

A Marxist Study of Space and Social Inequality in Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway by Rogelio Sicat using Marxist literary theory, focusing on how space reflects class struggle and social inequality. Guided by the ideas of Karl Marx and spatial theory, the research employed a qualitative design through close reading and the use of the Place–Text–Culture Analytical Matrix. The findings revealed that space functioned as a key element in portraying inequality. The cultivated fields and domestic spaces represented the working class and highlighted labor, including gendered and invisible work. In contrast, Señor Borja’s mansion symbolized class hierarchy and social exclusion. Educational spaces were shown to reproduce inequality, where privilege influenced

access to opportunities. Moreover, spaces of modernity and aspiration reflected the limitations of social mobility, showing that visible progress did not necessarily lead to empowerment. The study concluded that literature reflects societal realities, revealing how power, labor, and inequality are embedded in social and physical spaces. It highlights the importance of literary analysis in promoting critical awareness of social issues.

Keywords: *Wealth, Power, Social Inequality, Marxist Theory, Spatial*

INTRODUCTION

Literature plays a significant role in understanding society as it reflects and preserves culture, values, and lived experiences. It allows readers to become aware not only of societal norms and traditions but also of the social realities and issues that exist within a community. Literary works such as novels, poems, and plays mirror people’s lives, emotions, struggles, and experiences, making them powerful tools for examining human conditions. Through literature, readers are exposed to themes such as poverty, inequality, power relations, and social injustice. In this way, literature does not merely entertain but also promotes critical thinking and deeper understanding of real-world issues. As emphasized by scholars, literature has significantly influenced the development of society by shaping perspectives, exposing inequalities, and raising awareness among readers (Mayende, 2022). Literary texts reflect social realities through elements such as setting, characters, and events. In particular, space and place within a narrative play a crucial role in shaping characters’ actions and interactions. These elements allow authors to portray conditions such as poverty, inequality, and power structures in ways that readers can recognize and relate to. Through such representations, literature becomes a medium for revealing how social systems operate and how individuals are affected by them. In the Philippine context, rural provinces such as Nueva Ecija provide a rich backdrop for narratives that reflect agrarian life and social realities. Known as the “Rice

Granary of the Philippines,” the province has long been shaped by agriculture, which remains central to the livelihood and identity of its people (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023). Historically, Nueva Ecija played a significant role in the country’s struggle for independence, having been among the first provinces to revolt against Spanish rule in 1896 and later contributing to resistance movements during the Japanese occupation (Streamtech, 2020). Its agricultural foundation, combined with its historical and cultural experiences, has influenced the development of literary work such as *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway* that portrays the struggles, resilience, and everyday lives of rural communities. One of the social issues that can be observed in *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway* by Rogelio Sicat is poverty and social inequality. The narrative revolves around the life of Simon, a farmer from San Roque, Nueva Ecija, whose experiences reflect the struggles of individuals living in a society marked by class division. The story presents different historical periods in the Philippines and illustrates how these conditions shape the lives of the characters. As a literary work, it remains relevant for it addresses social issues that continue to exist in contemporary society. It also contributes to Filipino identity by portraying cultural values, historical experiences, and the realities faced by marginalized groups (Farmonova & Ilhomovna, 2024). This literary work is worth studying as it raises awareness among readers, particularly the younger generation, about ongoing social issues such as inequality and limited access to opportunities. Despite being written in the past, the themes of the story remain relevant, showing that the struggles portrayed in the text persist in present-day society. As stated in the study of Alfarhan (2024), literature, therefore, plays an important role in shaping societal perspectives and exposing inequality. This study employed Marxist literary theory, based on the ideas of Karl Marx to analyze the gap between the rich and the poor in the narrative. Marxist criticism examined how power, wealth, and social class influenced the lives of individuals. Through this framework, the study explored how inequality shaped the identities of the characters and affected their interactions. It also investigated how different spaces in the story contributed to the representation of these social conditions. Hence, the researcher aimed to analyze *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway* by Rogelio Sicat using Marxist literary theory, focusing on how space reflects class struggle and social inequality. It is hoped that the findings of the study can contribute to a deeper understanding of literary texts and serve as a basis for more critical and socially aware approaches in teaching and analyzing literature.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically employing literary analysis and historical contextualization. The selected text, *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway*, was analyzed in terms of its textual elements, spatial settings, and socio-political context. Through a Marxist lens, the study examined how the spaces in the text represent class struggle, inequality, and the lived experiences of marginalized individuals. Furthermore, the historical and social context surrounding the text was explored to better understand the conditions it reflected and critiqued. Primary sources included the literary text itself, while secondary sources consist of scholarly articles, critical essays, and related studies that support the analysis of literature as a reflection of social and economic realities (Eagleton, 2019).

