

**THE MAIN FEMALE CHARACTER'S STRUGGLE AGAINST  
OPPRESSION IN ANGIE CRUZ'S *DOMINICANA***

**THESIS**

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK  
IBRAHIM MALANG**

**2025**

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OPPRESSION IN ANGIE CRUZ'S *DOMINICANA***

**THESIS**

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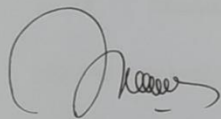
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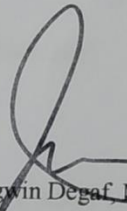
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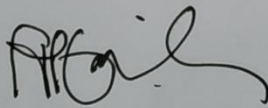
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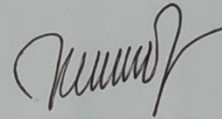
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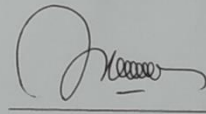
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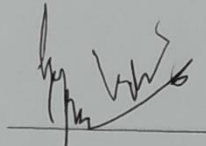
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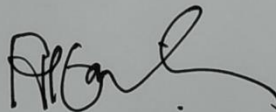


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## **MOTTO**

“Live gloriously, Die to Heaven”

“Q.S. Al-Insyirah 5-6”

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my family who always support me to finish this thesis well. I, myself, Avida Putri Laksono thank you for fighting, holding on so far, even though it passes through the pain, tired, confused, and fall back up.

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1. My entire family, for their unwavering love, compassion, and support during my academic pursuit. My success is a result of their faith in me and their willingness to make sacrifices.
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Malang, October 2 2025

Avida Putri Laksono

## ABSTRACT

**Laksono, Avida Putri.** (2025). *The Main Female Character's Struggle Against Oppression In Angie Cruz's Dominicana*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Hj, Istiadah, M.A.

Key word: *Dominicana, oppression, Iris Marion Young, feminism, resistance*

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This thesis analyses Angie Cruz's novel *Dominicana* (2019) by applying Iris Marion Young's theory of the four faces of oppression (exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) to examine how the literary work reflects the complex realities of immigrant women facing patriarchal traditions and structural injustice. The main objective of this study is to answer the research questions: 1) What types of oppression are experienced by the main female character in Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*? 2) How does the main female character struggle against oppression in Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*? The method used in this research is a feminist literary criticism approach, where the text is analysed based on Young's theoretical framework. The results of the analyses show that Ana experiences exploitation through her forced marriage, powerlessness as an immigrant with limited opportunities, cultural imperialism that suppresses her Dominican identity, and violence that functions as a tool of control within her marriage. However, the findings also reveal that Ana gradually develops struggle of resistance by building supportive relationships, voicing her personal desires, and seeking autonomy, which reflect her resilience and agency. Thus, the novel not only exposes the realities of oppression faced by immigrant women but also emphasizes the possibility of empowerment, solidarity, and courage in the struggle for freedom.

## البحث مستخلص

لاكسونو، أفيدا بوتري ٢٠٢٥ الشخصيات النسائية الرئيسية التي تعاني من القمع في رواية أنجي كروز "دومينيكا". أطروحة. برنامج دراسة الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية. المشرف: الدكتورة حاجي استياده، ماجستير

الكلمات المفتاحية: دومينيكا، القمع، إيريس ماريون يونغ، النسوية، المقاومة

من خلال تطبيق نظرية إيريس ماريون (2019) *Dominicana* تحلل هذه الأطروحة رواية أنجي كروز يونغ حول الوجوه الخمسة للاضطهاد (الاستغلال، والتهميش، والعجز، والإمبريالية الثقافية، والعنف) لدراسة كيفية انعكاس الواقع المعقد للمهاجرات اللواتي يواجهن التقاليد الأبوية والظلم الهيكلي في العمل الأدبي. الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو الإجابة على الأسئلة البحثية التالية: كيف تعاني أنا كاتسيون، الشخصية الرئيسية، من الوجوه الخمسة للاضطهاد، وما هي الجهود التي تبذلها لمقاومتها؟ المنهج المستخدم في هذا البحث هو نهج النقد الأدبي النسوي، حيث يتم تحليل النص بناءً على الإطار النظري ليونغ. تظهر نتائج التحليلات أن أنا تعاني من الاستغلال من خلال زواجها القسري، والتهميش والعجز كلاجئة ذات فرص محدودة، والإمبريالية الثقافية التي تقمع هويتها الدومينيكية، والعنف الذي يعمل كأداة للسيطرة داخل زواجها. ومع ذلك، تكشف النتائج أيضًا أن أنا تطور تدريجيًا نضالاً للمقاومة من خلال بناء علاقات داعمة، والتعبير عن رغباتها الشخصية، والسعي إلى الاستقلالية، مما يعكس مرونتها وقدرتها على الفعل. وبالتالي، لا تكشف الرواية فقط عن حقائق القمع الذي تواجهه النساء المهاجرات، بل تؤكد أيضًا على إمكانية التمكين والتضامن والشجاعة في النضال من أجل الحرية.

## ABSTRAK

**Laksono, Avida Putri.** (2025). *Tokoh Perempuan Utama Yang Mengalami Penindasan pada Novel Dominicana Karya Angie Cruz*. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

Kata kunci: *Dominicana, penindasan, Iris Marion Young, feminisme, perlawanan*

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Skripsi ini menganalisis novel *Dominicana* (2019) karya Angie Cruz dengan menerapkan teori Iris Marion Young tentang empat wajah penindasan (eksploitasi, ketidakberdayaan, imperialisme budaya, dan kekerasan) untuk mengkaji bagaimana karya sastra tersebut mencerminkan realitas kompleks wanita imigran yang menghadapi tradisi patriarki dan ketidakadilan struktural. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian: 1) Jenis-jenis penindasan apa saja yang dialami oleh tokoh perempuan utama dalam *Dominicana* karya Angie Cruz? 2) Bagaimana perjuangan tokoh utama perempuan dalam melawan penindasan di *Dominicana* karya Angie Cruz? Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kritik sastra feminis, di mana teks dianalisis berdasarkan kerangka teori Young. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Ana mengalami eksploitasi melalui pernikahan paksa, marginalisasi dan ketidakberdayaan sebagai imigran dengan kesempatan yang terbatas, imperialisme budaya yang menekan identitas Dominikannya, serta kekerasan yang berfungsi sebagai alat kontrol dalam pernikahannya. Namun, temuan juga mengungkapkan bahwa Ana secara bertahap mengembangkan perjuangan perlawanan dengan membangun hubungan yang mendukung, mengungkapkan keinginannya secara personal, dan mencari otonomi, yang mencerminkan ketangguhan dan agensinya. Dengan demikian, novel ini tidak hanya menyingkap realitas penindasan yang dihadapi wanita imigran, tetapi juga menekankan kemungkinan pemberdayaan, solidaritas, dan keberanian dalam perjuangan meraih kebebasan.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS COVER.....	i
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP.....	ii
APPROVAL SHEET.....	iii
MOTTO.....	iv
DEDICATIONS.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
ABSTRACT (English).....	vii
مستخلص البحث.....	viii
ABSTRACT (Indonesia).....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Problem of the Study.....	4
C. Significances of the Study.....	4
D. Scope and Limitation.....	5
E. Definition of Key Term.....	5
CHAPTER II REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
A. Feminist Literary Criticism.....	7
B. Oppression.....	11
C. Oppression by Iris Marion Young.....	12
1. Powerlessness.....	13
2. Cultural imperialism.....	13
3. Violence.....	14
4. Exploitation.....	15
D. Struggle .....	30
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD.....	17
A. Research Design.....	17

B.	Data Source.....	17
C.	Data Collection.....	17
D.	Data Analysis.....	18
CHAPTER IV FINDING AND DISCUSSION.....		19
A.	The Forms of Oppression in Angie Cruz's <i>Dominicana</i> .....	19
B.	Main Female Character's Struggles Against Oppression.....	38
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....		50
A.	Conclusion.....	50
B.	Suggestion.....	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		52
CURRICULUM VITAE.....		55

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher explains about the components of this research. The components consist of background of the study, problem of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key term.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Oppression is a social phenomenon that often occurs in various situations and conditions, both among families, schools and communities. This usually happens due to several factors such as the economy, poverty, bullying and even exploitation. Physical abuse, sexual violence including rape, unlimited working hours and unpaid wages (Martha, 2016). Men's views are so low on women who work. Indeed, in reality many women are recruited by banks, especially to occupy positions in customer service, counters and tellers. In the other hand women work as driver such as ojek online, domestic workers who work in the household (Ningsih, 2014).

