

## Unearthing Bulosan's "Life and Death of A Filipino in America" Through a Marxist Lens

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### Abstract

*Carlos P. Bulosan's literary works have attracted significant interest from both language and literary researchers, not only for his unique narrative style but also for the wealth of data available for scholarly exploration. While much of the existing criticism has focused on Bulosan's novels through feminist, sociological, and historical lenses, there remains a notable gap in addressing his short stories and employing other literary frameworks. This study aimed to fill that gap by conducting a qualitative content analysis of Bulosan's short story "Life and Death of a Filipino in America," utilizing Marxism as an approach to literary analysis alongside thematic analysis. Through a meticulous examination of the text, this literary analysis identified key Marxist features, namely: base, superstructure, alienation, and class struggles depicted in the text. The findings primarily highlighted the author's emphasis on the vital role of labor unions and the importance of solidarity among marginalized communities as essential means for challenging the dominance of the ruling class. Ultimately, this study not only enriches the understanding of Bulosan's literary legacy but also contributes to broader discussions about identity, belonging, and the quest for dignity in the face of systemic oppression, making it a significant addition to the field of literary analysis.*

**Keywords:** Carlos Bulosan; Filipino immigrants; Marxism, base; superstructure; class struggles; alienation

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### Publication Details:

Article Received: August 29, 2024

Article Accepted: October 10, 2025

Article Published: December 31, 2025

Recommended citation in APA 7<sup>th</sup>:

Manzano, J. A. D., Felix, J. B., Lopez, S. R., & Cabagbag, C. M. L. (2025). Unearthing Bulosan's "Life and Death of a Filipino in America" through a Marxist lens. *International Review of Literary Studies*, 7(2): pp. 1-19. <https://irlsjournal.com/index.php/Irls>

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## INTRODUCTION

Literature reflects each country's unique culture, history, or identity. It is anything voiced, expressed, or invented (Krystal, 2014) and allows people to understand more narratives, providing valuable insights into life. Undoubtedly, it serves as a tool for reflection and acts as a repository of personal and textual histories, bridging one's life with those of others. With this in mind, the world is undeniably flooded with literary pieces, prompting literary scholars to develop frameworks and approaches for interpreting written works through literary analysis.

Over the years, literary analysis has evolved significantly, giving rise to a multitude of literary theories that serve as lenses for examining texts. These include approaches such as historical, sociological, biographical, formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, orientalism, post-modernism, feminism, and psychoanalysis, among others. One particularly noteworthy approach is Marxism, which interprets the dynamics of power, class, and wealth within literary works. This approach answers probing questions such as: "What role does class play in the work; what is the author's analysis of class relations?" "How do the characters overcome oppression?" "In what ways does the work serve as propaganda for the status quo, or does it try to undermine it?" "What does the work say about oppression, or are social conflicts ignored or blamed elsewhere?" "Does the work propose some form of utopian vision as a solution to the problems encountered in the work?" (Delahoyde, n.d.)

Interestingly, the Philippines is among the countries with a rich reservoir of literary works in various forms. This is evident from the number of poets, writers, authors, and novelists that the country has produced. Among them is Carlos P. Bulosan (1913-1956), a renowned diasporic writer who focused on narrating the experiences and struggles of Filipino immigrants in America.

Bulosan wrote a myriad of literary works dedicated to the Filipino nation, including his novels "America is in the Heart" and "The Cry and The Dedication," poems such as "I Want the Wide American Earth" and "If You Want to Know What We Are," and compilations of short stories like "The Philippines is in the Heart," "The Laughter of My Father," and "On Becoming Filipino," among others. Bulosan's literary pieces have captured the interest of both language and literary researchers not only because of his style but also due to the richness of data available for research. Bulosan's literary texts have been intriguing subjects for formalist criticism in the early 1970s, evolving into discussions on "gender, migration, transnationalism, and culture" due to various social and historical contexts such as racial prejudices, gender stereotypes, authoritarianism, and ultranationalism that he experienced as a diasporic writer in the United States in the 1930s (Cabusao, 2016).

Liu (2021) reinterpreted "America is in the Heart" by emphasizing the physical ailments and injuries suffered by Filipino characters to unveil their colonial and migrant experiences. He pointed out that working-class migrant Filipinos were disproportionately affected by tuberculosis, syphilis, hunger, injuries, and death, indicating severe social injustices. Liu used ecocritical theories to argue that these health issues reflect the devastating social conditions endured by Filipinos.

Further, Alquizola and Hirabashi (2016) critiqued Bulosan's collection of 24 short stories titled "The Laughter of My Father," highlighting the roles of Filipino women and their resistance to patriarchy in a neocolonial context. They presented women with different levels of agency, noting the mother figure, especially Mother Sampayan, as essential for family survival amid socioeconomic challenges, spotlighting women's resistance within the peasant class.

Amorao (2016) examined Bulosan's novel "America is in the Heart" and short story "As Long as the Grass Shall Grow," providing a critical look at the intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Through Bulosan's works, Amorao exposed the racial, gendered, and sexual violence of US neocolonialism and domestic racism, promoting an intersectional, anticolonial, and anti-capitalist approach to liberation.

These studies highlight the availability of reviews and criticisms employing feminist, sociological, and historical approaches (Liu, 2021; Cabusao, 2016; Alquizola & Hirabashi, 2016; Amorao, 2014) to interpret Bulosan's works. However, there remains a gap in research focusing on his short stories, and little is known about the nexus of the Marxist approach to his written works. In this context, this study was conceptualized.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literary analysis, the Marxist approach was employed to analyze Bulosan's literary work, making it crucial to define. Salao (2022) expounded on the Marxist literary approach, emphasizing its focus on divisions between social classes, economic conditions, and the power dynamics entrenched in society. This approach underscores the pivotal role of the social and economic context in which the literature was produced.

Abrams (1999) elucidated the Marxist perspective on literature, depicting it as a dynamic mirror of society, woven with intricate ideological threads. According to this approach, literature serves not merely as a narrative but as a conduit transmitting specific ideological messages. It posits that within literary works, the struggles among social classes find a voice, and the relentless pursuit of material prosperity is vividly portrayed through the characters' quests for wealth.

Moreover, Abrams (1999) emphasized that Marxists reject the notion of literature as timeless art, focusing instead on its profound shaping within contemporary economic and ideological landscapes. They contend that an author's social background and their thoughts on class dynamics inevitably imprint upon their writing, regardless of the depth of their scrutiny.

