
Question 3: Identify and describe two "Faces of Oppression." Describe two scenes that illustrate how Anna from *Real Women Have Curves* experiences those faces of oppression.

Answer: Two "Faces of Oppression" illustrated in *Real Women Have Curves* are the following:

Powerlessness--can't exercise one's own autonomy
Cultural Imperialism--dominant group seen as norm

Ana experiences powerlessness when working for her sister over the summer after she graduates high school. Her sister, Estela, is having difficulties with affording her rent as well as paying those who work for her in her seamstress factory. She goes to negotiate with her boss, Mrs. Glass, but she won't give them any of the payment for the dresses in advance. So, many of them must continue to work without pay, and Ana ends up speaking to her father to give Estela the money for rent.

In this situation, both Ana and Estela are facing powerlessness due to their socioeconomic status; they are the working poor, and can't seem to rise up the conditions they are living and working in. This instance of a face of oppression could also intersect with exploitation, because the work these women are doing is for companies that sell the dresses at a much higher price than what they make for creating them. However, with the loan from their father, they are able to continue the work and meet the deadline for the finished dresses. Ana also faces powerlessness due to the control her mother has over her; the entire reason she's working at the factory in the first place is because her mother forced her into it and doesn't want her to attend college.

She experiences cultural imperialism through the movie because of her economic status as well as the fact that she is Hispanic. In the movie, Jimmy, who she develops a romantic relationship with complains on the phone to her about how easy his life is; he's been handed everything. He owns a car, and is much better off than Ana. In order to fit in with the white, rich culture around her, she does things such as lie about her post-high school plans, and calls her sister's factory a boutique.

In order to get to class in the morning, she has to take numerous buses, yet Jimmy can simply drive. In the scene with Mrs. Glass, although she also speaks Spanish, she sees herself as above Ana and Estela because she is more financially successful. Basically, the Hispanic or Latino community in L.A. is overshadowed by those who have a higher economic status and are white. Ana must face oppression and difficulty due to the fact that her culture and economic standing makes it more difficult for her to have the same opportunities as many of the kids she went to high school with. She doesn't see college as a real option for her after high school, although all of them have college plans. Because of cultural imperialism,

Ana has to work harder for everything from finding a job, getting to class, and enrolling in college than her white classmates do because they are seen as the norm, and aren't part of the marginalized group of Hispanic people in the community.

Why this is a good answer: Not only did they effectively name and concisely define the types of oppression, they used concrete scene examples that accurately showed what they are. Also, this answer does not rely on scene description. She makes her points clear throughout the entire thing.