Ross (2008) asserts that oppression occurs in life and might take the form of disparate treatment between people. Given the circumstances, it may be inferred that women have long faced discrimination, which contributes to societal oppression. Women use a variety of actions to gain acceptance and independence, including hiding who they are. Because of the inequalities in their society, some women are able to fight for their rights.

In literary works, authors describe the issues with life that they themselves are dealing with. The purpose of this study is to provide light on the author's perspective on the subject of women's oppression as it is expressed in literary works. The oppression of women has been going on for a long time now. When talking about discrimination against women, the thing that is most associated is the patriarchal culture of the country. A patriarchal culture restricts the migration of women to specific areas. This tendency is inherited and is still deeply ingrained in society (Stevi, 2013).

Angie Cruz's novel *Dominicana* (2019) tells the story of Ana Cancion, a 15 years old girl living in a small village in the Dominican Republic in the 1960s. Ana comes from a humble family with high hopes of improving their living conditions. To achieve these hopes, Ana is forced to marry Juan Ruiz, a man much older than her. Juan promises a better life in the United States, so Ana's family sees this marriage as a way to improve their standard of living. However, for Ana this decision is not a choice, but a sacrifice for her family. After their marriage, Ana moves to New York City with Juan. In the big city, she faces a harsh reality she is trapped in a marriage filled with violence, control, and oppression. Juan is harsh, controls Ana's life, and often uses violence to maintain his power. Furthermore, she must contend with cultural alienation, loneliness, and language barriers.

Into this situation, Cesar, Juan's younger brother, who is gentler and more caring, appears in Ana's life. Cesar's presence gives Ana a sense of affection and freedom she's never experienced before from Juan. Cesar also helps her better



understand American life and provides much-needed emotional support. Throughout the story, Ana is depicted as struggling between her responsibilities to her Dominican family and her personal desire for freedom. This inner conflict forms the core of her story. Gradually, she begins to find the strength within herself to question, resist, and break free from the shackles of her marriage and the oppression she experiences.

This novel has been researched by Cahyanita Pramestya Dewi (2023) *Feminine Mystique Experienced by Ana Concion in Angie Cruz's Dominicana*. This research finding out how feminine mystique is portrayed in the book and explaining Ana's attempts to resolve these concerns are the goals of this study. The researcher employs Betty Friedan as a case study and takes a feminist literary criticism approach.

Next, several researchers using theory oppression of Iris Marion Young such as Septiana (2022), Oktavianus (2018), Erliska (2017), Aini (2018), Nada (2021), Istiadah, Furaida, & Nabillah (2021), Rahayu (2010), Rahayu, Abdullah, & Udasmoro (2015) attempt to analyse the oppression experienced by women and the struggles of women against oppression.

The researchers were finding out the meaning of the symbols of gender injustice found in the scenes in the film, exercised the gender of oppression.

The other studies related to the used approach is Feminist Literary Criticism. It is an approach which analyses the relation of gender, particularly at the time woman are in the domination of men. By using this approach, the

research conducted by Pramudya (2021), Ardiasyah (2022), Kamilah (2021), Sari (2020), Adiva (2020), Rizky (2023), Rizqiyana (2024), Aisyah (2024), Jannah (2024), and Muvidah (2024) aims to describe the characteristic of women and analysing the portrayal of women, how the effort in fighting to against the oppression. Furthermore these researches also purpose in analysing system of patriarchy that exist, in the story investigating the form of patriarchal oppression to reveal the types of violence.

Based on the existing research, it was found that no study has examined the novel *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz using Iris Marion Young's theory of the Five Faces of Oppression. Although the novel has been studied by other academics, their approaches are different and do not focus on a deep analysis of the four forms of oppression experienced by the main female character. Therefore, this research is titled "The Main Female Character's Struggle Against in Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*".

## **B. Problems of the Study**

This research is aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What types of oppression are experienced by the main female character in Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*?
2. How does the main female character struggle against oppression in Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*?

## **C. Significance of the Study**

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it aims to contribute to the development of feminist literary criticism by analysing Angie Cruz's novel, *Dominicana*. Practically, this research seeks to encourage readers to think critically about hidden issues such as feminism, women's oppression, and the struggle against it. Furthermore, it serves as a valuable resource for other researchers interested in a similar topic.

#### **D. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

*Dominicana* by Angie Cruz can be analysed from various perspectives. However, this research specifically focuses on the forms of oppression experienced by the main female character, Ana. The study examines several types of oppression, including exploitation, powerlessness, violence, and cultural imperialism, that occur throughout Ana's life.

These aspects highlight the social, gender, and cultural inequalities faced by immigrant women within patriarchal and foreign settings. Furthermore, this research also discusses Ana's struggles for independence, freedom, and self-empowerment as she adapts to a new environment in the United States and gradually develops her sense of identity and agency.

#### **E. Definition of Key Term**

In this research, the researcher gives some definitions of key terms to avoid misunderstanding. The following is an explanation used in this study:

##### **1. Powerlessness**

Powerlessness is the lack or absence of a person's strength in making a decision individually or in a social group in society to decide an action in social life. (Young, 1990).

## 2. Cultural imperialism

Cultural imperialism is a different type of oppression where an individual or group is subjected to a society's power that distinguishes them as a different group. It entails the dominant group's experience and culture becoming the norm among them. (Young, 1990).

## 3. Violence

Violence is an action or attack committed by a certain group of people against another group that can damage, destroy. (Young, 1990).

## 4. Exploitation

Exploitation is an act that uses human power to gain profit without proper wages or compensation. (Young, 1990).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter includes of the theories that are relevant to the study. The theories are to support the research to be studied. The theories are feminist literary criticism and oppression by Iris Marion Young.

#### **A. Feminist Literary Criticism**

Feminist literary criticism is a branch of interdisciplinary study that considers gender as a fundamental organizing category of human experience, both in the real world and in artistic representation. Rooted in the feminist movement, which sociologically falls under the sub-field of the sociology of literature, its primary goals are to rehabilitate and re-examine the writings of women authors from the past and to highlight the representation of women in male-dominated literary works. These representations often portray women as oppressed, misunderstood, and trivialized as a result of patriarchal traditions. Feminism itself is understood as a perspective or way of life that has diverse foundations and evolves in accordance with various sociocultural contexts (Sugihastuti, 2010).

Another key objective of feminism is to present a critical perspective on culturally prevalent viewpoints in literature. Despite the diversity of its approaches, the fundamental aim of feminism remains the struggle for justice and equality for women. The concept of feminist literary criticism can be applied to literary analysis through various theoretical lenses (Loon & Sardar, 1997), such as: Liberal feminism, which prioritizes equal rights; radical feminism, which

concentrates on issues of sex and gender; Marxist and social feminism, which emphasizes gender and class; post-modern feminism, which highlights gender and race; and black and non-Western feminism, which focuses on race and colonialism. Each of these ideologies has specific demands and emphases that distinguish it in textual analysis.

Philosophically, feminism rejects the socially and culturally shaped distinctions between males and females. Therefore, feminism is the ongoing fight to stop the oppression of women (Suwastini, 2013), emphasizing the significance of understanding equal rights for women and men across all disciplines. Feminists firmly support women's efforts to obtain equal rights in the social, political, economic, and educational spheres. The core issue addressed is gender injustice caused by the patriarchal system, which historically has oppressed, marginalized, and even disregarded women.

Patriarchy is defined by Walby (1990) as a set of social norms and structures where males dominate, subjugate, and profit from women. Harkrisnowo (2000) adds that patriarchy is a social structure in which men hold positions of authority and is viewed as a system that denigrates women. In this system, women are stereotyped as being accustomed to dominance and being weak. Since the patriarchal system remains prevalent, its detrimental placement of women is observable in various spheres—beyond the household, including social, legal, educational, economic, and political hindering women's advancement and growth (Sultana, 2012; Fujiati, 2016).

The study of literature through the feminist lens, according to Madsen (2000), is intimately tied to the fight for equality waged by feminists, with a central focus on women in literary works. Feminist literary criticism has several main objectives in textual analysis:

1. To Support the Writing of Women Authors:

The objective is for female authors' writing to contend and achieve the same level of recognition as that of male authors, revising the literary canon that is taught, and inspiring new women writers.

