

# Justice and the politics of difference - five faces of oppression by iris m. youn...

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Young also offers a comprehensive understanding of oppression in its restricted appreciation since the existence of the oppressed does not necessarily imply the simultaneous existence of an oppressor. These five faces: Exploitation, Marginalization, Powerlessness, Cultural Imperialism and Violence are the main focus of the article.

Exploitation can most vividly be designated in a Capitalist environment where labor is a means to propagate dominion. The evident injustice in the distribution of wealth among social classes is the main thrust of this category but it does not end there since social rules in work also define the inequality (Young, p. 6). Defined as the most dangerous, Marginalization is best manifested with the material deprivation of one group over the others. Society has addressed this issue mainly by providing welfare dole-outs and services to repress unrest among these people (ibid, p. 9). Powerlessness is the lack of opportunity and respect that the oppressed suffer. “ the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them” (ibid, p. 10). The imposition of the dominance of one group over the others results to Cultural Imperialism since culture variations become a source of oppression through intolerance (ibid, p. 10).

Violence is an outward manifestation of systemic oppression whereby the sole reason for belonging to a marginalized group, the members suffer this face of oppression. This is a recurring social practice and suggests degrees of perpetration (ibid, p. 13). These five faces can be used as a gauge and as a way compare the level of oppression among the oppressed groups and the presence of any, as the author suggests, positively equates to oppression.