Moreover, an extensive review of related literature was carried out, drawing from scholarly articles and book chapters that explored the relationship between literature and social realities. In line with the focus of this research, particular emphasis was placed on texts that depict themes of social inequality, struggle, and transformation, as these are central to the analysis of *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway* (Loquias et al., 2025)

Research Instrument

This study employed two primary instruments to analyze the novel *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway*: The Place–Text–Culture Analytical Matrix and the literary text itself. The Place–Text–Culture Analytical

Matrix was utilized to examine the interplay between textual features, representations of place, cultural practices, and power dynamics within the narrative. According to Tally (2020), this framework enabled the researcher to systematically explore how spatial environments and cultural conditions shape the characters' experiences, social roles, and class relations in the story. By integrating spatial and cultural dimensions with textual analysis, the matrix facilitated the identification of social inequalities, struggles, and power relations depicted in the text, particularly when examined through a Marxist lens (Eagleton, 2019).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected using a qualitative approach, by focusing on textual evidence from *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway*. Two primary sources were utilized: the literary text itself and the Place–Text–Culture Analytical Matrix. The researcher conducted a thorough close reading of the text to identify relevant passages, which were then extracted, coded, and organized within the analytical matrix according to pre-determined categories. Additionally, secondary sources, including scholarly articles, critical essays, and historical accounts, were reviewed to provide contextual support and to deepen the interpretation of the cultural and socio-economic conditions represented in the narrative (Villafuerte, 2024).

Data analysis employed a qualitative content analysis method, integrating the Place–Text–Culture Analytical Matrix with Marxist theory to examine the relationship between textual elements, spatial settings, and social realities (Paglinawan & Hussin, 2024). Key analytical steps included identifying themes and social issues, evaluating character roles and class representation, analyzing conflicts and ideologies, and assessing how settings influence the experiences of marginalized individuals. Through this integrated approach, the study achieved a comprehensive, organized, and theoretically grounded analysis, demonstrating how *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway* reflects and critiques societal inequalities, class oppression, and the lived experiences of marginalized groups (Abraham et al., 2024).

Ethical Considerations

This study formally acknowledged the original work of Rogelio Sicat in *Dugo sa Bukang Liwayway* (Sicat, 1972) and observed proper citation practices to uphold intellectual property rights. The literary text was treated as a primary source, and all analyses were conducted with objectivity and academic rigor to ensure credibility and scholarly integrity. By explicitly referencing the work, the study not only honored the author's contribution but also provided transparency and allowed readers to trace the primary source.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway* by Rogelio Sicat was organized into four major themes to provide a more structured understanding of how the narrative reflected class struggle and social inequality. Guided by the Marxist perspective of Karl Marx, the discussion was divided into the following themes: (1) labor and the spatial conditions of the working class, (2) class hierarchy and the spatial exclusion of the marginalized, (3) institutional inequality and (4) ideology, and the illusion of social progress. These themes highlighted how different spaces in the story functioned as representations of power, labor, and inequality.

The analysis of *Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway* by Rogelio Sicat revealed that space was not merely a backdrop but a powerful element that reflected class struggle, social inequality, and the lived realities of marginalized individuals. Through a Marxist lens grounded in the ideas of Karl Marx, the study showed how different spaces in the narrative functioned as sites where power, labor, and inequality were produced and maintained.

