

Biodiversity and Conservation Stories

ENG/ENV M30: Environment across Cultures

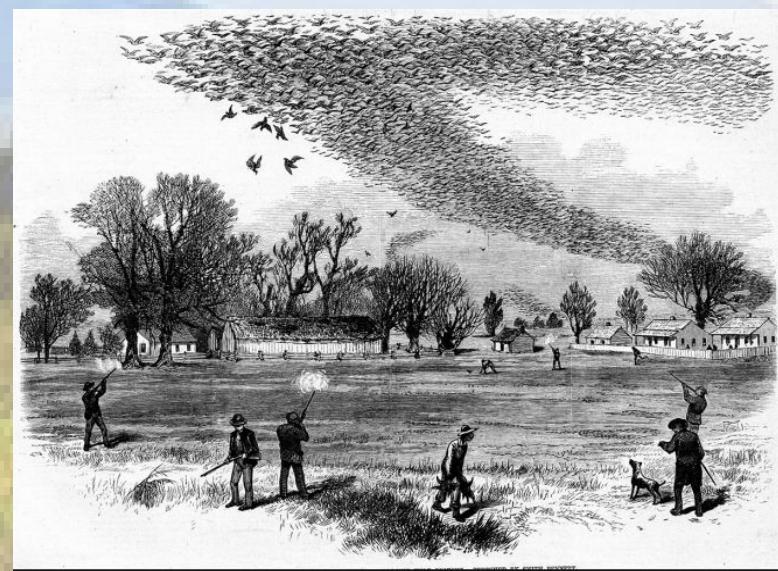
Prof. Heise
Spring 2023

Lecture 15: Roadmap

- 1. Recap: Biodiversity Loss and Extinction Stories**
- 2. Biodiversity Sound Art: Hyla's *Wilson's Ivory-bill***
- 3. Graphic Novel/Graphic Narrative**
- 4. Conservation and Multispecies Justice in *Virunga***

