ways in most of everything. She actually hates it and afraid to get into it. She expects her husband to treat her with respect, love, and equality but she fails. Here in this paper, I am going to probe the attitudes of Kamala Das in light of new perspective by having select poems of her.

Keywords: *confessional, liberation, traditional, submissive*

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Kamala Das was born in punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, managing editor of the widely circulated Malayalam daily Mattrubhumi, and Nalapat Balamani Amma a renowned Malayali poet. At the age of 15, she got married to a bank office, Madhava Das who encouraged her writing interest.

### A creative Artist confronting convention

Kamala Das's skill as an artist impeccably matches with her deep insight into human predicaments-social and psychological. Since she attempts in the border are of analyzing things in a psychological way he has eloquence with words, an ear for rhythm that is not commonly found among most of her fellow poets. The poet's stimulated imagination catches words, phrases, symbols, and images from the vast panorama of life. She eddies and currents of thought run too fast for her pen. She tries to capture them by her swift method of composition. With the result, her poems are late to be formless. A fitting reply to this conclusion is given by Ezekiel "their power derives from the inner urgency of her utterance, the pressure of her conflicts and the pathos of her helplessness". The academicians and the professionals make much fuss about her carelessness in the compositional aspects of poetry. The creative writer and the greatest of poets refuse to bend their will to this labor.

### A Critical Appreciation

The female protagonist tries to discover the nature of true love in this poem. She expresses her protest against male chauvinism. The protest is conveyed in a powerful conversational idiom. The woman persona has been a swallow with inborn nature to fly. "One caught" in the trap of lust set by man; she is tamed to forget the "urge to fly" and is rid of her freedom. it is a tendency that whatever creation exists in the world forgets its nature when it is tamed or caged for years and years. She comes to him to realize the true self, not to seek knowledge. "Of yet another man" but the man differs not in the least from her knowledge of the male conceived usually as an inscrutable symbol of power and lust. In her judgment, men are out and out self-oriented in their relationship with a woman. The woman persona gets frustrated at her man's sole and whole concern with her "body's response, its weather, its usual shallow convulsions". The male partner indulges in a sexual orgy with her. Sexual experience is only rooted in bodily response without bringing about spiritual or psychological transformation she might have looked forward to.

The strong man that her male partner is, he serves excessive dos for love. These may please him but not the woman persona and hence lethal to her. The woman persona is ever conscious of the dominant male ego. She equates love with Narcissus, for man is unable to raise himself above his ego. She seeks a total, spiritual transformation which cannot be realized through the gratification of physical cravings with this man, or possibly with another man. She wants to transform the body based sexual experience into a rich reposeful, satisfying, spiritual experience. This she can achieve by transcending the barriers of the physical, as symbolized by the breaking of the mirror and erasing of the water that reflects male ego.

The freaks a critical summary

It smacks of unabashed confession. A crisis in the woman persona's personal life—a crisis that arises out of unconsummated love forms the themes of the freaks. In the beginning, the signs of the title should be noted a freak is a person subject to unpredictability. A freak is also a person who had broken away from conventional society. The title in the plural number has added dimension because the woman persona talks not only for herself but also for a similar woman who seeks an intense fulfillment through love.

The poem opens with a man of “sun-stained cheek”. He is a womanizer, as suggested by his “sun stained” cheek symbolic of his frequenting different woman at different times. He talks to the woman persona. His talk is only a seductive device to delight her and draw her towards him. He is the symbol of the ID because he craves for her physical fulfillment of sex. His mouth similar to a “dark cavern” is indicative of his extreme passion for “skin communicated” ecstasies. He places his right hand on her knee to stimulate sexual desires in her and to entice her into just full entanglement.

The male partner stagnates at the level of lust. It is heart where love is enthroned but her heart is an “empty container” Love’s fulfillment is in containment, not in emptiness. She is not for lust. She is for an ultimate creative fulfillment through love. Therefore, she is sexually incompatible and fails to respond to his advances. She concludes that her male partner falls below her vibrant expectation for an intense fulfillment of eternal love through love. For the social make-believe, she pretends to be responsive to him, which she really does not.

Kamala Das: A Love Poet

She is basically a poet of love, wits, awful emotional enormously moving, profoundly scandalous and disturbing her love poems. She is unsatisfied, longing for more and more caress and mourning endlessly is in a passionate with the death of love in the modern world. Almost all her love poems deal with either of the adulterer love or pangs and frustrations occasion by unconsummated love and negated affections. The poem "The Old Play House" deals with the theme of frustration in love there seems to be an unclear and deliberate play upon the word "you" meaning either the husband or "other person" in keeping with the woman- persona's liberated spirit. The expressions "of yet another man" is probably an endorsement of the extramarital relation the woman person seeks.

It was not to gather knowledge

A lesson you gave was about yourself (*The Old Play House*)

What she is after is not the knowledge "of yet another man" but the awareness of herself through another man the man to whom she uncovers her bosom differs not in the least from her knowledge about another man. In no way is he free from the canal hunger and domineering ego of the male.

You dribbled spittle into my mouth, you poured  
Yourself into every nook and cranny, you embalmed  
I was taught to break saccharine into your tee and  
*(The Old Play House)*

The poet persona comes to her husband/ loves to learn what she is, to find her own real self but she finds only the strong man. Wherever she turns, she finds the sex-obsessed world of the dominant man. Much of what Kamala das writes maybe looks upon journalistic sensationalism because she is alive today. She seems to shock her readers with the gummies of an unabashed confession but her confession is sincere, moving and courageous.

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