Table 1. *Labor and the Spatial Conditions of the Working Class*

Textual Feature	Representation of Place	Cultural Practice Reflected	Power Dynamic	Analytical Insight
Tano walked through the cultivated fields until he reached the national highway.	The cultivated fields reflect a rural setting where life is centered on labor and long-standing traditions. In contrast, the national highway represents modernity, mobility, and the presence of state development. The contrast between these spaces highlights the gap between the traditional lives of farmers and the progress brought by modernization.	In Filipino rural communities, life has traditionally centered on farming and tending the land.	Tano belongs to the space of labor (fields), but the highway symbolizes systems of power that operate beyond his control. The movement shows transition but not necessarily empowerment.	Tano's movement from the fields to the highway reveals the tension between lived rural space and abstract national space. Although he physically crosses into the highway, the structural power embedded in that space suggests that modernization does not automatically translate into agency for the peasant subject.
Even so, Melang did not stay idle at home. Their hut was never in disarray. She would always mop the bamboo floor clean of dirt and dust and make sure the kitchen sink was cleared after every meal.	The hut comes across as a simple yet well-kept home. Even amid poverty, its neatness and order show the discipline and care of its occupants.	Traditional gender roles; the expectation that women maintain the household regardless of economic hardship.	Melang occupies and maintains the domestic space, but her labor remains confined and invisible. The home becomes a gendered space where her contribution is essential yet unrecognized.	The hut is not merely a shelter but a gendered site of labor and responsibility. Melang's constant maintenance of order reflects how domestic space disciplines women into roles of silent endurance, reinforcing patriarchal expectations within rural life.
Only half of Tano's body was in the shade. His dark, wrinkled, and slender legs lay exposed in the sun. He had fallen into the mud in front of his plow.	The image of Tano's body lying partly in the shade and partly exposed to the sun reflects the difficult life of a farmer. The mud and the plow strongly connect Tano to the land, emphasizing that farming is not only his occupation but also his destiny. Falling into the mud suggests how deeply his life is tied to the soil. That he was born to work the land and will likely spend his entire life within the same cycle of labor and hardship	It reflects the agrarian culture in rural communities, where farming is not only a means of livelihood but a lifelong duty.		The scene highlights the inescapable link between labor, space, and identity in rural life. Tano's partial exposure to sun and shade symbolizes both the harshness and endurance of a farmer's life, showing that agrarian work is not merely an occupation but a defining element of his existence.

The cultivated fields, where Tano labored, were portrayed as spaces rooted in tradition and survival. This is evident in the line, “*Tano walked through the cultivated fields until he reached the national highway,*” which situates him within a landscape defined by labor and movement shaped by necessity. These fields can be understood as part of the mode of production, where labor is directly tied to the land and structured by existing economic relations. They represent the working class, whose lives revolve around physical labor and dependence on land, reflecting how the economic base constrains mobility and reinforces class divisions. Similarly, domestic spaces in the story reveal how labor is structured and often made invisible. As described, “*Even so, Melang did not stay idle at home. Their hut was never in disarray. She would always mop the bamboo floor clean of dirt and dust and make sure the kitchen sink was cleared after every meal.*” This passage highlights the constancy and discipline of her labor despite economic hardship. However, this space also functions as part of the superstructure, where cultural norms and expectations sustain the existing economic order. Her continuous work within the home demonstrates how ideology normalizes gendered labor, presenting it as a natural duty rather than productive work. This reflects false consciousness, where such expectations are internalized and accepted, reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting her visibility within the broader social structure. Her experiences mirror broader patterns of gendered labor relations in Philippine agriculture, where women contribute significantly to production yet remain marginalized in access to resources, decision making, and recognition. Recent research in Sariaya, Quezon Province, found that gender shaped agricultural roles and participation in community enterprise programs, with women experiencing restricted access and undervalued labor compared to men (Olvida & Leron, 2025). This suggests that the mode of production relies on both visible and invisible forms of labor, while the superstructure continues to legitimize inequalities within the system. The physical condition of Tano’s body further reflects the inescapable nature of labor; his body, partially exposed to the sun and covered in mud, symbolizes his deep connection to the land. This imagery suggests that his identity is shaped by labor, reinforcing how individuals in the working class are bound by the conditions imposed by the economic base, where life follows a cycle of continuous labor with limited mobility. Taken together, these local findings, alongside theoretical frameworks on gendered labor and feminist political ecology, illustrate how labor, gender, and class intersect to shape individuals’ identities and reinforce systemic inequality (Rocheleau et al., 1996 as cited in Nelson, 2024). Furthermore, ideology sustains acceptance of these conditions, preventing resistance and maintaining the existing social order.

Table 2. *Class Hierarchy and the Spatial Exclusion of the Marginalized*

Textual Feature	Representation of Place	Cultural Practice Reflected	Power Dynamic	Analytical Insight
Tano arrived at Señor Borja’s mansion in town. The windows of the huge house were closed and so was their gate.	The mansion is depicted as vast and closed off, almost untouchable. Its shut windows and locked gate not only create physical separation but also reflect emotional and social distance, suggesting a world of privilege that isolates its occupants from the outside.	Landlordism and elite exclusivity in rural Philippine society; physical separation of social classes.	Señor Borja controls the space. The closed gate symbolizes restricted access, reinforcing class hierarchy. Tano stands outside, spatially and socially marginalized.	The mansion’s closed windows and gate symbolize how space enforces social hierarchy, keeping the elite physically and emotionally isolated while marginalizing others like Tano.