Endangered and Extinct Species Stories

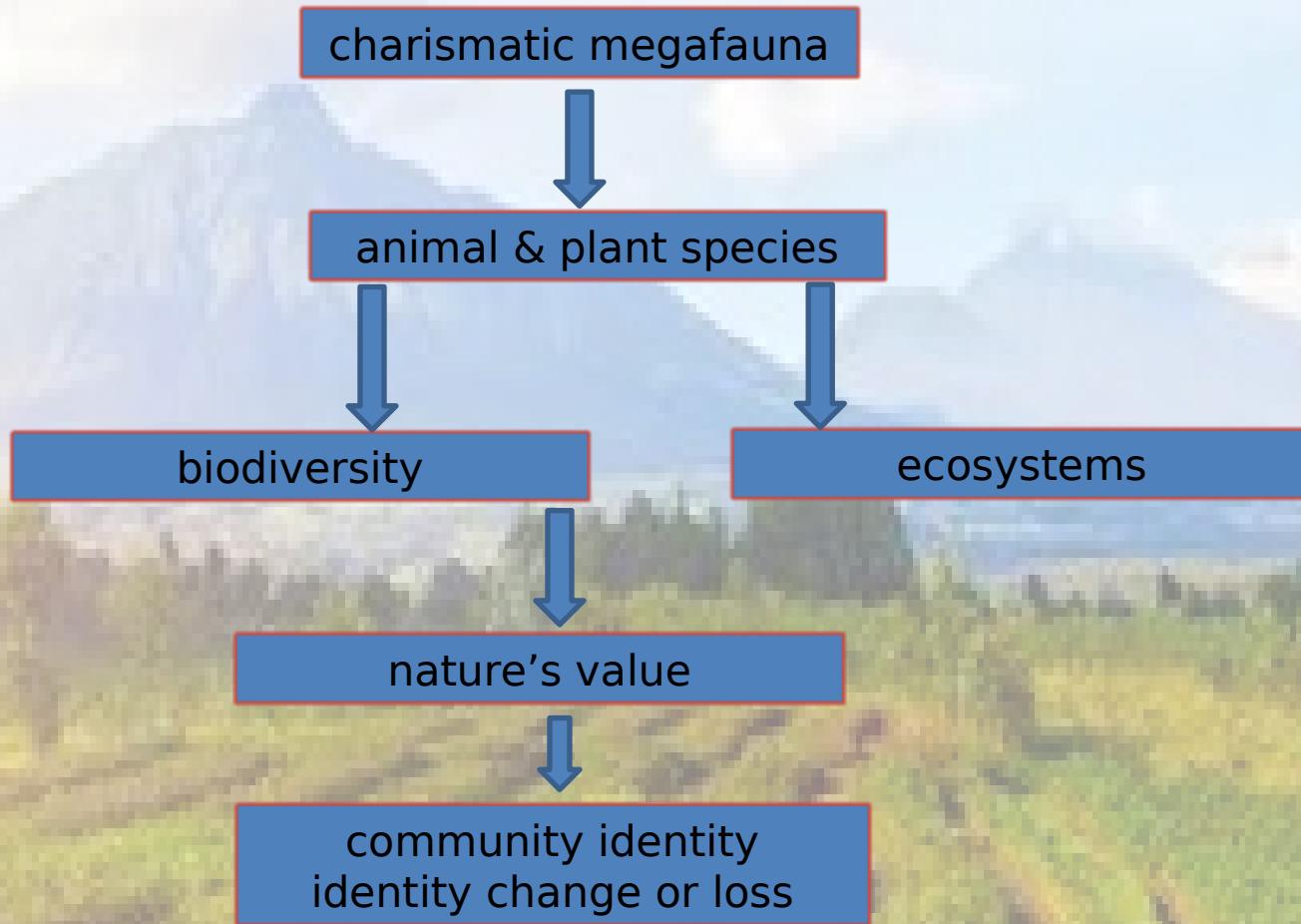
- Individual species extinctions vs. mass extinctions
- Images, replicas, and stories of endangered and recently extinct species are all around us.
- They typically focus on animals (not plants); on vertebrates (not invertebrates); on birds and mammals (more than reptiles, amphibians, or fish): CHARISMATIC MEGAFAUNA.



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- Stories about charismatic megafauna come to matter publicly when they follow a proxy logic that links them to the past, present and future of a particular cultural community (tribe, region, nation, international community).

The Proxy Logic of Biodiversity Narratives

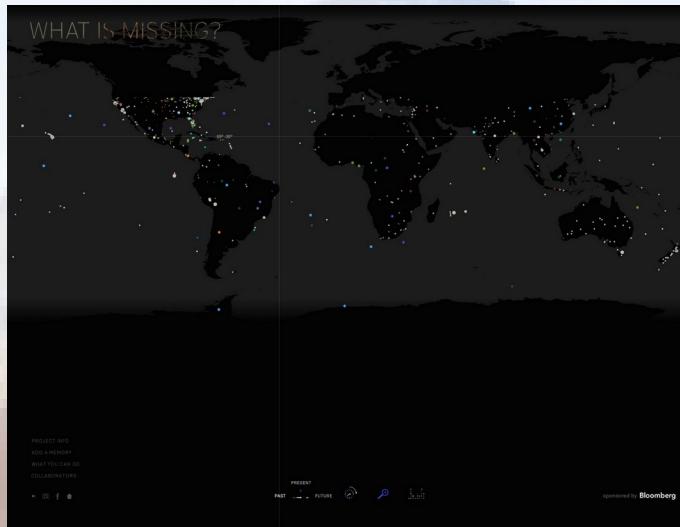


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- Narratives about charismatic megafauna often follow the genre patterns of elegy (poem of mourning) or tragedy (undeserved fall of a person of high standing or meaningless death of innocent victim).

