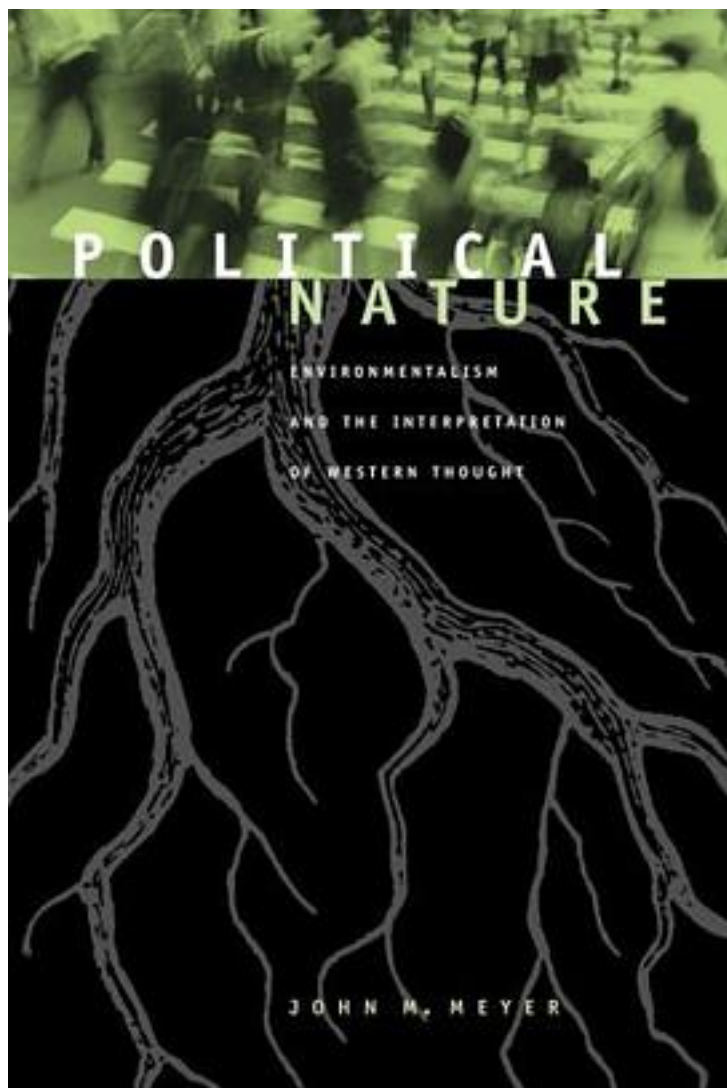


# Political Nature



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著者:John M. Meyer

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Concern over environmental problems is prompting us to reexamine established thinking about society and politics. The challenge is to find a way for the public's concern for the environment to become more integral to social, economic, and political decision making. Two interpretations have dominated Western portrayals of the nature-politics relationship, what John Meyer calls the dualist and the derivative. The dualist account holds that politics--and human culture in general--is completely separate from nature. The derivative account views Western political thought as derived from conceptions of nature, whether Aristotelian teleology, the clocklike mechanism of early modern science, or Darwinian selection. Meyer examines the nature-politics relationship in the writings of two of its most pivotal theorists, Aristotle and Thomas Hobbes, and of contemporary environmentalist thinkers. He concludes that we must overcome the limitations of both the dualist and the derivative interpretations if we are to understand the relationship between nature and politics. Human thought and action, says Meyer, should be considered neither superior nor subservient to the nonhuman natural world, but interdependent with it. In the final chapter, he shows how struggles over toxic waste dumps in poor neighborhoods, land use in the American West, and rainforest protection in the Amazon illustrate this relationship and point toward an environmental politics that recognizes the experience of place as central.

作者介绍:

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