Meanwhile, Leitch (2001) claimed that Marxists view ideologies as attempts to "hide" the truths of class struggle from people's awareness, leading to the unconscious adoption of bourgeois doctrines. Consequently, Hamadi (2017) posited that since ideologies often lurk beneath the surface of literary texts, critics must delve into the unspoken, prioritizing the exploration of implicit themes over overt narratives. He elucidated Marx's contention that ideologies arise from a society's and an era's economic and social underpinnings, suggesting that literary analyses should meticulously account for the prevailing modes of production within a society during a given historical period.

It is also important to include studies that critiqued literary pieces through the lens of Marxism. Bashir *et al.* (2020) used the base-and-superstructure model, a feature of Marxism, to analyze "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield. Their Marxist analysis led them to discover the struggles of the subjugated class in society at the hands of the apathetic dominant class, as embedded in the text. They also delved into how one's social class profoundly shapes their beliefs and perspectives, as well as concepts of class conflict and oppression. Similarly, Astuti *et al.* (2014) employed Marxist criticism on Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables" using a descriptive analysis technique that included (1) reading the novel, (2) identifying the topic, (3) determining the characters, (4) noting the primary and secondary data sources, (5) reading Marxist-related books, and (6) determining the issues in the novel. They found that Hugo exposed the social injustices in France during the mid-nineteenth century and protested for revolution to obtain justice in society.

Furthermore, Rimun (2013) analyzed "The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins by dissecting the novel's portrayal of the capitalist system, hegemony, reification, and false consciousness, which are Marxist features. Their study concluded that the proletariats were portrayed as mere tools with poor lifestyles in the ideological world of the bourgeoisie, shedding light on societal mistreatment based on socioeconomic status.

Carlos Bulosan uncovered his experiences as an exile in his written works, specifically his story "America is in the Heart," characterized by physical hardships and anguish associated with "pasyon" (Espiritu, 2005). In his review, Chua (2007) expounded that the hardships of being an exile depicted in the semi-biographical novel illustrated "empathy (damay) and pity (awa) which in turn enjoin one to do one's share of 'redemptive suffering.'" He also noted Espiritu's (2005) observation:

*"The emphasis on sacrifice, toil, and suffering symbolized by 'America' seems far from the popular conception of a land of opportunity waiting for every profit-seeking immigrant or Horatio Alger. Rather, Bulosan's America hearkens to an idiom of protest in which compassion and empathy for the sufferings of others are paramount values, alongside an alacrity for self-sacrifice that is motivated by the attempt to give back to 'others' (e.g., Christ, Rizal) for their sacrifices."*

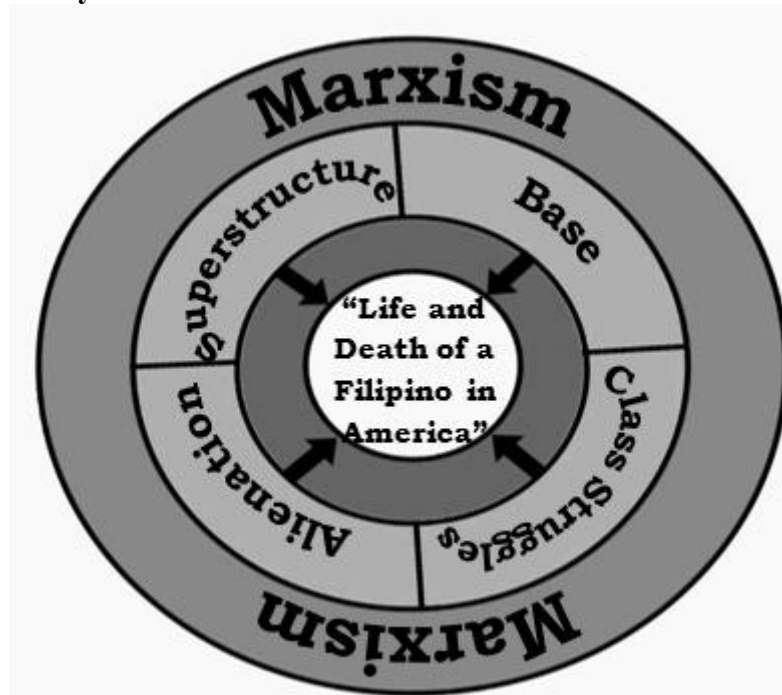
It is also crucial to note San Juan Jr.'s (2008) analysis that Bulosan stresses the importance of global unity to advocate for democratic rights and social justice, to resist fascism and imperialism, and to support oppressed communities worldwide, as portrayed in his works. Bulosan envisioned a more promising future achieved through the pursuit of human rights, freedom, equality, and

compassion. He underscored the value of drawing lessons from historical radical movements and revolutionary artists, especially during difficult times that offer both opportunities and challenges. The author suggested that crises can serve as chances for education and raising awareness by utilizing qualities such as “patience, resilience, humor, intelligence, and generosity”—traits epitomized by Filipinos in diverse cultural contexts, whether at home or abroad.

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, data source, and mode of analysis the researchers adopted as fundamental factors in establishing the direction of the study.

### Framework of the Study



**Figure 1. Framework of the Study**

As shown in the figure, this study centers on Carlos Bulosan's work, "Life and Death of a Filipino in America," which serves as the subject for this literary analysis. This is visually represented in the framework, where the text is centered, indicating its primary role in the analysis.

Surrounding the central text is a circle that contains arrows pointing towards it, representing the key features being analyzed: base, superstructure, alienation, and class struggles, contained by another circle. The "base" refers to the economic foundation of society that influences cultural and social structures, classified into means and relations of production, while the "superstructure" encompasses the societal institutions and cultural norms that arise from this economic base. Additionally, another theme depicted in the text was alienation, which is the sense of disconnection experienced by individuals within a capitalist society, and class struggles, which pertain to the conflicts between different social classes, particularly between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Positioned in the outermost circle, the Marxist literary approach serves as the overarching lens through which these features are interpreted. This positioning indicates that the analysis will utilize Marxist theory to explore how the identified features manifest within Bulosan's text. The framework is designed to provide a structured approach to analyzing a literary work through a Marxist perspective, elucidating how Bulosan's narrative reflects and critiques the socio-economic conditions faced by Filipinos in America. By situating the text within the Marxist theory, the study seeks to uncover deeper meanings related to identity, struggle, and societal dynamics. Hence, the framework effectively organizes the analysis by clearly illustrating the central text, the key features of Marxist theory under examination, and the theoretical lens guiding the interpretation, thereby enhancing understanding of the literary elements in Bulosan's work and its relevance to broader socio-political discussions.