2. To Discuss the Pressure Placed on Female Characters in Male Writers' Works:

This criticism analyses and explains the anxiety or suffering experienced by female characters who often play prominent roles in literary works written by men.

3. To Clarify the Author's Ideology:

Feminist literary analysis is used to clarify the author's philosophy, which may reflect how characters act or how others are treated within the work.

4. To Comprehend Feminist Philosophy:

By applying this criticism, comprehension of feminist ideology, both that which informs the substance of literary works and how those works are understood, is deepened.

5. To Understand the Psychological Traits of Feminists within the Literary Work:

The goal is to fully comprehend the feminist psychology presented in a literary

work, allowing readers or scholars to grasp the goals and objectives of the information or ideology provided.

Significantly, feminism has exerted a major influence on literary criticism over the past 35 years (Plain & Sellers, 2007). It impacts how literary texts are published, reviewed, and judged for acceptability, offering fresh analytical perspectives, and fundamentally changing the literary canon that is the focus of academic study.

## **B. Oppression**

The new left is a social movement that is built on oppression. The new left social movement of the 1960s and 1970s is referred to as oppression (Young, 2014). Constraints on the group are referred to as oppression and are not always the consequence of a tyrant's objectives. In this instance, oppression is more structural and tied to serious unfairness that is experienced by many groups as a result of knowledge of cultural stereotypes, media, advertising, habits, and market mechanisms. It also differs from the typical conception of oppression. By enacting regulations or passing numerous new laws, structural oppression cannot be eradicated. Systematic reproduction of structural oppression occurred in major political, cultural, and economic institutions.

The system of oppression and dominance separates people. It is so because individuals are categorized into groups based on traits like gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, ability, age, and so on. Attributes, norms, and stereotypes are used to describe these group qualities. Men are viewed as



superior and strong people (Husna, 2013). According to the gender perspective, women have historically been the target of male dominance and oppression. Women experience unfairness and lack of rights compared to men. The notion that men are stronger and more capable than women is represented by male dominance.

The identification of masculinity and femininity in men and women is also referred to as gender. This is true because women's femininity is what prevents them from actively engaging in society. Simply put, because they compete with men, women who work outside the home are seen as unfeminine (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Additionally, the existence of social capitalism, which puts the interests of the wealthy first, pushes poor women into the lower class and further marginalizes them. Poor women must understand their place in society if they are to eventually succumb to the ruling elite.

To sum up, even though oppression can affect anybody or any group wherever, it differs from oppression experienced by various groups. Therefore, it is possible that everyone has faced oppression and challenges when trying to grow or express their emotions. However, those who are oppressed could have certain ailments. Because of this, the aforementioned groups must each undergo some form of oppression in order to distinguish themselves from one another. Because of this, theorists create a broad image of how these many groups are oppressed, which frequently results in never-ending arguments. Iris Marion Young (2011) categorizes forms of oppression into four groups: powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence, exploitation.

### **C. Oppression by Iris Marion Young**

Oppression is an act, behaviour or even words from a group or individual against another person that can harm or hurt which is done continuously. According to Iris Marion Young (1990) in *Five Faces of Oppression*, oppression is divided into four types, those are:

#### **1. Powerlessness**

Powerlessness is the lack or absence of a person's strength in making a decision individually or in a social group in society to decide an action in social life. The impact of not having one's power can be considered weak and helpless. Women are judged to tend to be weak, angry, even helpless. This powerlessness of a woman is considered to have no strength by men. Women are said to be afraid to make decisions. Young stated that the powerlessness of women is only placed on duty (Young, 1990).

#### **2. Cultural imperialism**

Cultural imperialism is a different type of oppression where an individual or group is subjected to a society's power that distinguishes them as a different group. Power in society can determine how those in a powerless position are interpreted and talked about. Ideas like 'ability' and 'mansplaining' can be seen as having rooted in a similar notion of the unconscious frame of reference that is taken for granted makes the 'other' invisible (Young, 1990).

#### **3. Violence**

Violence is an action or attack committed by a certain group of people against another group that can damage, destroy. The most obvious form of oppression in gender inequality causes women to often become victims of violence, both physically and psychologically. Violence can be found in the realm of family, society, and the state with individual or group perpetrators. The existence of stereotypes of women as weak or number two makes men able to treat women arbitrarily. Also, some men resort to violence simply to conquer women or make themselves appear stronger than women. Examples of violence can be verbal abuse, beating, rape, and so on (Young, 1990).

The three sorts of violence that women experience are physical, psychological, and sexual, according to Krantz & Garcia-Moreno (2005).

a. Physical Violence

All actions that negatively impact a victim's physical health are considered to be physical violence, regardless of whether they involve physical contact, the use of tools, or other comparable behaviours. Slapping, punching, or locking the victim in a small, dark space are all options. Freedom is highly restricted in this situation, and dignity is frequently violated. Physical abuse that results in severe injuries frequently results in the victim's death (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

b. Psychological Violence

Psychological violence, also referred to as emotional abuse, is characterized by harsh rhetoric or demeaning body language. It could

damage the victim's sense of self-worth, dignity, and self-identity. Although there were no reported injuries, the collision might break all of the participants' familial ties. Children, adolescents, and adults all experience psychological violence in some way. Given that diverse types of violence are typically practiced in different cultures and nations, it is more challenging to describe this type of violence internationally. Psychological violence was frequently defined in studies from Africa to include behaviours like bringing a partner home, getting shut out of the house, and refusing sex (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

c. Sexual Violence

Any coerced sexual action, including sexual assault and similar offenses that result in sexuality under any circumstance, is referred to as sexual violence. Sexual violence can happen in a variety of settings, even though it frequently happens in the context of violence during sexual activity. Sexual violence can undoubtedly be committed by relatives, romantic partners, and total strangers who typically target young girls and teenagers as well as older women. As in gang rape, a woman is frequently sexually harassed by one or more people (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

4. Exploitation

Exploitation is an act that uses human power to gain profit without proper wages or compensation. Some people exercise their abilities under control according to the purposes and interests of others. Currently,

women do not only work at home, but can also work outside such as government agencies, schools, universities and others (Young, 1990).

#### **D. Struggle**

Throughout history, women have encountered significant obstacles in initiating movements to claim their fundamental rights. They have often endured prejudice and various forms of violence with little or no resistance. Consequently, feminism emerged as a social and political movement dedicated to advocating for women's right and equality. According to Young, during this era of social oppression, legal and cultural norms assigned distinct rights, duties, and privileges to different social groups based on gender, class, and religion. These distinctions created hierarchies that positioned certain characteristics as superior to others, thereby legitimizing social inequality. Therefore, the law must ensure justice and equal treatment for all individuals regardless of gender, race, religion, or ethnicity (Young, 1990, p.156).

Young emphasizes that individuals should be recognized based on their personal identity rather than their membership in particular social groups. Life choices and accomplishments, she argues, should be determined by individual merit. Every person should have the autonomy to live freely, make independent decisions, and pursue their own goals without being restricted by traditional norms or stereotypes (Young, 1990, p.157). Her concept of justice is grounded in equality treating all individuals under the same ethical principles, rules, and standards.

Consequently, women must actively engage in the struggle for equality and justice, as feminism itself represents a collective effort to eradicate systemic injustice. Feminist theory insist that women must resist oppression and utilize various strategies to achieve social and legal equality (Young, 1990, p.158).

Furthermore, the principle of assimilation has historically inspired marginalized communities and their allies to resist oppression and degradation, a motivation that continues to persist today. Movements such as the American Indian, Movement and other radical indigenous organizations rejected the authority of dominant social structures. Similarly, feminist opposed the notion of assimilation into a male dominated society, as it required conformity to patriarchal norms and standards established by men norms that have traditionally been used to oppress women. Attempting to conform to these male defined ideals often results in accommodating or satisfying the men who continue to dominate key social institutions and activities (Young, 1990, p.161). Thus, women's empowerment can only be achieved through collective self-organization and the creation of movements that aim to establish autonomy, equality, and justice for all women.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter explains the research method that will be used in this study.

Those are research design, data source, data collection and data analysis.

#### **A. Research Design**

The researcher in this study analyses the literary work by using feminist literary criticism. This is in keeping with Fard's explanation, who stated that literary criticism is the study of interpreting, analysing, and rating literary works (Fard, 2016). Because the researcher examines oppression related society issues and the struggle of the novel's character, this research is categorized as literary criticism. The researcher employs Iris Marion Young's theory to define the various forms of oppression depicted in Angie Cruz. The researcher describes the various forms of oppression experienced by the main female character using a feminist perspective.