Extinction and Sound Art

- Laura Schwendinger, *Creature Quartet* (2015)
- Linsey Pollak, *The Extinction Room*
- Maya Lin, *What Is Missing?* (2009-present)



<http://whatismissing.net/#/home>



Maya Lin's Sound Cone

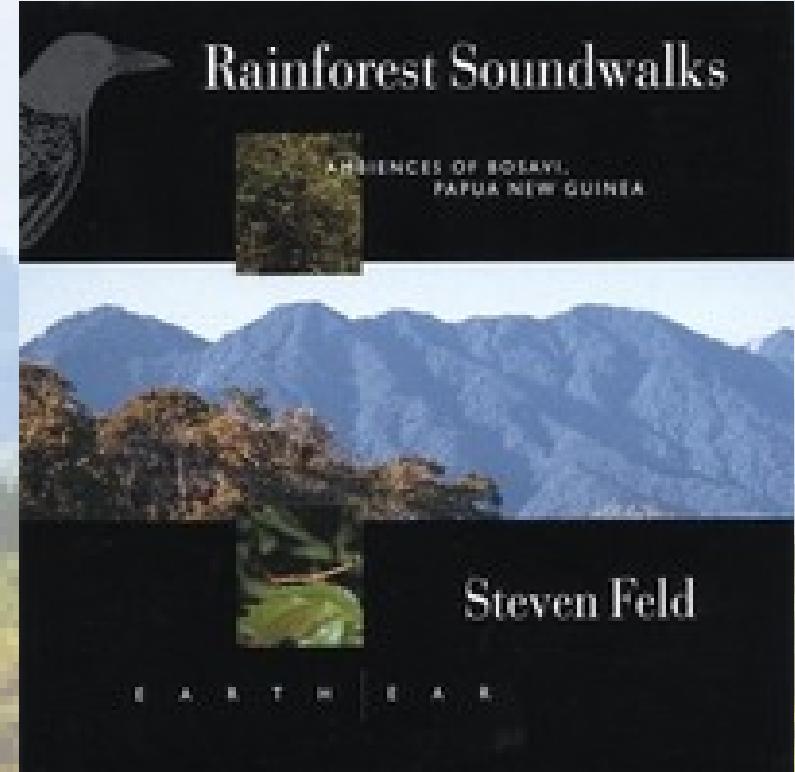
- Bernie Krause, *Wild Sanctuary Audio Archive*:

"the voices of living organisms from larvae to large mammals and the numerous tropical, temperate and Arctic biomes from which they come. The catalog currently contains over 4,500 hours of wild soundscapes and in excess of 15,000 identified life forms. Fully half of the natural soundscapes in this rare set are from habitats that no longer exist, are radically altered because of human endeavor, or have gone altogether silent" (<http://www.wildsanctuary.com>).

