



# Engaging the Everyday: Environmental Social Criticism and the Resonance Dilemma (MIT Press)

*John M. Meyer*

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Far-reaching efforts to address environmental issues rarely seem to resonate with citizens of the United States or other wealthy postindustrial societies. In *Engaging the Everyday*, John Meyer considers this impediment to action on environmental problems -- which he terms "the resonance dilemma" -- and argues that an environmental agenda that emerges from everyday concerns would resonate more deeply with ordinary citizens. Meyer explores the contours of this alternative, theorizing both obstacles and opportunities and then considering it in terms of three everyday areas of material practice: land use, transportation by automobile, and home dwelling.

Adopting the stance of an "inside critic" (neither detached theorist nor narrow policy advocate), and taking an approach that he calls "contested materiality," Meyer draws on a variety of theoretical perspectives to construct a framework for understanding material practices. He reimagines each of the three material practices in terms of a political idea: for land, property; for automobiles, freedom; and for homes, citizenship. His innovative analysis offers a grounded basis for reshaping our talk about political concepts and values.

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