## Research Design

This study employed qualitative content analysis informed by literary criticism through a Marxist lens. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio, to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences. This approach is valuable for developing a deeper, more substantial understanding of a problem and for generating novel ideas for further research (Bhandari, 2020).

Content analysis is a research tool used to identify recurring patterns in spoken or written language (Luo, 2019). It can be approached quantitatively (focusing on numerical data) or qualitatively (emphasizing comprehension). Regardless of the method, content analysis involves sorting through elements such as words and themes in texts and evaluating the results. Furthermore, De Maret *et al.* (2005) affirmed that content analysis is used to identify certain words or concepts within texts. In this mode of analysis, researchers “quantify and analyze the meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are part.”

Finally, Berelson (1952), as cited by De Maret *et al.* (2005), provided additional uses of content analysis: uncovering instances of propaganda; discerning the motives, priorities, or communication patterns of an individual or a group; outlining attitudes and actions triggered by communications; and assessing the psychological or emotional well-being of people.

## Source of Data

This study analyzed the selected short story by Carlos Bulosan, titled “Life and Death of a Filipino in America,” found in “On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings of Carlos Bulosan” (San Juan, 1995). The researchers employed purposive sampling in choosing the source of their data. Purposive sampling, also called judgment sampling, involves selecting specific units for a sample based on the characteristics a researcher requires, rather than randomly (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Further, Bernard (2002), as cited by Etikan, Musa, & Alkaasim (2016), affirmed that it is a technique of consciously selecting participants based on their specific characteristics.

“Life and Death of a Filipino in America” follows the experiences of Filipino immigrants—the narrator, Marco, Crispin, and Leroy—as they navigate life in the United States. The story grapples with themes of loss, survival, and identity amidst the class struggles and alienation suffered at the hands of the bourgeoisie. It portrays the protagonist’s encounters with death, reflecting the harsh realities of immigrant life while also showcasing the resilience and enduring spirit of Filipinos. Historically, the selected short story was set in 1930, when the Manong Generation and the Sakadas pursued their grand American Dream, the Great Depression occurred in America, and the Watsonville riots occurred in California (Yo, 2016; Duhigg, 2008; De Witt, 1979).

In this literary research, the text by Carlos Bulosan was chosen for analysis because it aligns with the predefined research objective: to examine a literary work through the lens of Marxism. The researchers selected Bulosan because his works often explore themes of class struggles in a foreign land. They chose to analyze his short story, “Life and Death of a Filipino in America,” for its Marxist themes, including the base-superstructure model, class struggle, and alienation.

## Mode of Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is defined as a “method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set.” As noted by Jason and Glenwick (2016), Braun and Clarke (2006), outlined a series of steps for conducting thematic analysis, which include immersing oneself in the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and ultimately producing a report.

In this study, the researchers focused on Carlos Bulosan’s “Life and Death of a Filipino in America” to identify manifestations of Marxism within the text. They systematically organized the data around key Marxist concepts, including base and superstructure, alienation, and class struggle.

Through this process, the researchers generated their interpretations of the text, highlighting how these themes reflected the broader socio-economic context of Bulosan's narrative.

The thematic analysis allowed the researchers to draw connections between experiences of the characters in the literary work and the principles of Marxist theory. By examining the short story through thematic analysis in tandem with Marxism as a literary lens, they were able to uncover deeper meanings related to the immigrant experience and the socio-political challenges faced by Filipinos in America. This approach not only enriched their understanding of Bulosan's work but also contributed to the ongoing discourse surrounding literature and social justice.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major themes of the literary text were categorized according to the concepts of base and superstructure, class struggle, and alienation. Each of these Marxist features was interpreted and supported with relevant excerpts from the story to enhance understanding. Additionally, external evidence was incorporated to further illuminate these themes and provide a richer context for the analysis.

**Base.** This is also referred to as the substructure, which encompasses the productive forces that underpin an economy. This concept is primarily divided into two components: the means of production, which include essential resources such as machinery, land, tools, and equipment, and the relations of production, which reflect the class divisions within society, including landowners, the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and other social strata. This foundational economic structure plays a crucial role in shaping and sustaining the superstructure, comprising the cultural, ideological, and institutional elements of society (Singh, 2014).

In the text, the means of production identified include carabao (water buffalo), agriculture, and gambling, which highlight the economic activities central to the characters' lives. The relations of production were demonstrated through the depiction of the bourgeoisie, represented by men with leather thongs and shotguns, in contrast to the proletariat, which includes the narrator's father, Leroy, Crispin, Marco, and the other thirty laborers. These dynamics among the different classes underscore the socio-economic tensions in Bulosan's narrative, reflecting broader themes of superstructure, class struggle, and alienation.

*"This animal and I grew up together like brothers; he was my constant companion in the fields and on the hillsides at the edge of our village when the rice was growing."*

The narrator stated that he treated the carabao as his companion, even his brother, in the rice fields, implying that the animal was used by Filipinos during the early 20th century as a tool for farming and a means of earning money. This excerpt also reflected the deep symbiotic relationship between humans and carabaos, encapsulating the economic and cultural significance of these animals in Filipino society. The passage highlighted the carabao's role as a working animal integral to the livelihood and cultural identity of Filipino farmers.

Carabaos, or water buffaloes, stood as emblematic figures of resilience and hard work deeply ingrained in Filipino cultural identity. Revered as valuable domestic animals and indispensable economic tools, they historically played a vital role in agricultural practices. From tilling fields to serving as modes of transportation and sources of milk and meat, carabaos symbolized the labor and sustenance of underprivileged farmers, particularly in rural communities (Villamor et al., 2021; Hsu, 2022). This reverence for carabaos was reflected in their designation as the national animal of the Philippines, serving as a testament to the enduring spirit of Filipino farmers.

*"It was a cool summer night and the sky was as clear as day and the ripening ricefields were golden in the moonlight."*

The narrator revealed that one of their means of production, managed by his father and him, was rice fields. In the early 20th century, Filipino peasants relied on rice farming but struggled with an unequal land tenure system featuring sharecropping, leaving many impoverished as large estates were controlled by a few. Traditional farming methods and the scarcity of modern techniques made

them vulnerable to price changes and natural disasters. American colonizers' attempts to modernize agriculture and reform land tenure were sluggish, fueling social unrest and calls for land reform and fairer tenancy laws. Thus, economic hardship prompted some peasants to migrate to urban areas or abroad for broader prospects (Sobritchea, 1981).