Extinction and Sound Art



1997/2001

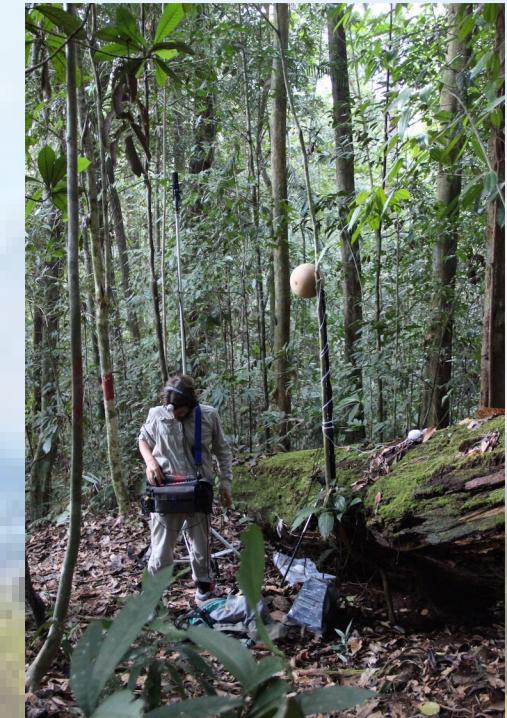


2006

David Monacchi| Italy

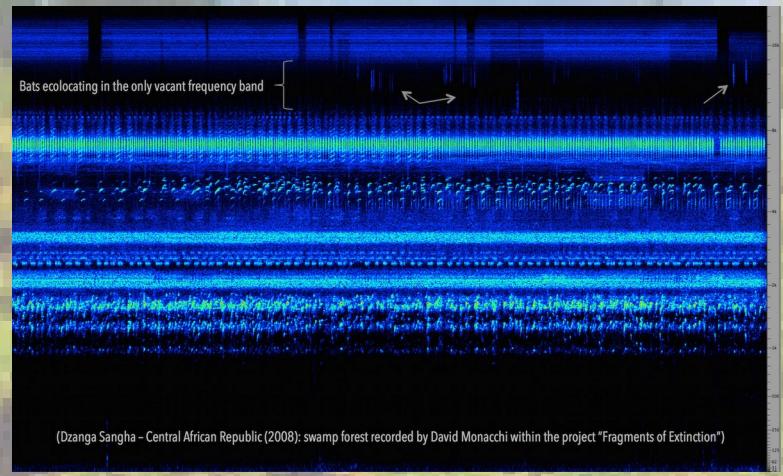
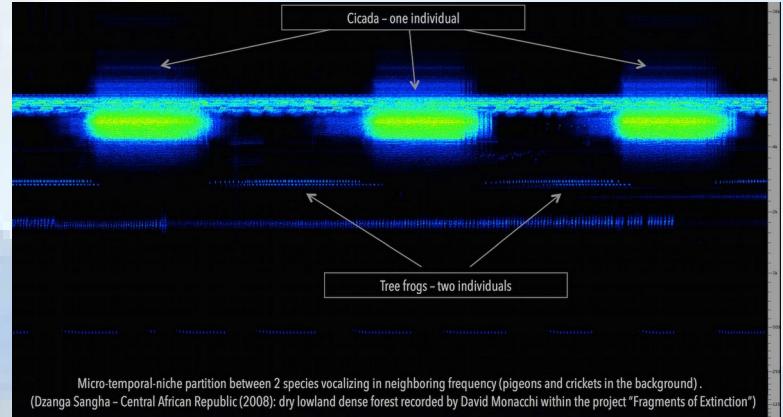
Fragments of Extinction (2001-2015)

- "fragments of a sonic world in extinction"
- "foster public awareness of 'the most silent catastrophe of our times': what has been defined as the Sixth Mass Extinction."
- "The ongoing ecocide is silencing forever the marvellous choirs of natural sound, the 'eco-symphonies' we have not even heard or recorded."
- "It is the sonic heritage of millions of years of evolution. We must save fragments of it in order to study, understand, experience, enjoy, and conserve it, preserving for future generations imprints of the disappearing sonic intelligence of nature."
- "eco-acoustic composition"



David Monacchi| Italy

Fragments of Extinction (2001-2015)



[http://www.fragmentsofextinction.org/
eco-acoustic-music/](http://www.fragmentsofextinction.org/eco-acoustic-music/)