Simon grows up looking at Borja’s elevated mansion that stands above the village.	The house is elevated and dominant, physically positioned above the village. The village is portrayed as lower, smaller, and subordinate.	Class stratification embedded in rural space; normalization of elite dominance through spatial elevation.	The elevation of Borja’s house places the elite literally and symbolically above the villagers. Simon’s act of gazing upward reflects internalized awareness of hierarchy.	The towering mansion naturalizes social inequality by embedding hierarchy into geography itself. Simon’s upward gaze suggests that class difference is spatially learned and internalized from childhood, reinforcing the perception that power resides “above” and beyond reach.
Regente had been sitting beside the window when Tano had arrived. Tano had removed his slippers before entering their house. He had held his native hat as he had entered the living room and greeted the Spaniard.	The house, particularly the living room, is portrayed as a formal and hierarchical social space. Tano’s act of removing his slippers and holding his hat while greeting the Spaniard reflects the cultural expectation of respect when entering another person’s home, especially one belonging to someone of higher social status.	It reflects the Filipino cultural norm of removing slippers or shoes when entering someone’s home to show respect to the host.	The scene shows Tano’s respectful gestures signaling his lower status, while Regente’s relaxed posture asserts his authority in the household.	The text reveals how domestic spaces are not neutral but structured to reflect social hierarchies. Tano’s respectful gestures show the negotiation of identity within these spaces, although he is a guest, his movements demonstrate awareness of power and social norms.

In contrast, the mansion of Señor Borja represented wealth, power, and exclusivity. This is emphasized in the line, *“Tano arrived at Señor Borja’s mansion in town. The windows of the huge house were closed and so was their gate,”* where the physical closure of the space signifies not only privacy but also deliberate social exclusion. Within a Marxist lens, the mansion reflects the dominance of those who control the mode of production, as ownership of property becomes a visible marker of class power rooted in the economic base. Tano’s position outside the mansion highlights his marginalization, as he remains excluded from spaces controlled by the elite, reinforcing class divisions shaped by unequal access to resources. The elevated position of Borja’s mansion further strengthens this hierarchy. As described, *“Simon grows up looking at Borja’s elevated mansion that stands above the village,”* the spatial elevation symbolizes the dominance of the ruling class over the working community. This positioning reflects how the superstructure through spatial organization and cultural meaning reinforces the inequalities produced by the economic base. Simon’s act of looking up suggests more than observation; it reveals how ideology operates to naturalize hierarchy, leading individuals to associate power with elevation and distance. In this way, class inequality becomes internalized, reflecting a form of false consciousness where social divisions are accepted as normal and unchangeable, thereby limiting the possibility of resistance or mobility. This portrayal finds resonance in broader social science discussions of spatial inequality. Research on socio-spatial segregation suggests that physical and symbolic divisions of space reinforce class segmentation and unequal access to resources, services, and opportunities, thereby entrenching social divisions rather than bridging them (Liao et al., 2024). Similarly, local studies of spatial inequality in Philippine cities observe how spatial segregation and differentiated urban practices reflect deeper social and economic inequalities

that shape people’s lived experiences (Rivera et al., 2025). These studies support the idea that spatial arrangements function as part of the superstructure, legitimizing and sustaining inequalities rooted in the mode of production. Domestic interactions also reveal subtle yet powerful expressions of class relations. As shown in the passage, “*Regente had been sitting beside the window when Tano had arrived. Tano had removed his slippers before entering their house. He had held his native hat as he had entered the living room and greeted the Spaniard,*” Tano’s actions demonstrate deference and an internalized awareness of his lower social position. This behavior reflects how ideology shapes everyday practices, conditioning individuals to act according to their class status. Such gestures illustrate false consciousness, where hierarchical relations are reproduced through routine actions without being questioned. In this sense, the house becomes a microcosm of the broader social structure, where behavior is regulated by expectations that reinforce class distinctions and maintain the dominance of the elite.