*"I was in California in a small agricultural community."*

The narrator's experience working in a small agricultural community in California revealed the important role Filipino laborers played in the state's farming industry during the early 20th century. As the passage noted, the narrator was employed alongside Leroy and 30 other workers, indicating the prevalence of Filipino migrant labor in California agriculture at the time. This aligned with research showing that by the 1920s, Filipinos had become the primary workforce in California's Asian agricultural labor industry, a trend that continued for the next two decades (Lee & Yung, 2011). The narrator's firsthand account provided a glimpse into the lived experiences of these Filipino farmworkers and the economic realities that drew them to agricultural labor in California.

*"I took him to my room and for days we slept together, eating what we could buy with the few cents that we begged in gambling houses from night to night."*

When the narrator and Crispin arrived in Seattle, they encountered gambling houses and relied on begging for money from these establishments. However, it was revealed later in the story that the gambling houses close during the winter season, and both gamblers and the narrator faced starvation due to the financial hardships exacerbated by the Great Depression. The passage highlighted the precarious living conditions and financial struggles faced by the narrator and Crispin in Seattle.

Lawrence (2010) documented that during the Great Depression in Seattle, some people turned to gambling as a means to cope with tough economic times, leading to extreme actions such as murder and suicide. With heightened unemployment rates and economic distress, individuals resorted to gambling in hopes of making quick money. The narrator's reliance on begging in gambling houses reflected the desperation felt by many during this period, as they sought any means necessary to survive the harsh economic realities of the Great Depression.

*"...several men came into our bunkhouse and grabbed Leroy from the table and dragged him outside... Before Leroy realized what was happening to him, a big man came toward him from the darkness with a rope in his left hand and a shining shotgun in the other."*

The unnamed characters with leather thongs, rope, and shotgun were considered part of the bourgeoisie or the dominant class in the narrative. Having privilege and power in society, they caused the dehumanization of the proletariat, specifically portrayed in the brutal murder of Leroy, and demonstrated the lengths to which the powerful would go to maintain their dominance. This aligned with the findings of De Witt (1979) regarding the Watsonville Riots in 1930, wherein Filipino laborers suffered from racial discrimination and physical assaults, highlighting the systemic oppression they faced as marginalized members of society.

The use of weapons and the act of murder in this context underscored the power dynamics at play, revealing the vulnerability of the proletariat in the face of bourgeois aggression. Leroy's tragic fate symbolized the broader plight of the lower class who are often subjected to violence and exploitation, reinforcing the narrative's critique of social inequality. This contextualized the contrast between the proletariat, represented by Leroy, and the bourgeoisie, symbolized by the perpetrators of the violence, emphasizing the urgent need for social justice and recognition of the humanity of all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status.

*"My father and I were plowing in the month of May."*

In the excerpt, the narrator and his father are depicted as engaged in the arduous work of rice farming. This portrayal highlighted their roles as peasants, placing them firmly within the oppressed class of society. The semi-biographical nature of Carlos Bulosan's works suggested that this depiction likely reflected the harsh economic realities faced by many Filipino sharecroppers, who were often exploited by absentee landlords, effectively rendering them akin to slaves (Circa, 1943, as cited by San Juan Jr., 2008).

This passage situated the characters within a socio-economic context, emphasizing not only their laborious agricultural work but also their vulnerable position in society. The act of plowing, a fundamental agricultural task, symbolized the hard labor that sustains rural communities while simultaneously underscoring the struggles of those who perform it. San Juan Jr.'s (2008) study supported the interpretation of Bulosan's narrative as a reflection of the injustices faced by Filipino peasants during that historical period, drawing attention to the pervasive issues of exploitation and social inequality that characterized their lives.

By illustrating the daily realities of the narrator and his father, Bulosan shed light on the systemic issues affecting the agricultural workforce in the Philippines. Their labor is not just a means of survival but also a testament to the resilience and dignity of those who endure such hardships. Ultimately, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the socio-economic struggles that continue to resonate in contemporary discussions about labor rights and social justice.

*"...I befriended a fellow passenger of my age named Marco. He was an uneducated peasant boy from the northern part of our island who wanted to earn a little money in the new land and return to his village."*

In this excerpt, the character of Marco was portrayed as an uneducated peasant from the northern Philippines. His situation associated with the working class, emphasizing his identity as a proletariat. Despite carrying \$10 in cash and aspiring to achieve his version of the American Dream, Marco's tragic fate illustrated the harsh realities faced by marginalized individuals in society, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds.

The narrative took a dark turn when Marco, while trying to assist the narrator suffering from seasickness, was tragically murdered, and his money was stolen. This brutal act underscored the vulnerability of marginalized characters like Marco, who, despite their aspirations, were often victims of violence and exploitation. The incident served as a reminder of the struggles faced by many during this period, highlighting the precariousness of life for those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

The early 20th century was marked by significant socio-economic changes in the Philippines, including a wave of Filipino immigrants to the United States known as the "Manong Generation." This group predominantly consisted of Ilokanos and Visayans who sought better job opportunities and escaped the dire conditions in their homeland (Yo, 2016). Bulosan's portrayal of Marco's origins from the northern Philippines not only contextualized his character within this historical framework but also reflected the broader experiences of Filipino immigrants who sought to improve their lives in an often hostile environment.

*"...And then one night when we had not eaten for five days, I got out of bed and ate several pages of an old newspaper by soaking them in a can of water from the faucet in our room.... I finally went to sleep from utter exhaustion, but when I woke up again, Crispin was dead."*

In this passage, Crispin was depicted as a character embodying a marginalized and alienated proletariat. His presence in the narrative highlighted the struggles faced by individuals who, despite their profound aspirations, remained largely unseen and unrecognized by society. Crispin's character was described to be filled with "poetry" that often goes unnoticed, emphasizing the theme of alienation prevalent in the story.



*“He was very gentle and there was something luminous about him, like the strange light that flashes in my mind when I sometimes think of the hills of home. He had been educated and he recited poetry with a sad voice that made me cry. He always spoke of goodness and beauty in the world.”*

Crispin embarked on a new life in the United States during one of its most challenging periods, the Great Depression, which exacerbated the racial discrimination he faced and ultimately led to his tragic death from hunger. This aspect of his journey underscored the harsh realities that many Filipino immigrants encountered as they sought better opportunities in a foreign land. Austin and Williard (1998) underscored the profound impact of the Great Depression on Filipino Americans, who confronted widespread unemployment alongside systemic racial prejudices and cruelty, further complicating their pursuit of the American Dream.

This put Crispin’s symbolic role as a representative of marginalized individuals during the Great Depression on the broader socio-economic and racial dynamics that shaped Filipino American experiences in the early 20th century. The convergence of economic turmoil and racial marginalization left Filipino immigrants particularly vulnerable, subjected to exploitation and exclusion from mainstream society.