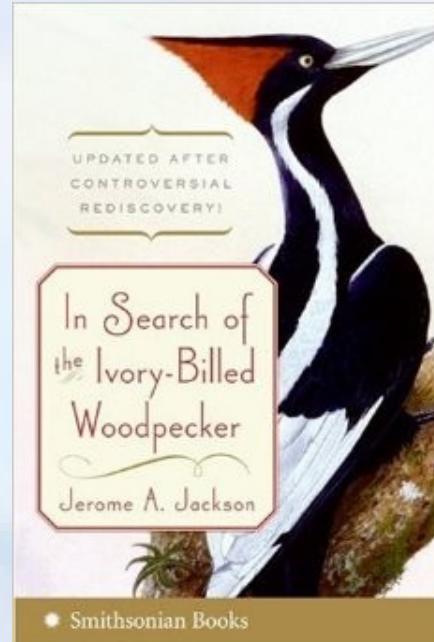
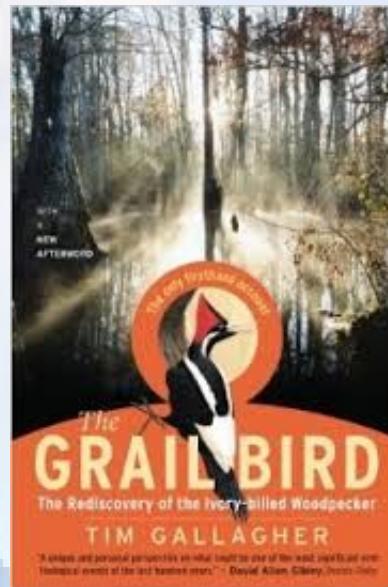
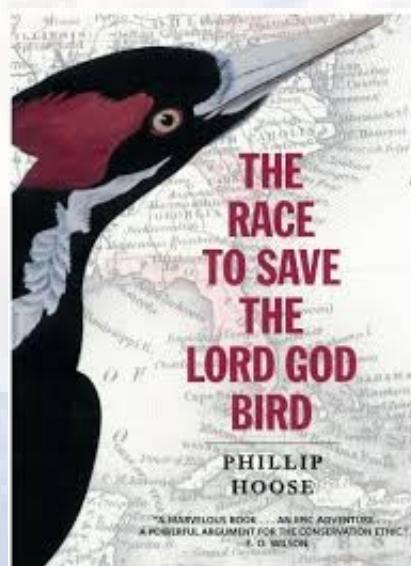
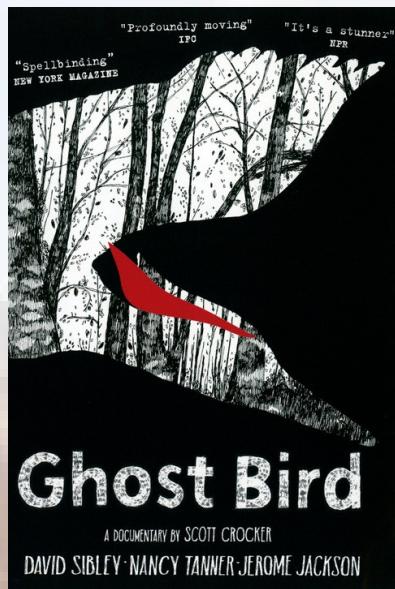
Ivory-billed Woodpecker