#### **B. Data Source**

The data source of this research is a novel written by Angie Cruz entitled *Dominicana*. The novel was published in 2019, consist of 333 pages but the researcher use printed pdf book. The researcher analysed the data collected from the novel, which are in the forms of words, phrases, and sentences.

#### **C. Data Collection**

To collect the data, the researcher did several stages as follows, first the researcher read the novel in order to understand the whole story, second the researcher has a deeper understanding the content related to the research topic, then the researcher read repeatedly and the last is highlighting the points relevant to the topic in this research.

#### **D. Data Analysis**

The data analysis process was executed in a systematic three-stage approach. First, the researcher performed data classification by meticulously examining the collected textual evidence to identify and categorize the specific instances of oppression experienced by the main female character, aligning them with the established categories of exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Second, the classified data were subjected to critical interpretation using Iris Marion Young's theory of the five faces of oppression as the primary analytical framework. This stage involved explaining the relationship between the textual evidence and the theoretical concepts, demonstrating how the oppression manifests within the narrative context. Finally, based on the findings from the interpretation, the researcher proceeded to draw comprehensive conclusions, answering the research questions and articulating the broader implications of the study regarding oppression, resistance, and literary representation.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the types of oppression experienced by the main female character in the novel *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz. The researcher examined the types of oppression experienced by the female character as a result of their roles as wives and women in an unequal society, particularly in the household system where women are consistently oppressed, using Iris Marion Young's theory of forms of oppression. The main female character's fight against gender inequality is also worth mentioning. In this chapter every issue is well covered. The theory of Iris Marion Young used to analyse these issues.

#### **A. The Forms of Oppression in *Angie Cruz's Dominicana***

Iris Marion Young classified oppression into four categories, the researcher was able to identify four types of oppression using that theory include violence, cultural imperialism, powerlessness, and exploitation.

##### **1. Violence**

Violence, according to Iris Marion Young (2014), is a clear and intentional form of oppression often used to assert control and maintain hierarchies. It encompasses physical, psychological, and emotional abuse that is targeted toward a specific group, often based on gender, race, or class. In the case of *Dominicana*, Ana is subjected to repeated physical and

verbal assaults by her husband Juan, illustrating how violence becomes a normalized mechanism of control within patriarchal family structures. These episodes are not random but systemic, embedded in cultural norms that dictate obedience and submission from women, particularly within immigrant and working-class communities.

Young asserts that violence is not only an act committed by individuals but also a social practice that is tolerated, ignored, or even encouraged in many institutions and social settings. This insight is evident in Ana's situation where domestic violence is met with silence, complicity, or indifference by her family and society at large. Ana's physical suffering is emblematic of countless women whose bodies become battlegrounds for patriarchal assertion (Young, 2014).

Throughout *Dominicana*, Juan asserts control through multiple forms of violence. His physical assaults are often preceded or followed by verbal abuse that diminishes Ana's sense of self-worth and reinforces her powerlessness.

#### **A). Physical Violence**

Attacking someone or a group of people primarily with their bodies such as by kicking, strangling, beating, slapping, striking or biting is referred to as physical violence. Women are routinely injured by this type of behaviour, whether they be minor injuries or serious ones. In fact, it might kill them (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

In the novel *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz, physical violence plays a significant role in highlighting the struggles and oppression faced by the protagonist, Ana. Physical violence is primarily portrayed through Ana's relationship with her much older husband, Juan. Shortly after their arranged marriage and move to New York, Ana experiences domestic abuse, including physical assaults. These moments of violence are not just about physical harm but also represent the emotional and physical control Juan exerts over her.

This violence reflects broader themes in the novel, such as gender inequality, immigration hardship, and the loss of agency. Ana's fear and isolation are intensified by the fact that she is in a foreign country, does not speak English fluently, and has no support system. Physical violence becomes a symbol of her entrapment, but over time, it also fuels her desire for independence and freedom.

**Datum 1:**

*"I reach for the phone. I want to call back, but he's quicker. He grabs the phone away from me, then clutches a fistful of my hair and jerks my head back so I look into his eyes. His fist is directed at my face. Instead, he flings me to the sofa."*  
(p.102-103).

This passage is a vivid illustration of physical domination. Ana is having a conversation with her husband Juan. He becomes increasingly angry as she tries to call someone on the phone. The situation escalates quickly as Juan loses his temper. He uses physical force (grabbing her hair, jerking her head, and throwing her onto the sofa) as a way to assert control and dominance over Ana. Ana's hair is used as a tool of control,

and the threatening gesture of a raised fist, although not actualized in that moment, is an implicit reminder of her vulnerability. This moment serves as both physical intimidation and psychological warfare.

Moreover, the continuation of these violent acts reveals that Ana's oppression is chronic rather than episodic:

**Datum 2:**

*"Juan grips my neck, his heavy weight over me making it even harder to breathe... I wake up to Juan slapping my face." (p.103).*

Here, the act of choking adds an even more dangerous dimension to the violence, revealing a will to dominate to the point of incapacitation. Ana's lack of recourse no one comes to her aid, and she has no place to flee underscores Young's assertion that systemic violence is often accompanied by social isolation and silence.

**B). Psychological Violence**

Psychological violence happens when a person uses threats or creates fear in another individual to gain control over them. According to the World Health Organization, psychological violence can take many forms, including intimidation, harassment public humiliation, repeated verbal abuse, or forcing someone to witness physical, sexual, or psychological harm inflicted on a family member. It may also involve exposure to pornography or cruelty to animals. (WHO, 2002)

Irish Marion Young (2014) asserts that the victim's psychological state or emotional state may be negatively impacted by the perpetrator's aggression.

**Datum 3:**

*“He pulls me close. I keep my eyes closed, pretending to sleep, hoping he will stop. He doesn’t. He keeps whispering, ‘You’re my wife now. You belong to me. Tell me yes, he insists with his lit breath and his thick sweat dripping over my face. I can’t move. I don’t want to say yes, but I nod anyway. He kisses me hard. I close my eyes and think of home.” (p.11).*

Ana narrates how she feels nervous and trapped, knowing that she must obey her husband. The atmosphere is tense, she cannot refuse him because of cultural expectations and fear. Immediately following this moment, Ana describes how she gives in silently, not out of desire but resignation. The scene emphasizes the imbalance of power in their relationship she feels cornered voiceless, and emotionally violated.

Young emphasizes that violence as oppression is characterized by its systemic nature: “Members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property” (Young, 2014, p. 62). Ana embodies this lived experience. Her narrative is permeated with tension, always bracing for the next blow or insult. This continuous threat of harm contributes to a climate of fear that severely limits her personal freedom.

Furthermore, Ana’s immigrant status amplifies her vulnerability. Isolated in a foreign country, with limited English proficiency and no social network, she lacks the means to report or escape the abuse. Cruz uses Ana’s internal monologue and physical reactions to illustrate how

violence has altered her psyche. Ana often flinches or anticipates punishment, revealing a form of trauma bonding where her survival depends on predicting her abuser's moods.

The normalization of violence in Ana's life also reflects intergenerational dynamics. Her mother and other women in her community often advise her to endure and be patient. These suggestions, although offered with concern, perpetuate a cycle of silence and suffering. As Young notes, oppressive systems are often maintained not only by those in power but also by those within the oppressed group who have internalized the norms of domination (Young, 2014).

By documenting Ana's experiences with such granularity, Cruz exposes the embeddedness of violence in gender relations, especially within contexts marked by economic dependency and cultural traditionalism. The consistent presence of violence and the lack of intervention from others reflect a societal structure that tolerates male aggression and expects female endurance.

## **2. Cultural Imperialism**

Cultural imperialism, according to Young (2014), is the experience of how a society's dominant meaning simultaneously makes a certain group's perspective prominent while stereotyping and labelling the group as the other. Cultural imperialism demonstrates that while the dominant culture imposes its experience and interpretation on the social life of the oppressed group, the dominant group's experience and interpretation of

the oppressed group itself on social life are not widely communicated and have an impact on the dominant culture.