*“I lived in a big bunkhouse of thirty workers with Leroy...”*

In the excerpt, the narrator described his living situation among fellow laborers, highlighting their collective identity as part of the proletariat. Leroy and the other 30 laborers were positioned in the lower class of society, illustrating the struggles faced by those who toiled in agricultural jobs. Following the Philippine-American War, a wave of predominantly young men migrated to California and Hawaii in search of better opportunities, driven by the economic hardships in their homeland (Zong & Batalova, 2018; Lott, 2006).

These laborers were motivated by poverty, which was exacerbated by U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. Carlos Bulosan, like the narrator and his companions, embarked on a journey to pursue the elusive "American Dream," a quest shared by many Filipino immigrants during the early 20th century (San Juan Jr., 1993). This collective aspiration underscored the desperation and hope that characterized the lives of many seeking a better future in a foreign land.

The Filipino American Curriculum Project by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program (2006) documented the migration of 126,147 Filipinos known as “sakadas” to Hawaii as skilled laborers from 1906 to 1946, primarily from the Ilocos and Visayas regions. This historical context illustrates the significant contributions of Filipino workers to the agricultural sector in the United States. Immigration laws, such as the 1917 and 1924 acts, facilitated the entry of Filipinos to meet the growing labor demands, despite the discriminatory policies that targeted people of Asian descent.

By the 1920s, a significant number of Filipino immigrants were young, single men who became the predominant workforce in the Asian agricultural labor industry in California for the subsequent two decades (Lee & Yung, 2011). American farm owners often preferred hiring Filipino workers because they could manage challenging work environments. Specifically, in California’s Santa Clara and San Joaquin valleys, Filipinos were regularly assigned demanding tasks in growing and harvesting crops such as asparagus, celery, and lettuce (Baldoz, 2011).

The aforementioned studies contextualized the socio-economic circumstances of Filipino immigrants in the early 20th century, illustrating their pivotal role in American agriculture amidst discriminatory immigration policies and economic challenges. These laborers not only contributed to the agricultural output of the United States but also faced systemic barriers that hindered their integration into society. This further shed light on the broader dynamics of exploitation and resilience that defined the lives of Filipino immigrants during this period.

**Superstructure.** This pertains to all non-economic elements of society that are derived from and influenced by the economic base. In Carlos Bulosan's text, this includes various aspects such as

culture, education, and ideological determinants that shape the lived experiences of the characters. The superstructure plays a critical role in "maintaining and shaping" the base, as it not only reflects but also reinforces the underlying economic conditions that govern social interactions and hierarchies (Singh, 2014). By examining these elements, one can gain a deeper understanding of how societal values and beliefs are intertwined with economic realities, ultimately influencing the characters' struggles and aspirations.

*"My mother was writhing and kicking frantically at the old woman who was attending her, but when the child was finally delivered and cleaned I saw that my mother was frothing at the mouth and slowly becoming still."*

In this excerpt, the traditional method of assisting childbirth, known as "hilot," performed by a "kumadrona" (traditional birth attendant), was depicted through the old woman. This cultural practice has its roots in the Spanish colonization of the Philippines in 1565, where childbirth rituals involved various methods such as sneezing with a special powder made from mustard seed and pepper, drinking a mixture of wine and water, and applying coconut oil mixed with escobillai juice to the mother's abdomen (Calderon, 1908). The vivid description of the mother's frantic movements and the eventual stillness underscored the intensity and potential risks associated with traditional birthing practices, particularly in the absence of modern medical interventions.

The excerpt highlighted the cultural and historical context of childbirth practices in the Philippines during the early 20th century, demonstrating the influence of Spanish traditions on local customs. The "hilot" method, passed down through generations, was a testament to the resilience and adaptability of Filipino culture in the face of colonial influences. However, the passage also suggested the potential dangers associated with these practices, as evidenced by the mother's death after the delivery. This contrast raised questions about the evolution of healthcare practices and the need to balance traditional knowledge with modern medical advancements.

*"I got seasick the moment we left Manila, and Marco started hiding oranges and apples in his suitcase for me."*

In this passage, Marco's gesture of kindness towards the narrator revealed the camaraderie and solidarity prevalent among Filipino immigrants, especially during challenging times. His act of stealing fruits to alleviate the narrator's seasickness illustrated the deep bonds formed through shared experiences of displacement and hardship. This mutual support network exemplified the resilience and resourcefulness of Filipino immigrants striving to carve out a better life in a foreign land, highlighting the importance of community in overcoming adversity.

Moreover, Marco embodied the Filipino value of "bayanihan," also known as "tulongan" and "damayan," which emphasizes collaboration rooted in community and nationhood. This cultural value symbolizes selfless sacrifice for the collective good, fostering unity and solidarity among individuals. In times of scarcity, such practices facilitate resource sharing and collective action, reflecting a profound sense of kinship and shared responsibility (Ang, 1979). Marco's actions, therefore, were not merely acts of kindness but representations of a broader cultural ethos that prioritizes communal well-being over individual gain.

This excerpt underscored the cultural significance of Marco's actions within the broader context of Filipino immigrant experiences, providing insight into the values that guide community interactions. The emphasis on mutual support and solidarity highlights how these cultural practices serve as vital coping mechanisms in the face of adversity. By illustrating the importance of these values, the narrative emphasized the enduring strength of the Filipino community, revealing how cultural traditions can foster resilience and hope in challenging circumstances.

*"He was an uneducated peasant boy from the northern part of our island who wanted to earn a little money in the new land and return to his village. It seemed there was a girl waiting for*

*him when he came back, and although she was also poor and uneducated, Marco found happiness in her small brown face and simple ways."*

In the narrative, the educational background of Filipino immigrants was depicted through Marco's and his girlfriend's lack of formal education. Despite their limited schooling, the passage suggested that they found happiness and contentment in each other's company, highlighting the value of love and companionship over material wealth or social status. Conversely, Crispin was portrayed as educated, reciting poetry to the narrator, suggesting that Filipinos did not receive equal privileges in education before.

During the American colonial period in the Philippines, the importance of education was emphasized, yet many Filipino pupils faced significant challenges. Monroe (1925) reported that "82% of the [Filipino] pupils did not go beyond Grade 4," highlighting the educational limitations faced by Filipino children. Counts (1925) also noted that while Filipino elementary pupils performed well in subjects like Science and Mathematics, they struggled with English-related subjects, reflecting the difficulties of learning in a foreign language. These statistics illuminate the systemic barriers that hindered access to quality education for many Filipinos during this period.