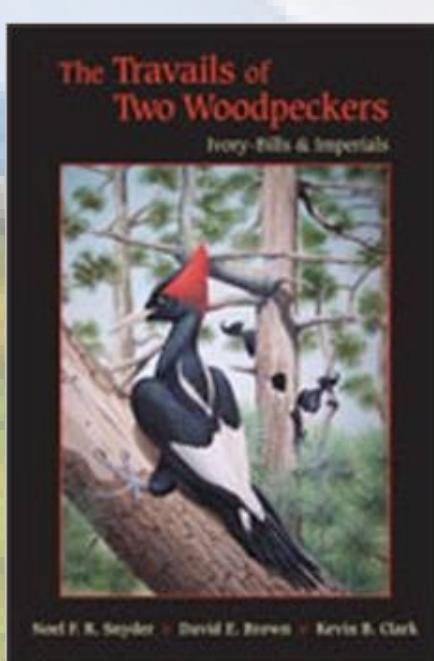
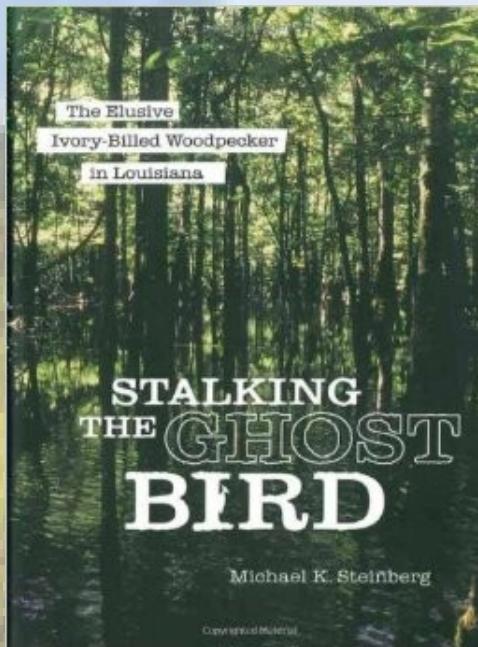
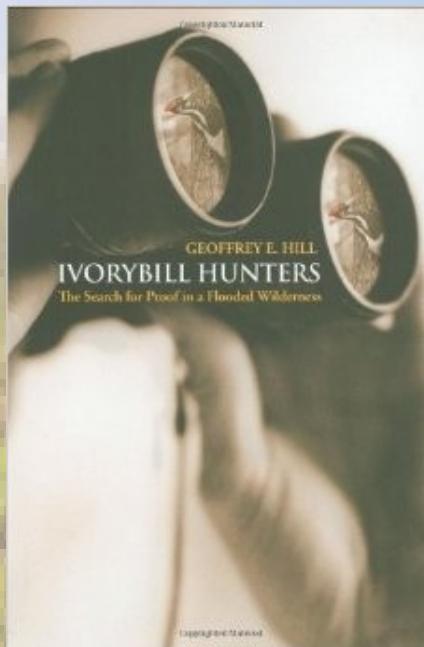
Male Ivory-billed Woodpecker leaving nest
Photo by James T. Tanner - 1937



Male Ivory-billed Woodpecker - Singer Tract, Louisiana
Photo by James T. Tanner - 1935



• Smithsonian Books

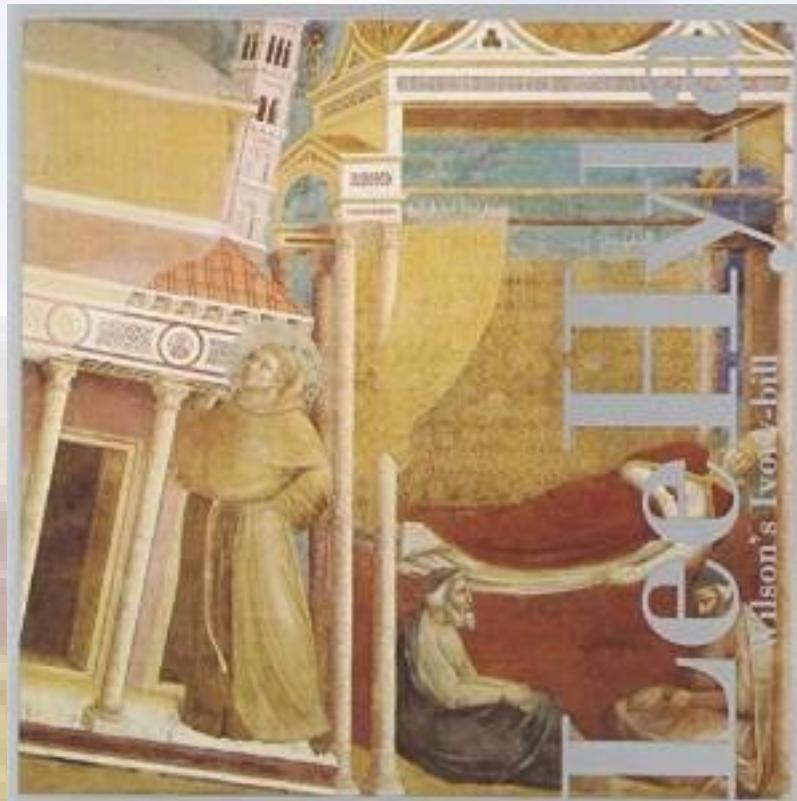


Wilson, *American Ornithology*:



I took him upstairs and locked him in my room, while I went to see my horse taken care of. In less than an hour, I returned, and, on opening the door, he set up the same distressing shout, which now appeared to proceed from grief that he had been discovered in his attempts at escape. He had mounted along the side of the window, nearly as high as the ceiling, a little below which he had begun to break through. The bed was covered with large pieces of plaster; the lath was exposed for about fifteen inches square, and a hole, large enough to admit the fist, opened to the weather-boards; so that, in less than another hour, he certainly would have succeeded in making his way through. I now tied a string round his leg, and, fastening it to the table, again left him. . . .

Lee Hyla, *Wilson's Ivory-bill*



- Text excerpt from Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology* (1808-14), sung by baritone
- Tape recording: ivory-bill calls, 1930s
- Piano score

Alleged Rediscovery of the Ivory-bill

- Latta et al., 18 May 2023: "Multiple lines of evidence suggest the persistence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) in Louisiana," *Ecology and Evolution*:
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ece3.10017>
- "'There are these incredibly rare birds that live in the middle of the Amazon that people can get good, identifiable photographs of,' Dr. Elphick said. 'And yet people have spent hundreds of thousands of hours trying to find and photograph ivory-billed woodpeckers in the United States. If there's really a population out there, it's inconceivable to me that no one could get a good picture'" ([New York Times](#) 21 May 2023).

Graphic novel | Graphic narrative

- 1976 term first used in print:
serious themes, three-dimensional
characters, extended plot
development, artful means of
expression
- tradition of graphic novels in
Europe (Dino Buzzelli in the 1960s)
and in Japan (*manga*)

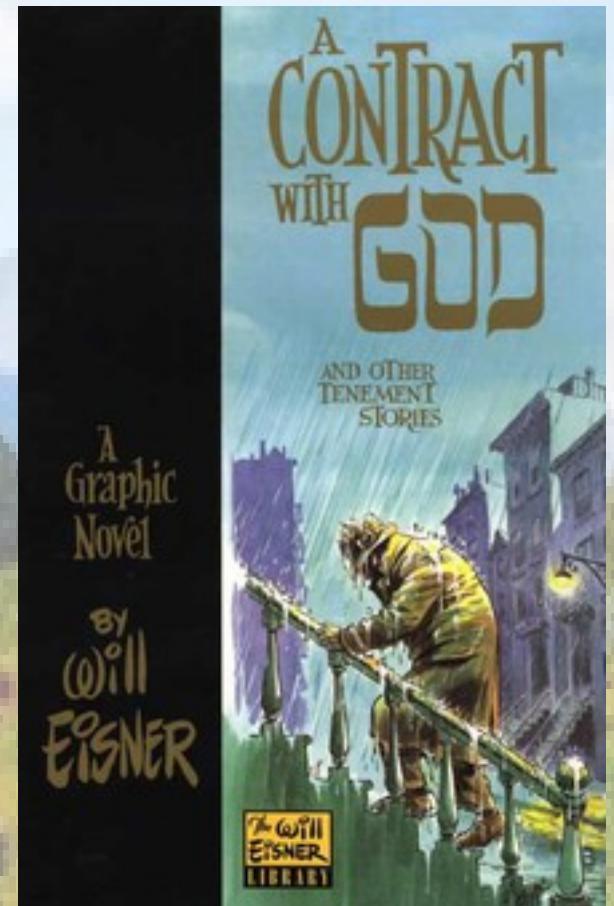
Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*
(はだしのゲン | *Hadashi no Gen*, 1973-
85)