The novel highlights cultural imperialism through the clash between Dominican traditions and the American way of life. Ana is thrust into a new culture that diminishes her heritage and identity, as her survival depends on assimilating into American society. The expectations placed on her as a Dominican wife in a foreign land showcase the pressures to adapt while maintaining the values imposed by her homeland. Some evidence in the novel shows about cultural imperialism below:

**Datum 4:**

*“Clara told me that he wants for me, my brothers, see? What kind of future waits for me or my brothers if I stay? Think of your Tía Clara—her daughter married a man who works in New York, and every month he sends the family money.”* (p.33).

*“I practice saying the words right, so I sound like them. I don’t wanna them to laugh at me.”* (p.68).

The quotation above shows that, here the dream of America as a land of opportunity is contrasted with Ana’s reality. The pressures of leaving her homeland to achieve this ideal represent cultural imperialism. Ana is expected to navigate an unfamiliar culture while adhering to Dominican traditions that define her worth by her ability to sacrifice for family. She is viewed as a means to elevate her family’s status through marriage and migration, not as an individual with her own aspirations. This social expectation illustrates Young’s notion that oppressed groups internalize the dominant ideology. In this case, Clara perpetuates a patriarchal and economically motivated cultural system that dictates Ana’s

role and decisions in life. As Ana's older sister, Clara has internalized the same societal values that prioritize family honour and economic advancement over personal happiness. Although she love Ana, Clara reinforces the belief that a woman's primary duty I to sacrifice for her family, even if it means entering an arranged marriage. Her character reflects how oppressed individuals can unconsciously sustain the very structures that oppress them, aligning with Young's concept of internalized domination. She becomes the "other" a representative of her family's honour and survival rather than a self-determining person.

The second quotation above, Ana's internal struggle with cultural assimilation in the U.S. She attempts to mimics American speech patterns, fearing ridicule and exclusion. Through Young's lens, this reveals the silencing effect of cultural imperialism: Ana feels compelled to erase her Dominican accent and cultural identity to gain acceptance. The dominant American culture positions its language and behaviour as superior, leaving immigrants like Ana invisible and devalued within the social hierarchy.

### **3. Powerlessness**

Powerlessness, as defined by Iris Marion Young (2014), refers to the inability to make decisions that affect one's own life and the lack of authority, status, or sense of self-worth in social structures. Powerless individuals are denied the autonomy to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes that shape their own lives. This form of oppression is pervasive in *Dominicana*, where Ana is consistently denied



agency from her early life in the Dominican Republic to her constrained existence in New York.

Young contrasts the powerless with the “privileged,” highlighting how the latter enjoy access to resources, influence, and self-expression, while the former remain voiceless and dependent. Ana’s condition exemplifies this divide. As a 15-year-old girl coerced into marriage and migration, her voice is consistently undermined, and her choices are subordinated to those of her family, husband, and broader societal expectations.

The narrative introduces Ana’s powerlessness from the outset of her marriage. Her engagement is orchestrated by her mother and Juan, with little regard for Ana’s consent:

**Datum 5:**

*“To distract myself I run through the list my mother gave me before Juan’s arrival. Go to America. Clean his house, cook him dinner, clip his nails. Send Mamá money, learn from Juan, learn from the brothers. Study hard in school and become a professional. Learn English. Send for Mamá and Yohnny first, so they can work. Send for Lenny so he can enroll in school, and then for Papá and for Teresa and the baby if she is ever willing to leave El Guardia behind. I’ll demand what I need from Juan, for myself and my family. I will make myself indispensable. Mamá talks to Juan as if I’m not here. She doesn’t know about Gabriel, who may still show up to the wedding and speak now or forever hold his peace although my life is no telenovela. “Don’t worry, señora, says Juan, boisterous as a cowboy. I’ll take good care of your daughter. His confidence is kind of charming. He obviously is capable of taking care of us all. He’s not a weak man. And his power is even more pronounced by the surrounding wilderness—overgrown trees and bushes impossible to tame”. (p.46).*

This quotation reveals how Ana is physically present but socially invisible. She is an object of negotiation rather than a subject of her own story. Her emotional reality is dismissed, reflecting Young’s assertion that the powerless are often deprived of recognition, both socially and

interpersonally (Young, 2014, p. 57). Ana's powerlessness within patriarchal and cultural structures. Though present in the conversation, she is excluded from the decisions-making process. Mama negotiation and Juan's confident response establish Ana as a passive recipient of others authority, illustrating how both familial and gendered domination suppress her autonomy.

Another powerful illustration of Ana's lack of decision-making power occurs during Juan's proposal:

**Datum 6:**

*"Juan is talking fast, his eyes on Papá, not on me. He talks about opportunities, about New York, about a better future. He says he'll take care of me, that he'll send money home. I keep my eyes on the floor. I don't know what to say. I look to Papá for an answer. Go ahead, answer him, Papá urges. My hands tremble on my lap. I whisper yes, though I don't understand what this yes will mean for my life. Mamá smiles proudly, as if my answer has made her proud, not scared."* (p.27).

Here, Ana's agency is so diminished that she cannot respond to a marriage proposal without her father's cue. Although she is the one whose life will be irrevocably changed, she is not empowered to make the choice independently. This dependency reinforces her subordinate status and demonstrates how patriarchal structures operate across cultural contexts both in her homeland and in the U.S. Juan and Papa control the discussion, while Ana's silence and trembling hands reflect her lack of agency. Her whispering "yes" is not an expression of consent but rather an act of submission to social and familial expectations. Mama's proud smile further emphasizes how women are conditioned to value obedience over autonomy, reinforcing the cultural belief that a daughter's duty is to

comply. Through this moment, Angie Cruz exposes how gender and class hierarchies silence women like Ana, forcing them to accept choices that define their lives without genuine participation.

The novel also explores Ana's internalization of powerlessness. She expresses fear and passivity in the face of her husband's dominance:

**Datum 7:**

*"Mamá stands beside Papá her hands clasped tight. Juan speaks of opportunities, of the future, of New York. Papá listens, nods, asks, about work, about money. My throat is dry, my chest heavy. I glance at Papá, but he doesn't look at me. Where is your rifle? Where is your scowl? I want to scream. He stands there, silent, his eyes fixed on Juan, as if this conversation is not about me at all."* (p.26).

This quotation reveals Ana's profound sense of helplessness and longing for protection in a patriarchal environment. Ana is addressing her father, who once represented authority and safety. However, this silence and compliance in arranging her marriage to Juan signify his emotional withdrawal and participation in the patriarchal system that commodifies her future. Ana's rhetorical question reflects both her father's reluctance to resist, to defend her autonomy, yet he remains passive. This moment illustrates Young's (1990) concept of powerlessness, where Ana is deprived agency and voice within family and societal structures. Her yearning "scream" captures the internal conflict between submission and resistance, marking her as both physically present and emotionally silenced in her own life decisions.

Young (2014) notes that powerlessness often manifests as a lack of access to communication and social mobility. Ana's experience in New

York intensifies these conditions. She does not speak English fluently, cannot access employment, and is isolated from her community. Even the home she is supposed to manage feels like a prison rather than a sanctuary. She is not only geographically displaced but also socially and emotionally disempowered.

The very structure of her daily life is designed to keep her subordinate. Juan's strict control over her activities, the money, and even her communications with the outside world exemplify her captivity. For instance, Ana often avoids confrontation because she knows her resistance might provoke violence or further isolation. Her silence is not consent but a survival strategy a reflection of the "double consciousness" Young references in describing the powerless: an awareness of one's subjugation paired with the inability to escape it (Young, 2014).

One of the more harrowing aspects of Ana's powerlessness is that even her reproductive choices are not her own. She is impregnated without any evident consent, and her pregnant body becomes yet another site of control physically by Juan and symbolically by the cultural scripts dictating what a wife and mother should be. The burden of expected motherhood further limits her ability to escape or assert herself, tying her down to a life that she never chose.

Moreover, Ana's early attempts to assert herself are either dismissed or punished. Her rare moments of defiance are met with

aggression or ridicule, reinforcing the risks of claiming agency in a system that silences dissent:

**Datum 8:**

*“Tell me yes, he insists with his lit breath and his thick sweat dripping over my face.” (p.11).*

This quotation captures the coercive environment in which Ana operates. She is not allowed to express refusal; her voice is constantly manipulated or overridden by male dominance. This reinforces Young’s claim that the powerless are often trapped in positions where “others speak for them,” denying them subjectivity and self-determination (Young, 2014, p. 56).

