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## Review of The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to dismantle systems of oppression to protect people + planet

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***The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to dismantle systems of oppression to protect people + planet.* L. Thomas, 2022, Souvenir Press, USA, 202 pp. \$15.18 US.**

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The book “The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet” addresses the intersection of environmentalism and social justice, focusing on dismantling systems of oppression to protect both people and the planet. It delves into topics such as intersectional theory, environmental justice, privilege, the impact on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, and the relationship between racial progress, equality, and environmental justice.

Thomas centers the necessity of intersectional environmentalism (IE) which aim to create a more inclusive and equitable approach to environmental issues by acknowledging the diverse identities and experiences of individuals and their relationship to the environment. The author contends that traditional environmentalism has frequently disregarded the perspectives and contributions of marginalized groups, resulting in inadequate and discriminatory approaches to environmental concerns. The book argues that undervaluing, commodifying, and exploiting both people and the planet originate from the same systems of oppression. Achieving environmental justice, therefore, involves considering the impacts on both people and the planet. This book is to look beneath the surface and reflect on the missteps in social and environmental movements so that future environmental justice movements can improve.

The author delves into the influence of identity on environmental perspectives, using personal anecdotes to underscore the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in shaping diverse environmentalism. Through three generations of black women, the author explores themes of waste-free living, community values, and grassroots perspectives. As the founder of Intersectional Environmentalist, the author stresses the need for diverse representation in addressing environmental issues. The first IE council, consisting of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives, aims to identify and address problems across different communities. The book provides empirical evidence supporting the argument that environmental justice requires considering the impact on both people and the planet. It examines various environmental factors affecting minority communities, including air quality, extreme heat, food security, water access, lack of green spaces, and the disproportionate dumping of e-waste in the Global South.

Leah Thomas explores the intersectionality of fashion, renewable energy, and veganism, shedding light on environmental injustices. Fashion, a major contributor to global carbon emissions, is driven by capitalist consumption patterns, leading to excessive waste and pollution. The book touches upon the seventeen principles of environmental justice, emphasizing the importance of responsible consumption and waste reduction but waste is generated once recourses are being utilized. In achieving Environmental Justice, consuming little of Mother Earth’s resources may seem reasonable but waste repair seems more practical since utilizing of the Earth’s resources is inevitable as population growth is not ceasing. However, the author failed to inform readers of the

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current largest e-waste dumpsite worldwide, Agbogbloshie in Ghana which displaced China since 2016.

This book is closely related to “Developing Deeply Intersectional Environmental Justice Scholarship” by Malin and Ryder (2018) which explores environmental health, intersections with Environmental Justices, and the impact of oppression and inequality on environmental injustice, focusing on racial/ethnic marginalization, poverty, gender discrimination, and rural/urban divides. The author utilizes robust data sources and employs a significant and understandable analysis to support arguments in the book. The content is accessible to a wide audience, including those in social sciences and other fields, making it suitable for individuals who wish to engage in discussions about Intersectional Environmentalism. Each chapter concludes with expert answers to questions related to the specific topic, along with Intersectional Environmentalist pledges and discussions. The language used is clear, and the author explains terms clearly for a broad readership. Additionally, the book offers a toolkit for readers to actively participate and get involved in addressing environmental issues.

In a nutshell, this book is a commendable book that explores the interconnectedness of social justice and environmentalism, stressing the need to recognize and address the diverse impacts of environmental issues on various communities. The author, through personal experiences and insights, sheds light on environmental injustices faced by minority communities, notably in the intersection of the fashion industry and carbon emissions. The book offers unique perspectives not found in other environmental justice literature. I highly recommend it for a wide audience, including community leaders, educators, and political figures globally. It serves as an educational tool for fostering intersectionality, especially among young school children, and advocates for a more inclusive environmental movement that tackles the intricate relationship between social and environmental injustices.

### **References**

Malin, S. A., & Ryder, S. S. (2018). Developing deeply intersectional environmental justice scholarship. *Environmental Sociology*, 4(1), 1-7. DOI: 10.1080/23251042.2018.1446711.