Table 3. *Institutional Inequality*

Textual Feature	Representation of Place	Cultural Practice Reflected	Power Dynamic	Analytical Insight
Simon tells his father that their teachers show favoritism toward Alejandro Borja, who is included in the honor roll despite not being very intelligent.	Simon’s observation about Alejandro Borja being favored despite his mediocre performance highlights the role of social hierarchy within the school setting. While Simon demonstrates intelligence and effort, his exclusion from the honor roll reflects how social status, family influence, or connections can shape recognition and opportunities.	Students from wealthy or influential families are more likely to receive preferential treatment, such as being included in the honor roll, regardless of merit. This reflects a cultural norm where social connections and resources are leveraged to gain advantage, showing how school recognition can be shaped as much by influence as by ability.	Teachers and the school administration hold the authority to grant recognition, but this power is exercised in a way that favors students from higher social classes.	The text exposes how meritocracy in schools is often undermined by social privilege. Simon’s intelligence alone is insufficient to gain recognition, highlighting how educational spaces reproduce societal inequalities.
And so, Simon continued to take the bumpy road to his school. He travelled a long way, but his determination to continue with his studies was unstoppable.	The bumpy road represents the underdeveloped infrastructure of the rural community, reflecting how individuals from lower social classes face physical and structural barriers in accessing education. The difficult journey to school symbolizes the struggles that marginalized individuals must endure in order to pursue opportunities that are not equally accessible to everyone.	Rural communities often normalize long, difficult journeys to school as part of daily life, reflecting a culture of perseverance, self-reliance, and the value placed on education despite hardships.	The narrative highlights the imbalance of access between urban and rural populations: urban students may have smooth roads, transportation, and resources, while rural students like Simon navigate physical and systemic obstacles.	The text illustrates how rural space is not neutral. It actively shapes opportunities and challenges. The bumpy road is a spatial metaphor for systemic inequalities in education access, showing that determination alone is not always enough to overcome structural limitations.

Educational spaces in the narrative also reflect systemic inequality shaped by class relations. This is evident in the line, *“And so, Simon continued to take the bumpy road to his school. He travelled a long way, but his determination to continue with his studies was unstoppable,”* where the difficult journey symbolizes the material barriers faced by individuals from the working class. From a Marxist perspective, such conditions are rooted in the economic base, where unequal distribution of resources determines access to opportunities like education. While education is often presented as a pathway to social mobility, the physical hardship of reaching school reveals that the mode of production creates uneven starting points, limiting the capacity of individuals to transcend their class position despite personal determination. This inequality is further reproduced within the school itself, as shown when *“Simon tells his father that their teachers show favoritism toward Alejandro Borja, who is included in the honor roll despite not being very intelligent.”* This moment exposes how meritocracy is undermined by privilege, where recognition is not based on ability but on social status. The school, as part of the superstructure, functions as an ideological institution that reinforces the interests of the dominant class. Through such practices, ideology normalizes inequality, presenting biased recognition as acceptable, while students like Simon may internalize these injustices as part of the system, an example of false consciousness that discourages resistance and sustains existing hierarchies (Ramirez Yee, 2024).

Furthermore, educational inequality extends beyond physical access and becomes embedded in the distribution of resources and opportunities within learning environments. Although schools are expected to serve as equalizing institutions, they often reproduce class disparities by favoring those with wealth and influence. This reflects how the superstructure operates to maintain the inequalities produced by the economic base, ensuring that advantages remain concentrated among the elite. Such patterns are consistent with findings that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face barriers that limit their academic engagement and sense of belonging. For instance, the study of Clamor and Saloma (2023) highlights that unequal access to digital resources in Philippine universities affects students’ ability to accumulate digital capital and fully participate in learning environments. Consequently, systemic inequality within educational spaces is not only about the physical journey to school but also about the persistent structural barriers embedded in both the mode of production and ideological institutions, which continue to shape students’ opportunities and outcomes.

Table 4. *Ideology, and the Illusion of Social Progress*

Textual Feature	Representation of Place	Cultural Practice Reflected	Power Dynamic	Analytical Insight
As he looked up at the sky, he saw a cluster of stars. Lo, so many stars and so far, away, just like his dreams of having a better life.	The vast sky filled with distant stars represents a space of aspiration and possibility. However, the great distance between Tano and the stars symbolizes how his dreams of achieving a better life remain far from reach, reflecting the limitations imposed by his social condition.	Many Filipinos in rural or low-income areas maintain personal goals and ambitions despite economic hardships or limited opportunities, showing resilience and the cultural value placed on education, hard work, and self-improvement as pathways to upward social mobility.		The distant sky reflects Tano’s dreams, showing how hope exists alongside social limits and how marginalized people strive for a better life despite barriers.
There had been many changes in San Roque in the last decade.	The village road connecting San Roque to the national highway is portrayed as a space	The paving of village roads reflects a cultural practice of embracing modernization and	Government or local authorities hold the power to implement	The transformation of the village road illustrates how infrastructure shapes