However, Ana’s journey also hints at the beginnings of empowerment, which will be explored more fully in Section B. Despite her environment, she begins to recognize her condition and strategize small acts of resistance like planning to take English classes or contemplating an escape. But within the boundaries of powerlessness, even these ideas seem distant and dangerous, reflecting how deeply entrenched this form of oppression is in her life.

In conclusion, Ana’s powerlessness is not merely a matter of personal circumstance but a reflection of larger structural inequalities rooted in patriarchy, colonialism, and classism. Her lack of autonomy, voice, and self-worth aligns with Young’s theoretical framework, illustrating how oppression operates through the systematic denial of power. Angie Cruz’s narrative offers a poignant case study of how young

immigrant women are disempowered within intersecting structures of family, culture, and state. Yet, the seeds of Ana's resistance indicate that even within powerlessness, the yearning for agency remains potent a theme that Cruz carefully develops throughout the novel.

#### **4. Exploitation**

Iris Marion Young (2014) defines exploitation as the systemic transfer of the results of the labour of one social group to benefit another. It is a process whereby the energies, talents, and efforts of marginalized individuals are appropriated to maintain the privilege and comfort of the dominant class or group. Unlike simple injustice, exploitation becomes institutionalized, embedded in roles, relationships, and expectations, particularly those concerning gender and economic labour. In *Dominicana*, Angie Cruz captures this insidious process through the life of Ana, whose identity as a young, immigrant woman makes her especially vulnerable to overlapping forms of economic and emotional exploitation.

Ana's exploitation begins before she even leaves the Dominican Republic. Her family sees her not as an individual with aspirations but as a vehicle for economic opportunity. Her marriage to Juan is engineered less as a personal union and more as a transactional arrangement that promises financial support for the entire family. In this way, Ana's body, labour, and future are commodified, traded in return for remittances and upward mobility.

#### **Datum 12:**

*What kind of future waits for me or my brothers if I stay? Think of your Tía Clara—her daughter married a man who works in New York, and every month he sends the family money.” (p.33).*

This statement from Ana’s mother illustrates how Ana’s value is derived from her potential to support the household economy. Young argues that such exploitation is systemic and often disguised as necessity or love, making it more difficult to contest (Young, 2014, p. 49). The transaction is framed as sacrifice or opportunity, masking the fact that Ana has no real choice.

Once in New York, Ana's exploitation intensifies. Her domestic labour cleaning, cooking, managing the home, and attending to Juan’s personal needs is unpaid, unrecognized, and expected. These tasks are viewed not as work but as inherent duties of a wife. This aligns precisely with Young’s argument that women’s domestic labour is frequently appropriated to sustain patriarchal systems without any form of compensation or acknowledgment (Young, 2014, p. 51).

**Datum 13:**

*“Clean his house, cook him dinner, clip his nails. Send Mamá money, learn from Juan, learn from the brothers.” (p.45).*

Ana recites this list of expectations almost mechanically, indicating how internalized these roles have become. Her body is the site of dual exploitation—physically in her labor and emotionally in her willingness to please, accommodate, and endure. Juan’s brothers, too, participate in this exploitation by offering unsolicited advice and reinforcing her subservient role, all while benefiting from her efforts in the household.

In a particularly striking passage, Ana reflects on the nature of this exchange:

**Datum 14:**

*“I’ll demand what I need from Juan, for myself and my family. I will make myself indispensable.” (p.46).*

This declaration, though framed as empowerment, reveals the depth of Ana’s entrenchment in an exploitative system. Her plan for survival involves increasing her utility to Juan not for her own liberation, but to secure more resources for her family. It reflects how those in oppressed positions often internalize the logic of exploitation, aligning their self-worth with productivity and obedience (Young, 2014, p. 52).

The theme of economic exploitation evolves further when Ana begins working, albeit informally, by assembling trinkets and eventually selling food. These ventures mark the beginning of her economic agency, but even here, the profits are viewed through the lens of familial obligation rather than personal gain.

**Datum 15:**

*“As soon as I hang up, I start on the souvenirs: five cents apiece, two hundred pieces—that’s ten dollars to feed my Dominicana!” (p.160).*

Ana calculates her labour in terms of how it can serve her family, not herself. Her use of “my Dominicana” to describe the hidden envelope of money she keeps suggests a nuanced attachment to both her homeland and her limited autonomy. The exploitative structure remains intact; only the context shifts from marital to entrepreneurial.



Later, Ana aspires to expand her business selling traditional Dominican foods, signaling a shift toward self-empowerment.

**Datum 16:**

*I want to make some money so I can take care of myself, bring my family to New York. (p.229).*

Yet even here, her labour is aimed at fulfilling collective responsibilities. While her entrepreneurship reflects growth, it also highlights how systemic conditions continue to shape the uses of her labour. Her goals remain externally oriented toward her husband, her child, her family not necessarily toward reclaiming her own desires and agency. The symbolic culmination of this theme occurs when Ana outlines her long-term vision:

**Datum 17:**

*“Every day, I place my earnings in an envelope... With time, I’ll buy a small cart like the hot-dog man’s. Eventually a small shop. Then a chain of shops all over the city.” (p.273).*

This passage presents a powerful image of transformation from exploited subject to potential business owner. However, Cruz’s careful use of conditional language (“with time,” “eventually”) keeps this future suspended, tentative. The system that exploited Ana for so long does not relinquish its grip easily.

Young argues that exploitation not only uses the labour of the oppressed but also deprives them of the means to develop and express themselves freely (Young, 2014, p. 50). Ana’s gradual accumulation of agency through work, language, and vision represents a struggle to reclaim

these denied capacities. Nevertheless, her journey is marked by a persistent tension: the line between independence and obligation is never clearly drawn.

In conclusion, exploitation in *Dominicana* is both overt and structural. Ana's life is shaped by a series of appropriations of her labour, her identity, and her aspirations. She is used to support the economic, emotional, and social stability of those around her, often at the expense of her own wellbeing. Angie Cruz's narrative makes visible the often-invisible labour of immigrant women, revealing the intricate layers of exploitation that persist beneath cultural expectations and familial duty. In doing so, the novel echoes Young's framework, which insists that real justice requires the redistribution of power and recognition, not merely survival under oppression.

### **B. The Main Female Character's Struggles Against Oppression**

There are several struggles carried out by the main female character, Ana, in the novel *Dominicana* by Angie Cruz. These struggles reflect her resistance against various forms of oppression as described by Iris Marion Young (2014), including powerlessness, cultural imperialism, violence, and exploitation. Ana experiences as an immigrant woman in New York who is isolated from society and lacks access to opportunities for education or employment. Her life is confined within domestic boundaries where she must depend entirely on her husband. She also struggles against powerlessness, shown when she gradually learns to make her own decisions despite her family's and husband's control. Moreover, she resists cultural

imperialism when she begins to question Dominican traditions that limit women's roles to obedience and servitude. Ana faces violence, both physical and verbal, from Juan, yet she slowly gains the courage to defend herself and set boundaries. Lastly, she endures exploitation by working hard to support her family while receiving little recognition in return. Through these struggles, Ana's journey portrays the transformation of a submissive young girl into a woman who seeks recognition, independence, and justice.

The first struggle is Ana came to the realisation that housewives shouldn't be passive after Juan put her under considerable pressure that caused her mental and physical pain. To combat her husband's oppression and progressively dispel the stereotype of a sedentary housewife, they are free to take a variety of actions.

**Datum 18:**

*"He clumsily pours a glass of whiskey for himself. Good. He hasn't asked me to do it. Or about dinner. Good, because wife isn't planning to serve him. Today, I don't care if he throws me out the window."* (p.105).