Furthermore, Filipino students were disadvantaged by studying using foreign educational materials and methods imposed by the American colonial regime. This educational framework contributed to the perception of Filipino immigrants as uneducated laborers in foreign countries, reinforcing their marginalization within the class hierarchy (Grefalda, 2006, as cited by San Juan Jr., 2008). The excerpt illustrated how educational disparities shaped the opportunities and perceptions of Filipino immigrants during the early 20th century, contributing to their roles and identities within American society.

*"It was then that my father started beating our carabao mercilessly. The animal jumped from the mud and ran furiously across the field, leaving the wooden plow stuck into the trunk of a large dead tree. My father unsheathed his sharp bolo and raced him, the thin blade of the steel weapon gleaming in the slanting rain."*

In this passage, the violent reaction of the narrator's father towards the carabao symbolized the desperation and frustration of a small farmer struggling against the harsh realities of a capitalist system. The carabao, a vital tool for agricultural labor, became a target of the father's anger, reflecting the broader societal forces that have pushed him to the brink of desperation.

Capitalism, an ideological determinant depicted in the harsh situation of the narrator's father and himself, is criticized for isolating the masses in the perspective of Marxism, arguing that while workers are sources of market wealth, the "market forces control things." Individuals are compelled to toil for capitalists who wield complete authority over production and uphold dominance within the workplace (Prychitko, n.d.). In the text, the father's actions were caused by the capitalist system, which prioritizes profit over the well-being of the working class.

To trace the reason for the violent reaction of the narrator's father, it was revealed in a sketch published in Poetry Magazine by Carlos Bulosan: "My father was a small farmer, but when I was five or six years old his small plot of land was taken by usury; and usury was the greatest racket of the ilustrado, and it still is although it is now the foreigners who are fattening on it. My father had a big family to support, so he became the sharecropper, which is no different from the sharecroppers from the Southern States. Years after, because of this sharecropping existence, my father fell into debts with his landlord, who was always absent, who had never seen his tenants---and this was absentee landlordism, even more oppressive than feudalism. Then my father really became a slave---and they tell me there is no slavery in the Philippine Islands!" (Circa, 1943, as cited by San Juan Jr., 2008). This biographical narrative, linked to the narrator of the story, unveils the injustices faced by small farmers whose land was seized by usury, the insidious racket of the ruling elite in the past.

Forced into sharecropping, he was chased into a cycle of debt bondage, eternalized by absentee landlords who wielded unchecked power over their tenants. This form of oppression reduced peasants to virtual slaves, trapped in a relentless struggle for survival. The father's desperate act of

violence towards the injured carabao was a manifestation of the brutality of systemic oppression against farmers. It reflected the moral complexities of survival in a society rife with inequality, where the line between victim and oppressor blurs in the face of desperation. His actions emphasized the harsh realities faced by peasants who, pushed to the brink, may resort to extreme measures to assert agency in a system designed to subjugate them.

*"I arrived in America when thousands of people were waiting in line for a piece of bread. I kept on moving from town to town, from filthy job to another, and then many years were gone."*

In this excerpt, the narrator's experiences as a Filipino immigrant in the United States during the Great Depression were vividly portrayed. The image of people waiting in line for bread highlighted the widespread poverty and desperation that characterized this period, while the narrator's constant movement from job to job underscored the difficulty of life for many immigrants struggling to survive in a hostile economic environment.

Looking at the bigger picture, this excerpt uncovered the experiences of both Filipino immigrants and Americans during the Great Depression. The Great Depression laid bare the inherent flaws of the capitalist system, harshly increasing inequalities and hardships for marginalized communities, including Filipino immigrants and other people of color. This economic downturn, considered one of the most severe in global history, plunged the nation into widespread economic devastation, characterized by skyrocketing unemployment rates and the collapse of countless businesses (Garraty, 1986; Duhigg, 2008).

San Juan Jr. (2008) observed that the Manongs and other racial minorities in the U.S. were disproportionately affected by unemployment and economic disenfranchisement, further compounded by racialized discrimination and exploitation. This excerpt unraveled the impact of Capitalism on both individual experiences, such as the narrator's struggles to find stability and security, and broader societal issues, including systemic inequality and racial discrimination.

*"I lived in a big bunkhouse of thirty workers with Leroy, who was a stranger to me in many ways because he was always talking about unions and unity. But he had a way of words in utter simplicity, like "work" which he translated into "power," and "power" into "security." I was drawn to him because I felt that he had lived in many places where the courage of men was tested with the cruelest weapons conceivable."*

In this excerpt, the narrator provided a compelling portrayal of the power dynamics within society, reflecting a Marxist perspective on class struggle and the exploitation of labor. Leroy's simplistic yet profound articulation of "work" as "power" and "power" as "security" encapsulated the inherent value of labor and its transformative potential in shaping individuals' socio-economic conditions. This aligned with the Marxist assertion that the proletariat, or working class, holds true power in society through their labor, despite being relegated to the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy.

In the context of Marxism, the narrative presented a clear division between the bourgeoisie (upper class) and the proletariat (lower class), with the characters who murdered Leroy representing the former. The proletariat, including the narrator, Leroy, and the other thirty laborers, was depicted as an exploited class within capitalism, forced to accept minimal wages in exchange for their labor while using the means of production controlled by the ruling class (Ernesto, 2019). Despite their essential roles in mass production, the farmers and peasants in the story were relegated to the lowest class of society, facing exploitation, deprivation of fair wages, and discrimination under the capitalist system.

Furthermore, the degrading stereotypes and negative connotations associated with peasants can be attributed to the rise of capitalism and proletarianism, which perpetuate class divisions and exploitation. As capitalism situates peasants to the lowest class, their inherent intelligence and adaptive skills are often overshadowed by systemic inequalities and discrimination. The term



"laborers," while seemingly innocuous, carries deep connotations of dispossession and exploitation within the capitalist framework, highlighting the struggles faced by those labeled as such.

San Juan Jr. (2008) argued that the designation of Filipinos as laborers is not a result of their lack of education but stems from their dispossession, racialization, and colonization under imperialist regimes. This perspective pulls in the ideologies of colonialism and racism depicted in the text, illustrating how these forces intersect to marginalize Filipino workers. Racism, as a complex global system of superiority and inferiority, is shaped by political, cultural, and economic forces over centuries within the capitalist or patriarchal western-centric modern/colonial system (Grosfoguel, 2011).

Another ideology manifested in this excerpt is communism, particularly through Leroy's ideas regarding "unions and unity." This assertion aligns with the Marxist assumption that if the proletariat is constantly subjugated and dehumanized by the bourgeoisie, they will be compelled to revolt. By 1933, Filipino laborers formed the first Filipino-led union, the Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union Local 18257 in Seattle, demonstrating their desire for collective action despite facing significant challenges, including violence and discrimination (Fresco, 1999).