The village road connected to the national highway was now covered with asphalt, which made it easier for farmers to travel to their field.	of development and modernization. The asphalt covering symbolizes infrastructural progress that facilitates easier movement for farmers between the village and their agricultural fields.	infrastructural improvement to support economic activity.	infrastructure projects, shaping the spatial and social landscape of rural communities.	both mobility and social opportunity.
What used to be an old prison had now been sanitized and made immaculate by the white paint.	The former prison is portrayed as a space that has been physically transformed through renovation and white paint, symbolizing the attempt to erase the violent memories associated with the place and present it as clean, renewed, and respectable.	This shows a belief that changing the appearance of a space can alter its social meaning or emotional associations, presenting it as respectable and socially acceptable.		The text demonstrates how physical space can be reshaped to control perception and memory. Renovation and whitening erase traces of past violence, transforming the prison into a socially acceptable and respectable site, while masking its historical role as a space of oppression.

The contrast between traditional and modern spaces in the narrative further reveals the limits of social mobility. This is reflected in the line, *“There had been many changes in San Roque in the last decade. The village road connected to the national highway was now covered with asphalt, which made it easier for farmers to travel to their field,”* where infrastructural development suggests progress and improved access. However, from a Marxist perspective, such changes remain tied to the economic base and the existing mode of production, where improvements primarily serve to sustain productivity rather than transform class relations. Although mobility appears to increase, the working class remains bound to the same labor conditions, indicating that access to modern spaces does not necessarily equate to empowerment or upward mobility. Similarly, symbolic spaces such as the sky and stars represent aspiration shaped by material limitations. As expressed in the passage, *“As he looked up at the sky, he saw a cluster of stars. Lo, so many stars and so far away, just like his dreams of having a better life,”* the vastness of the sky suggests possibility, yet the distance of the stars emphasizes unattainability. This imagery reflects how ideology functions within the superstructure, encouraging individuals to aspire while subtly reinforcing acceptance of their conditions. In this sense, the character’s dreams may illustrate false consciousness, where hope persists despite the structural barriers imposed by class inequality, thereby sustaining the existing social order. Moreover, while the story presents instances of development, such as the paving of the village road, these improvements do not necessarily eliminate inequality. Research on rural-urban education inequality in the Philippines shows that, despite progress over time, persistent disparities remain between rural and urban educational attainment, with rural areas continuing to lag, a structural imbalance that limits equitable opportunities and social mobility (Zamora & Dorado, 2021). This supports the idea that developments within the superstructure, such as infrastructure, may create an illusion of progress while leaving the underlying inequalities of the economic base intact. Finally, the transformation of spaces further illustrates how power operates through representation. As described, *“What used to be an old prison had now been sanitized and made immaculate by the white paint,”* the renovation suggests renewal and cleanliness.

However, this change can be read as part of the superstructure, where those in power reshape physical spaces to control perception and collective memory. By masking the violent history associated with the prison, such transformation reflects how ideology reconstructs reality, presenting an image of progress while concealing the persistence of inequality. In this way, space becomes a tool not only of material control but also of ideological influence, reinforcing dominant narratives that sustain existing class relations.

CONCLUSION

In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. That Dugo sa Bukang-Liwayway by Rogelio Sicat utilized space as a significant element in representing the condition of the working class, particularly through the depiction of cultivated fields, domestic spaces, and the physical condition of the characters, where labor defined their identity and socio-economic position.
2. That spatial elements in the narrative reflected class hierarchy and social exclusion, as seen in the contrast between the mansion of Señor Borja and the rural village, where physical distance, elevation, and restricted access reinforced the division between the elite and the marginalized.
3. That institutions, particularly education, were portrayed as systems that did not provide equal opportunities but instead reproduced existing inequalities, where access to success was influenced by social status and privilege rather than merit.
4. That spaces associated with modernity and aspiration, such as the national highway, symbolic elements like the stars, and developments within the community, reflected the limitations of social mobility, showing that visible progress did not necessarily result in real transformation due to underlying structural inequalities.
5. That the findings of the study implied that literary texts serve as powerful representations of social realities, and through a Marxist perspective grounded in the ideas of Karl Marx, the narrative revealed how systems of power, labor, and inequality were deeply embedded in both physical and social spaces, providing a basis for further literary analysis and educational application.

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