The aforementioned quote captures Ana's mindset following Juan's maltreatment, which resulted in minor lip sores and redness around her neck. She made the decision to not provide Juan with the normal care or service. This time, Ana just cared about her happiness and independence, even though she did not completely abandon her duty as a housewife. The following quotation further supports that:

**Datum 19:**

*"Juan hands me a gift bag. When I don't reach for it he takes out a small black box. Open it."*

*I don't want him to touch my hand, or my shoulder. Right then I decide I will leave him. If I stay he'll kill me. Tomorrow, Juan won't find me sitting at the table like a caged bird. At La Bodeguita I heard that a bus leaves daily from the terminal on 179th to JFK airport. Just twelve blocks away. Then a three-hour plane ride to Santo Domingo." (p.106).*

Ana desires to leave Juan in described in the aforementioned quotation. Ana had never shown such courage. Other than Juan, she has no family in New York and doesn't speak English. Because of that, she always complied with Juan's requests. Nonetheless, Ana's rejection and her attempt to leave the flat are described in the aforementioned quote. According to the author, this demonstrates Ana's bravery in the face of men. According to the argument used, Ana strives to avoid the patriarchal environment because he no longer wants to be humiliated. Ana suffered because, despite her inability to flee, she had the courage to take chances and was determined to break free from the stereotype of a housewife who was only interested in the kitchen and her husband's happiness. The following quote also contains Ana's opposition to her husband:

**Datum 20:**

*"I told you, one dress! One dress! Do you think I'm made of money? I don't flinch. I stare into him. I dare you, I say, knowing he's too proud to do anything to me where everyone can see." (p.136).*

Ana and Juan were in the El subterranean, which Giselle and Gino ran, when the aforementioned conversation took place. Juan asks Ana there to pick out outfits that fit her. Ana was cautioned by Juan to only take one shirt. But Ana picked out a lot of clothes on purpose and brought them to the checkout. Ana exploited Juan's tendency to flaunt his generosity in order to make it seem like he was a great spouse to Ana. So

that everyone would be aware of Juan's destructive tendencies in public, Ana just looked at him and challenged him to reprimand her when he tried to do so. Ana's strategy didn't work out since Juan was able to contain his wrath in this situation. Ana still makes an effort to harm Juan, though. The information below further supports that:

**Datum 21:**

*"My large belly presses against the sink with Juan against me. His hands circle both my breasts. They're huge. He squeezes hard. It hurts, but I stand still and say nothing as his hands drop to the globe I carry, hard and full. He nibbles on my neck, catching me by surprise. I cringe. Maybe it's a mistake to wait until the baby is born to leave. Juan, this kitchen's too small and hot for three people. Go entertain your brother."* (p.277).

The dialogue between Ana and Juan is described in the aforementioned quotation. Ana is under more strain now that Juan is back in New York. Juan didn't change his attitude. Ana is still subjected to his arbitrary treatment and sexual objectification. But with Ana, it's different. She no longer wants to act as though she loves and serves her husband like a wife because she has realised her life's purpose. She dares to challenge Juan because she now considers her happiness more. She is no longer obedient to her husband, as the aforementioned quote demonstrated. She makes an effort to resist and stop her husband from treating her badly. The data below also shows the same action:

**Datum 22:**

*"Get out! Get off me! I scream, and kick Juan. I stumble out of the bed. My body trembles."* (p.285).

Ana's battle with Juan is described in the aforementioned quotation. Ana has gained the confidence to confront Juan's unjust

treatment of her while he has been gone for several months. Ana no longer desires oppression and acts in ways that satiate Juan, her husband 's passion, now that she has discovered who she is. Ana develops into a courageous and assertive woman when interacting with Juan's. Apart from that, Ana had a new lease on life because of her relationship with Cesar. After all this time, she finally discovered the unfettered life she desired. According to the data below, Ana made the decision to leave Juan and pursue Cesar in Boston.

**Datum 23:**

*"Maybe I can leave to Boston before Juan comes back. Send a message to César that I'm on my way so he picks me up at the station. It will take Juan and Caridad three, maybe four hours to make up for lost time. Plus the time of the bus ride to Boston, about four hours. But how do I reach César?" (p.279).*

Ana intends to flee and take up residence with Cesar. She went outside of her comfort zone for the first time in her life in order to prioritize her happiness with the man she love. With considerable trouble. In order to prevent Juan from abusing her once more, Ana intended to flee the flat. Ana, however, is unable to go away and meet Cesar.

The second struggle is for the first time, Marisela offered Ana a part time occupation. Their fortuitous encounter enables Ana to profit from her labours. This is demonstrated in the following quotation:

**Datum 24:**

*"As soon as I hang up, I start on the souvenirs: five cents apiece, two hundred pieces— that's ten dollars to feed my Dominicana! I move the coffee table against the wall and organize all the pieces on the floor. I study a ceramic doll, smaller than my pinkie nail. It's of a bride and groom to be glued on a ribbon. In the sample, the glue is untraceable. I try to do the same. At first, I can't keep the*

*glue off my fingers, but once I establish a system I work fast and make few mistakes.” (p.144).*

Ana is regarded as a responsible and patient individual. Since this was her first time creating clay doll mementos, she took her time and carefully examined each component that needed to be joined. In order to prevent making too many mistakes, Ana was also cautious when applying the adhesive. Even so, she had to work fast and covertly to avoid Juan learning about it and preventing Marisela from meeting her and offering her a position. The attitude of Ana in the aforementioned sentence falls under the Iris Marion Young's life plan, that women should believe that taking care of the home is not their main responsibility as they have the right to reach their full potential and participate in society just like men do. The following comment further demonstrates Ana's growing enthusiasm for her work:

**Datum 25:**

*“Doesn't it feel good to make your own money, Ana?  
Well, it's good to be able to help my family back home. They always need. Do I have to tell Juan about the money? I say to change the subject. What you do with it is your business.” (p.144).*

The dialogue between Marisela and Ana is depicted in the aforementioned quotation. Ana received payment from Marisela for her laborious efforts in creating the clay doll memento. It is evident from this that Ana is content when she generates her own revenue. At last, she felt financially independent and was able to spend her money as she saw fit, without complaining or waiting for Juan to give it to her. In this quotation, Ana expresses her desire to use her wealth to support her Dominican

Republic family. Therefore, it may be said that women can support their families on their own without assistance from men. Ana's enthusiasm for working part-time and being self-sufficient is further demonstrated by the following quotation:

**Datum 26:**

*"Were you really serious about me selling food to your friends? Don't give me Juan's sure-one-day talk, I say. I want to make some money so I can take care of myself, bring my family to New York. C'mon, are you going to help me or not?" (p. 202).*

The aforesaid chat was carried out by Ana and Cesar. Cesar believes Ana's cooking skills are a talent. Consequently, Cesar once recommended that Ana sell her cuisine in order to get revenue. Ana questions Cesar's sincerity in assisting her in selling her meals in the aforementioned quotation. Ana believes that in order for people to stop demeaning her, she needs to be able to establish her own self-worth. In addition, Ana wants to fulfil Juan's vow to bring her family to New York. This leads one to the conclusion that Ana is stable under her new life plan. Ana's tenacity in selling food serves as proof of this, as does the following quotation:

**Datum 27:**

*"The first day I travel downtown to sell food, the sun makes the sidewalk glisten. Sweat beads pearl on my chest and forehead. I carry a tote full of fried pastelitos stuffed with ground meat and raisins, wrapped in tin foil. César says I can sell them for ten cents each. I've made fifty pastelitos. I quickly calculate my profit, factoring in travel and ingredients: over a hundred dollars in two months." (p. 204).*

Ana's first-day sales are described in the data above. She made an effort to adjust well despite the fact that she was not accustomed to the



outside world, which was considerably different from the kitchen in her apartment. Since getting her money is her first priority right now, she doesn't care about the scorching weather or the perspiration that drenches her body. It is clear from this description that Ana aspires to be on par with Juan as a woman. As Juan had promised but never fulfilled, she didn't have to wait for him to give him money or to take his family to New York. She has plans for the future and is determined to achieve her goals through her employment. as demonstrated by the following quotation:

**Datum 28:**

*"Every day, I place my earnings in an envelope in my drawer, no longer needing to hide my money inside Dominicana. With it, I still plan to bring my family closer to me, to where they will be safe and where Lenny can go to school, to where they won't have to worry about having enough food to eat. With time, I'll buy a small cart like the hot-dog man's. Eventually a small shop. Then a chain of shops all over the city." (p.243).*

Ana, who always saves the money she makes from selling food, is described in the aforementioned passage. Ana intends to utilise the funds to fulfil all of her desires. The author interprets this comment as evidence that Ana already possesses a fully formed intellect. She is greatly impacted by her work. Ana is also capable of handling money and has a well-thought-out plan for her future; she starts to dare to take all the chances when Juan might discover that she works a side job. This demonstrates how work may help Ana grow as a person, increase her sense of responsibility and discipline, and enhance her education and self-respect to become a self-sufficient woman. Work now takes up Ana's

days. As the following quote illustrates, she no longer cooks to satisfy Juan but rather to earn money:

**Datum 29:**

*“So I keep busy. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, English classes. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I go to the downtown to sell lunch to the men at César’s factory. I plan a lunch menu for each week. On Mondays, pastelitos, thirty with chicken, thirty with beef. On Wednesdays, pasteles. On Fridays, lunch surprise: sometimes empanadas de yucca, other times quipes. I prepare and package the foods so the men are able to eat while standing, like horses, like Americans eat hot dogs or burgers. To inspire customer loyalty, I make food that reminds them of home.” (p.243).*

The aforementioned quote depicts Ana's schedule as long as she has extra work. She's working hard to prepare food to sell. She now works during the day, unlike in the past when she was solely focused on servicing Juan. The quotation demonstrates how intelligent women are today, as demonstrated by Ana, who created innovations to expand her clientele. She also sells home-cooked cuisine to draw clients because she understands that New York is a city full of immigrants. When Ana was with Juan, she was scared to move. She gave up and came to terms with her destiny. She now, however, has a different perspective and a new life goal.

