

## Brewing Resistance: A Subaltern Marxist and Psychoanalytic Exploration of Suppression and Exploitation among Tea Labourers in *Red Tea* Novels by P.H. Danial

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines how psychological trauma and colonial exploitation interact in Paul Harris Daniel's *Red Tea*, a book that describes the hardships faced by Indian workers on British-owned tea plantations in South India. The study uses psychoanalytic and Marxist frameworks to investigate how the coolies' identities and mental health are shaped by the severe material realities of colonialism. The paper examines the workers' coping strategies and resilience while highlighting issues of internalized oppression, class inequality, and labor injustice. *Red Tea* is positioned as an important literary work that challenges colonial power structures and their enduring effects on underprivileged groups as a result of this research.

**Keywords:** Marxism, Identity Struggles, Worker Solidarity, Psychological Trauma, Social Injustice

### Introduction:

The present research depicted subaltern which is the mostly debated issue in the Indian still. *Paul Harris Daniel* raised the issues of Casteism, capitalism, feudalism, colonialism and imperialism through his novel *Red Tea*. In that, he has attacked one of the worst social evils of the Indian society during colonized period to the tea plantation workers. He worked in *PeriaKaramalai* Group Hospital, a plantation hospital in *Valparai's PeriaKaramalai* Estate, as the chief medical officer. The early to mid-1900s in Tamilnadu and Kerala were the setting for the novel, which was based on Dr. Daniel's observations of the impoverished living conditions in tea estates across these two states. The brokers known as "*Kanganies*" had deceived the starving poor people from all over the hamlet in the southern portion of Tamilnadu state forcing them to migrate to tea farms in hill stations like *Moonaar and Vaalpaataai*. The brokers had assured them that they would be offered a better life than what they had now, along with a nice pay, housing, and medical facilities. They understood their lives had been damaged as soon as they arrived at the plantation and began working in the tea estate fields.

### Exploitation of Tea Labourers:

The terrible reality of colonial exploitation that Indian workers endured on British-owned tea plantations in South India is the main subject of *Red Tea*. The novel depicts the harsh circumstances in which these laborers, referred to as "coolies," suffered from hard labor, poor pay, and cruel treatment through vivid storytelling. This systemic oppression draws attention to the abuse and power disparity that existed within the colonial system, where native laborers were abused by British plantation owners in order to maximize profits, causing social injustice and misery for generations. The book offers a critique of history as well as an example of tenacity in the face of injustice.

### Marxist Theory:

This method sheds light on how social hierarchies and material circumstances impact characters' lives and relationships by concentrating on class conflict, economic power, and labor exploitation. Marxist theory aids in our comprehension of the economic processes and disparities that influence the motivations and behaviors of characters by examining class oppression.

### Psychoanalytic Theory:

Based on Freud's theories, this method examines the traumas, repressions, and internal struggles of characters. It illuminates how power dynamics affect people's mental states and identity formation by examining

characters' subconscious reactions to oppression or abuse.

**Psychoanalytic Perspective:**

Combining the two theories allows us to examine in depth the ways that economic exploitation interacts with psychological consequences on individuals, providing a dual viewpoint on the repercussions on society and individuals. The brutal exploitation of the colonial system is brought to light in *Red Tea* by the class divide and labor persecution between Indian laborers and British plantation owners. The plantations are under the control of the British owners, who treat the workers like commodities and put profit before of their welfare. Indian workers endure long workdays, little pay, and subpar living circumstances. This sharp contrast highlights the colonial hierarchy, in which the foreign owners have the riches and power while the workers, constrained by social and economic constraints, fight for their lives and dignity in the face of systematic tyranny. "Coolies" represent the exploited working class, subjected to capitalist interests under British colonial rule. As laborers, they face relentless work, poor living conditions, and a lack of personal agency, effectively reducing them to tools for profit. The British plantation owners control wages, work hours, and workers' living environments, keeping the coolies in a cycle of poverty and dependence. This exploitation highlights the capitalist system's disregard for human welfare, showcasing how colonial power structures dehumanize workers for financial gain and maintain a strict class divide. In *Red Tea*, the coolies' psychological states are significantly impacted by colonial exploitation, which combines physical misery with a severe psychological cost. Long hours, little income, small living quarters, and a lack of autonomy are all examples of the severe material conditions that lead to chronic stress and mental strain, which in turn causes workers to repress their own wants and uniqueness. As individuals accept—or even internalize—the idea that they are helpless and doomed to adversity, their feeling of value diminishes.

**The Dual Exploitation of Body and the Mind:**

Targeting both the body and the mind, the dual exploitation highlights the terrible effects of colonial rule: the psychological strains of ongoing humiliation, subordination, and reliance erode their mental health while the physical demands wear them out. In *Red Tea*, the coolies' psychological states are significantly impacted by colonial exploitation, which combines physical misery with a severe psychological cost. Long hours, little income, small living quarters, and a lack of autonomy are all examples of the severe material conditions that lead to chronic stress and mental strain, which in turn causes workers to repress their own wants and uniqueness. As individuals accept—or even internalize—the idea that they are helpless and doomed to adversity, their feeling of value diminishes. Targeting both the body and the mind, the dual exploitation highlights the terrible effects of colonial rule: the psychological strains of ongoing humiliation, subordination, and reliance erode their mental health while the physical demands wear them out. The study's aim is to investigate how Marxist and psychoanalytic theories might help us better comprehend the themes of psychological trauma, class inequality, and labor oppression that are shown in *Red Tea*. By highlighting the dual role of colonialism in degrading the body and the mind, this study aims to examine the relationship between the tangible circumstances of exploitation that Indian laborers endure and their mental health. The research's ultimate goal is to draw attention to the workers' tenacity in the face of systematic oppression and advance larger conversations on the literary effects of colonialism.

**Conclusion:**

As a result of this indoctrination, the coolies eventually come to see themselves through a colonial mirror that highlights their inferiority.

Workers are forced into survival strategies by this colonial system, which further internalizes injustice. For example, in order to avoid confrontation with the overseers, many resort to self-effacing or conforming actions, and as a mental survival strategy, they eventually accept their circumstances. Despite being essential for their immediate survival, these adaptive behaviors encourage a psychological acceptance of their place and prevent them from seeing themselves as capable of equality or independence, thereby strengthening the colonial goal in both material and psychological dimensions. In today's global labor and economic systems, where problems of exploitation, class inequality, and psychological trauma still exist, the themes examined in *Red Tea* are still very pertinent. A powerful reminder of how oppressed labourers frequently suffer the most from economic structures that put profit ahead of human dignity is provided by the novel's portrayal of the harsh conditions that the coolies endured.

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