Through Leroy's brilliant socio-economic ideals, which were tragically wasted in his brutal death, Bulosan challenged stereotypes and advocated for a more equitable society where the proletariat is recognized as the true source of power and social wealth. The literary piece revealed the stark reality of exploitation within capitalist systems, particularly through the economic conditions of characters like Marco, Crispin, Leroy, and the narrator. The Marxist perspective illuminated the systemic deprivation of opportunities for farmers and peasants, perpetuated by capitalism, racism, and colonialism, underscoring the urgent need for social justice and reform.

**Alienation.** Mukhopadhyay (2020), citing the influential work of Karl Marx, elucidated the concept of alienation, which described the disconnection experienced by workers from their labor. This phenomenon is characterized by a lack of purpose, satisfaction, and opportunities for personal growth, leaving workers feeling isolated, humiliated, unworthy, and insignificant. The fruits of their labor primarily benefit others, serving only to meet their basic needs rather than contributing to their own fulfillment or self-actualization.

Furthermore, alienation manifests as a sense of estrangement from oneself or society, leading to feelings of powerlessness and a diminished sense of control over one's life (Evans, 2024). This disconnection underscores the broader implications of labor in capitalist societies, where individuals may find themselves detached not only from their work but also from their own identities and social relationships. The consequences of this alienation can be far-reaching, impacting job satisfaction and overall well-being.

In Bulosan's text, themes of alienation include class exploitation, societal exclusion, and racial discrimination, highlighting the profound disconnection experienced by Filipino immigrants. The concept of alienation, as explored by Karl Marx, serves as a critical framework for understanding how individuals become estranged from their labor and their sense of identity within capitalist systems. By examining these themes, one can better address the systemic issues that perpetuate exploitation and marginalization, ultimately striving for a more equitable and fulfilling relationship between workers and their labor.

*"Suddenly there was a scream and someone shouted for the light. I ran to the corner and clicked the switch and when the room was flooded with light, I saw Marco lying on the floor and bleeding from several knife wounds on his body."*

In this passage, the tragic fate of Marco illustrated the alienation experienced by Filipino immigrants in society. Marco, driven by aspirations to improve his financial situation with a mere \$10, represented the vulnerability of many immigrants seeking a better life. As noted by Carey McWilliams, a labor advocate and associate of Carlos Bulosan, Filipino immigrants were often stereotyped as "innocent, credulous, and wide-eyed," lacking the business acumen attributed to other Asian immigrant groups (Weltzien, 2014).

These stereotypes rendered Filipinos particularly vulnerable to exploitation in unfamiliar environments. Despite their perceived lack of economic threat and being a numerical minority, Filipino immigrants still faced significant discrimination and exploitation in the labor market. This reflected patterns of racialization and marginalization that shaped their experiences in the United States, highlighting the systemic barriers they encountered.

The violence that Marco faced served as an example of the dangers that accompany the immigrant experience, particularly for those who are marginalized. His tragic end underscored the harsh realities that many Filipino laborers encountered, often working in precarious conditions with little protection. This situation is emblematic of the broader struggles faced by immigrant communities, who are frequently subjected to violence and exploitation due to their socio-economic status and racial identity.

Furthermore, the excerpt illustrated how the intersection of race and class exacerbated the vulnerabilities of Filipino immigrants. The societal perception of Filipinos as less capable or threatening allowed for their exploitation by those in power, reinforcing existing hierarchies. This dynamic not only perpetuated stereotypes but also contributed to a cycle of poverty and marginalization that many Filipino immigrants found difficult to escape.

Marco's story reflected the narrative of Filipino immigrants in the United States during a time of economic hardship and social discrimination. The excerpt highlighted the need to challenge harmful stereotypes and recognize the resilience of immigrant communities. By understanding the complexities of their experiences, society can work towards creating a more equitable environment that acknowledges the contributions and struggles of all individuals, regardless of their background.

*"I arrived in America when thousands of people were waiting in line for a piece of bread. I kept on moving from town to town, from filthy job to another, and then many years were gone."*

In this passage, the narrator's experiences exemplified how Filipino immigrants were treated as strangers in a foreign land. The narrator embarked on a cycle of moving between towns and taking up menial jobs to survive, highlighting the precarious nature of life for many immigrants during this period. In the subsequent lines of the narrative, the narrator encountered Crispin, who was similarly alienated in society, underscoring the shared struggles faced by Filipino immigrants.

Both the narrator and Crispin were reduced to begging, relegated to the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, and rendered powerless in the face of adversity. This portrayal reflected the harsh realities that many Filipino immigrants confronted upon arriving in the United States. Seattle emerged as a central destination for many Filipino immigrants, attracting migrants from across Asia. Upon arrival, Filipinos secured employment through contracts, often laboring in Alaskan canneries or the fields of Yakima Valley. Seattle also served as a crucial residential hub, particularly for young Filipino men during periods of economic hardship or seasonal transitions. The city had gambling venues, bustling hotels filled with laborers, dance halls, and bars (Fresco, 1999).

However, their arrival coincided with the Great Depression of the 1930s, during which Filipino immigrants, as affirmed by Austin and Williard (1998), faced not only widespread unemployment but also systemic racial prejudices and cruelty. The intersection of economic turmoil and racial marginalization left Filipino immigrants exceptionally vulnerable, subjected to exploitation and exclusion from mainstream society. This excerpt highlighted the challenges faced by Filipino immigrants in the United States, underscoring the need to recognize and address the systemic barriers that hindered their integration and success.

*"Before Leroy realized what was happening to him, a big man came toward him from the darkness with a rope in his left hand and a shining shotgun in the other. He tied the rope around Leroy's neck while the other men pointed their guns at us, and when they had taken him outside, where he began screaming like a pig about to be butchered, two men stayed at the door with their aimed guns."*

In this excerpt, the violent scene illustrated the pervasive racial discrimination and violence faced by Filipino immigrants in the United States. Leroy's brutal treatment reflected the harsh realities of life for marginalized communities, who often found themselves at the mercy of systemic oppression. This violence was emblematic of the societal issues that Filipino immigrants encountered, where their lives were frequently devalued and subjected to brutal acts of aggression.

