

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

DORCETA TAYLOR

sociologist, author

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Page | 1



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Background Information

Taylor was born in Kingston, Jamaica.ⁱ Her interest in the environment started as a youth, when she was tending a rose garden.ⁱⁱ Taylor further immersed herself in nature by studying zoology and botany in college.ⁱⁱⁱ When Dorceta migrated to the United States, her interest shifted to understanding human-environment interactions.^{iv} She received her master’s degree and two doctorates in forestry and environmental studies at Yale University.^v

Taylor's Resistance

Historically, environmental conservation has been exclusively white in the U.S, purposefully excluding Black and Indigenous people through exclusionary practices. Dr. Taylor published multiple reports of her observations about this ongoing historical injustice including the famous 1981 report, “Blacks and the Environment: Toward an Explanation of the Concern and Action Gap between Blacks and Whites.”^{vi} Her work resisted the racist misconception that Black and Indigenous communities do not care about the environment. Rather, they are intentionally excluded from white environmental groups.^{vii} Dr. Taylor further articulated her experiences by developing the “17 Principles of Environmental Justice” during the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.^{viii} Her work highlights how environmental issues are not isolated ecological issues, but are actually interconnected with human rights issues. Social dynamics such as racism, classism, and gender discrimination are also factors.^{ix}

Achievements

Dr. Taylor’s report in 2014, *The State of Diversity in Environmental Institutions: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations, and Government Agencies*, brought national attention and held prominent environmental organizations accountable for their lack of diversity within their organization.^x Today, Dorceta Taylor is a professor and sociologist who writes about the inaccessibility and workforce dynamics in environmental conservation, urban agriculture, food security, and access.^{xi}

Essential Questions

1. What did Dorceta Taylor do in response to the lack of diversity in the field of environmental conservation?
 - a. How can diverse perspectives enhance an organization?

2. Racist assumptions such as, “Black and Indigenous communities do not care about the environment” are harmful and negatively impact those communities’ access to environmental resources.
 - a. What responsibility do climate change organizations have to create more diverse, inclusive organizations?

3. ***“Once you can start connecting large things that look unrelated, then you really have taken a very first step in liberating yourself.”***
 - a. What does this quote mean to you?

ⁱ Resources for the Future. “The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor.” <https://www.resources.org/resources-radio/challenge-diversity-environmental-movement-dorceta-taylor-rebroadcast/>.

ⁱⁱ “The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor”

ⁱⁱⁱ “The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor”

^{iv} “The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor”

^v “The Challenge of Diversity in the Environmental Movement, with Dorceta Taylor”

^{vi} “Interview of the Week: Dr. Dorceta Taylor | Our Daily Planet”

^{vii} “Interview of the Week: Dr. Dorceta Taylor | Our Daily Planet”

^{viii} “Interview of the Week: Dr. Dorceta Taylor | Our Daily Planet”

^{ix} Yale School of the Environment. “Dorceta Taylor, Preeminent Environmental Justice Scholar, to Join the F&ES Faculty,” June 1, 2020. <https://environment.yale.edu/news/article/dorceta-taylor-preeminent-environmental-justice-scholar-returns-to-yale>.

^x “ | Yale School of the Environment.” <https://environment.yale.edu/profile/taylor>.
^{xi} “ | Yale School of the Environment.” <https://environment.yale.edu/profile/taylor>.