The third struggle is the Dominican Republic native Ana speaks very little English. Juan assured her that she would continue her education and pick up English when she arrived in New York. Juan, on the other hand, only made empty promises to her. Juan is the only person who can assist Ana due to her lack of English and who is familiar with the particular Spanish spoken in the Dominican Republic. But she had

considerable independence when Juan was gone for a few months. She insisted on enrolling in English classes so she could speak with many of people outside of Juan. The following quotation illustrates this:

**Datum 30:**

*“Whatever needs to be done, I say with the sigh of a bad actress. Inside, I’m screaming. Yes! César! I can start the English classes, and go on long walks, and César will take me dancing. For sure, I will also be able to track down Marisela.”* (p. 170).

The aforementioned quote captures Ana's joy after Juan left her for a several-month work assignment in the Dominican Republic. She will have the confidence to express herself and follow her own desires. Ana's primary objective now is to better herself rather than struggle in the kitchen or when cooking. Ana's excitement demonstrates that she no longer views marriage as her primary objective. She desires to have novel experiences. Additionally, being able to communicate in English will enable her to make greater contributions to society.

**Datum 31:**

*“Excuse me, can I help you?  
I whip my head around and step back when I find a woman covered from head to toe in a black habit towering over me. My belly flutters.  
Inglis? I point to the sign.  
The nun’s skin glows and her eyes brighten.  
Welcome! Yes, here we learn English. You’re early, but take a seat.”* (p. 187).

The dialogue between Ana and Sister Lucia on the first day of the English course is described in the datum above. Despite her lack of social connections and her inability to speak English, Ana remained optimistic about her future academic endeavours. She demonstrated this by showing

up early to increase excitement and adjust to the surroundings of other pupils. The following quote also demonstrates Ana's passion for learning:

**Datum 32:**

*"When she reads my sentence aloud, Sister Lucía says, I was born, and writes Dominican Republic over my República Dominicana.  
Do-mi-ni-can Re-pu-blic, she says.  
I repeat.  
Very good, Ana, very good! Sister Lucía claps her hands.  
My name is Marta Lucía. I was born in Chile. And you, Ana?  
She points to me.  
My name is Ana. I bon in Dominican Republic.  
No, Ana, say, My name is Ana. I was born in Dominican Republic.  
I repeat.  
Very, very good, Ana. You can now say you speak English. "* (p.189).

When Ana is attempting to enunciate some English words, the quotation above serves as an example. It was really challenging for her because, even while she was still in school in the Dominican Republic, she had never taken English classes. Ana made an effort nonetheless, repeating what Sister Lucia had said. According to the information below, she made a concerted effort and used a variety of struggle to become fluent in English.

**Datum 33:**

*"In order to learn English, Sister Lucía says I need to practice every day. Every morning, I walk César downstairs on his way to work and borrow a newspaper delivered to the lobby. "* (p.191).

Ana heeds Sister Lucia's counsel to study English outside of class, as indicated by the aforementioned quotation. In order to improve her speaking abilities and expand her vocabulary, she spent some time reading books or newspapers that were checked out from the apartment lobby. Despite her occasional difficulties learning English, Ana made a sincere effort, as seen by the following quote:

**Datum 34:**

*“Why is English so hard? I ask my Dominicana, who watches faceless from the windowsill. I place a dictionary nearby and start my lessons. Education is the key to becoming independent and making something of myself. I glance over the newspaper, looking for familiar words. Dominican Republic splattered all over it like confetti. Our little country makes the news a lot.” (p.191).*

Even though it is challenging to comprehend and use English words in daily life, Ana never stops learning and is tenacious. In order to make studying easier, Ana begins by searching for words that she is familiar with. With her dictionary in hand, Ana studies on a regular basis. As evidenced by the data below, she even looks at every lotion and hair product bottle to jot down the ingredients before looking for the translation.

**Datum 35:**

*“While César works, I take long walks around the neighborhood. I go into Woolworth and study all the bottles of lotions and hair products. Write down the names and the ingredients so I can later look up the translations.” (p.194).*

She should take advantage of the chance presented by Juan's departure. She went around to meet and get to know folks in the neighbourhood. Additionally, Ana is not required to travel with Juan to Woolworths; she can go alone. Ana went to Woolworths to buy some household necessities that had run out, unlike when she was with Juan. However, these days, she analyses and notes down some new words that she will later translate. Her future fluency in English will benefit from it. She believes that education will enable her to break free from the patriarchal system, which is why she is so determined to become an educated and independent woman.

And the last struggle is by Juan that was in a relationship with Caridad before to their marriage. Until Ana and Juan were formally married, that kept happening. Ana had long been aware of their affair, but she had kept it to herself out of fear of Juan. It enhances Juan's reputation as a devoted husband who adores his wife. People, especially Mama, gave him a lot of praise. Ana's patience had run out, though. She does not wish to conceal her husband's transgressions and be a submissive wife. The following quotation illustrates that:

**Datum 36:**

*"Finally hearing her voice releases a tension in my chest.  
Caridad, I know who you are, I say into the phone as Juan tries to grab it from me.  
Give it to me, Ana, or else ...  
Or else, what ... Juancho?  
He twists my wrists then stops. Everyone's watching."* (p. 320).

The phone call between Ana and Caridad is described in the aforementioned quotation. It happens when Yrene and Hector throw a baby shower for Juan and Ana. It appeared that Ana picked up the phone and spoke with Caridad. Juan becomes irate when Ana calls him "Juancho" as Caridad frequently does when Juan reaches for the phone. The following comment, however, shows that Ana did not want to be surpassed; despite the fact that no one was on her side, she aired all of her fury.

**Datum 37:**

*"Mamá pulls me away.  
Ana, go to your room and find your head before you embarrass us further.  
You always take his side, Mamá. Haven't I done everything you wanted me to do and lived up to my end of the bargain? I say, and glare at him. Go to her, Juan!  
Go to her and leave me the hell alone, I yell. All of you!"* (p. 321).

Mama believed that Ana had shamed the family and defended Juan in the aforementioned quote. Ana doesn't hesitate to express the hurt she has carried inside for a long time. She screamed to let Juan know how stressed she was living with him, and eventually she asked him to leave her alone and go with Caridad.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The last chapter present the conclusions and of the research conducted, along with any relevant recommendations. The conclusions are formulated based on the analysis outlined in the previous chapter.

#### A. Conclusion

Angie Cruz's *Dominicana* powerfully illustrates the forms of oppression experienced by Ana Cancion. From Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression, only four are found in this novel: violence, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and exploitation. Ana, the protagonist, experiences powerlessness within her marriage to Juan, who dictates and controls her life. Her situation also reflects exploitation, since her marriage is used as a tool to benefit her family rather than herself. In addition, cultural imperialism is evident as Ana is forced to abandon her identity and adapt to the dominant American culture, while violence becomes a direct form of control used by her husband.

Despite these layers of oppression, Ana slowly develops struggle of resistance. She learns to adapt to her environment, builds connections with supportive figures like Cesar, and nurtures her own voice and agency. Her resistance is expressed through small but significant acts questioning her circumstances, imagining a different life, and gradually asserting her independence. Ultimately, Ana's journey represent the struggle of many



women who resist patriarchal and cultural domination, showing that resilience and courage can break the cycle of subordination.

### **B. Suggestion**

For the readers this novel should be read with a critical awareness of social issues such as domestic violence, early marriage, and immigrant life. Readers can learn lesson about the importance of courage in resisting oppression and respecting individual freedom, especially for women. And for the future researchers, the novel can be an object of literary study, particularly within in the context of feminism, and other theory that related with the novel and immigration studies.

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**



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