This racialized oppression was exacerbated by legislative measures such as the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which stripped Filipino immigrants of their citizenship rights and relegated them to the status of aliens (San Juan Jr., 2008). Such laws further marginalized them within American society, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and exclusion. The legal framework established by this act not only denied Filipinos basic rights but also reinforced their status as second-class citizens, making them particularly vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

From a Marxist perspective, Leroy's murder unraveled the inherent violence necessary to maintain capitalist power structures. In such structures, proletarianized and marginalized communities are often treated as expendable commodities in the pursuit of profit. The narrative served as a depiction of the oppression experienced by Filipino immigrants under capitalism, where the dynamics of race, class, and power perpetuate violence and exploitation, highlighting the intersectionality of their struggles.

**Class Struggles.** This refers to the ongoing conflict between two opposing classes: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor. This conflict can manifest in various forms, ranging from overt confrontations, such as strikes and protests, to more subtle expressions of discontent, such as passive resistance and silent grievances. In early or undeveloped stages, these struggles may appear as isolated disputes between workers and employers, dragging the inherent power dynamics at play (Harnecker, n.d.; Innes & Plaut, 1978).

In Carlos Bulosan's text, the themes of class struggle include class exploitation and race-based violence. By exploring these themes, Bulosan sheds light on the broader implications of class struggle in capitalist societies, where economic disparities are associated to social injustices. This depiction encourages readers to reflect on the complexities of power relations and the ways in which marginalized groups resist and navigate their circumstances. Ultimately, the text serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing relevance of class struggle in contemporary discussions about social equity and justice.

*"My father climbed down the hole and looked at the carabao with tears in his eyes. I did not know if they were tears of madness or of repressed fury."*

In this excerpt, the narrator's father exemplified the plight of peasants within capitalist agrarian systems. His emotional response to the suffering of the carabao reflected the deep connection between farmers and their labor, as well as the despair that arises from their exploitation. From a Marxist perspective, this moment captured the struggles of peasants, who are relegated to society's lowest standing and endure systematic deprivation of their rights and resources.

Peasants like the narrator's father faced the relentless exploitation of their labor, as landlords extract surplus value from their work, enriching a privileged minority at their expense. This dynamic illustrated the inherent class struggles within capitalist systems, where the labor of the masses is often undervalued and overlooked. The narrative underscored how such economic exploitation can drive the proletariat to desperation, potentially inciting revolutionary impulses as they seek to reclaim their dignity and rights.

The emotional turmoil experienced by the narrator's father highlights the psychological impact of economic hardship on individuals and families. His tears, whether stemming from madness or repressed fury, symbolize the broader despair felt by many who are trapped in cycles of poverty and exploitation. By depicting this emotional struggle, the narrative called attention to the urgent need for social justice and reform, emphasizing the importance of addressing the root causes of inequality in society.

*“We rushed outside all at once, stumbling against each other. And there hanging on a eucalyptus tree, naked and shining in the pale light of the April moon, Leroy was swinging like a toy balloon. We cut him down and put him on the grass, but he died the moment we reached him. His genitals were cut and there was a deep knife wound in his chest. His left eye was gone and his tongue was sliced into tiny shreds. There was a wide gash across his belly and his entrails plopped out and spread on the cool grass.”*

Bulosan painted a grim picture of the brutal realities faced by Filipino immigrants in America during the early 20th century. The vivid and horrific imagery of Leroy's lifeless body served as a powerful representation for the violence inflicted upon the proletariat under capitalism. This encapsulated the tragic fate of many Filipino laborers, highlighting the extreme vulnerability of marginalized communities subjected to systemic oppression.

As Viola (2006) noted, Filipino immigrants, primarily working as farm laborers, were subjected to racial discrimination and violence, denied access to government employment and land ownership. This systemic exclusion not only perpetuated economic hardship but also reinforced their status as second-class citizens within American society. Wong (n.d.) further affirmed the physical exhaustion and unjust wages endured by farmers and factory laborers during this period, highlighting the exploitative nature of capitalist labor relations that devalued their contributions and well-being.

The cruel murder of Leroy, along with the tragic deaths of Marco and Crispin, depicted the violence inflicted upon peasants under the ideologies of capitalism, racism, and proletarianism. The tragic fates of these characters symbolized the human cost of capitalist exploitation, urging readers to confront systemic inequalities and strive for a more just and equitable world. Their stories serve as reminders of the brutal realities that many faced, illustrating the need for unity and revolution against oppressive systems.

The abhorrent living conditions endured by Filipino laborers, as described by Yen Le Espiritu (1995), further unraveled the systemic oppression embedded within capitalist labor camps. These camps were characterized by dilapidated housing, harsh climates, unsanitary conditions, and a lack of privacy, all of which contributed to the degradation of the workers' dignity and health. Such conditions reflect the broader societal neglect of the needs and rights of immigrant laborers, reinforcing their marginalization within the economic structure.

Moreover, the excerpt underscored the intersecting forces of capitalism and racial oppression that shaped the lived experiences of Filipino immigrants during the Great Depression. Through its evocative portrayal of hardship and resilience, the narrative offered a glimpse of the human toll of economic downturns and systemic injustices. It also revealed the enduring spirit of survival and solidarity among proletarianized communities, emphasizing the importance of collective action in the face of adversity.

The excerpt also reflected historical events such as the Watsonville riots of 1930, documented by De Witt (1979), which involved brutal physical attacks on Filipino-American laborers by American residents amid racial and socioeconomic tensions in California's agricultural communities. These riots exemplified the violent backlash against Filipino immigrants, further illustrating the precarious position they occupied in society. Arguelles (2017) further asserted that dozens of Filipino men were beaten in their homes during these riots, highlighting the pervasive climate of fear and hostility that marked their daily lives.

Additionally, instances of bombings targeting Filipinos were documented, such as the bombing of the Filipino Federation of America building in Stockton (Perez, F., & Perez, L., 1994) and a Filipino labor camp in the Imperial Valley (Fojas & Guevarra, 2012). These violent acts serve to resonate the racial animosity and systemic violence that Filipino immigrants faced, further entrenching their status as targets of discrimination. Collectively, these events underscore the urgent need to acknowledge and address the historical injustices experienced by Filipino immigrants, advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society.

## Conclusion



This study concludes that Bulosan emphasized the critical importance of labor unions and solidarity among marginalized communities as a means to challenge the power of the dominant class, as reflected in the text's Marxist features. Ultimately, Bulosan's narrative not only reflected the historical struggles of Filipino immigrants during the 1930s but also resonated with contemporary issues of social justice and inequality, highlighting the enduring relevance of his work in understanding the complexities of identity, belonging, and the quest for dignity in the face of systemic oppression. The findings further suggest that a more nuanced study is needed to fully highlight the thematic connections and their impact on social development.

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