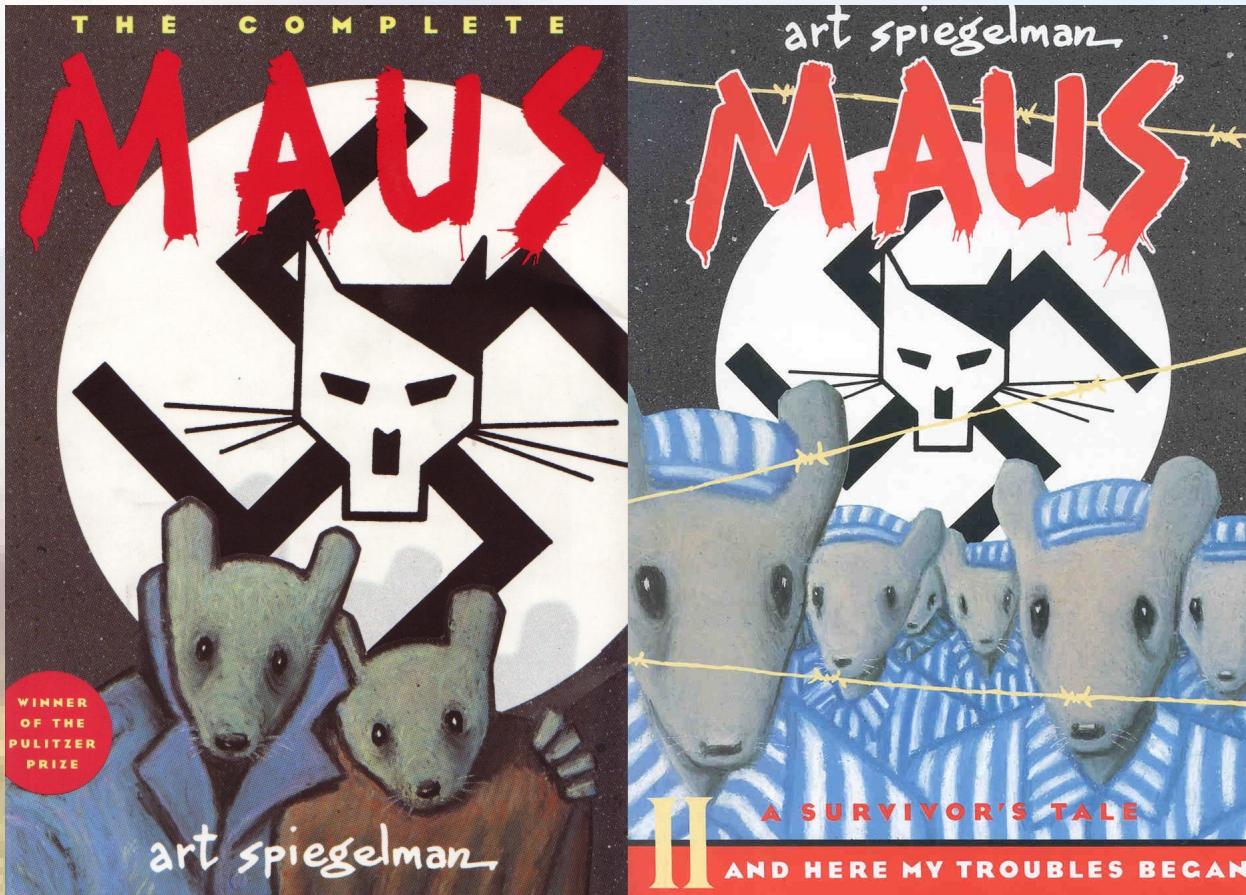
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Will Eisner, *A Contract With God, and Other Tenement Stories* (1978)

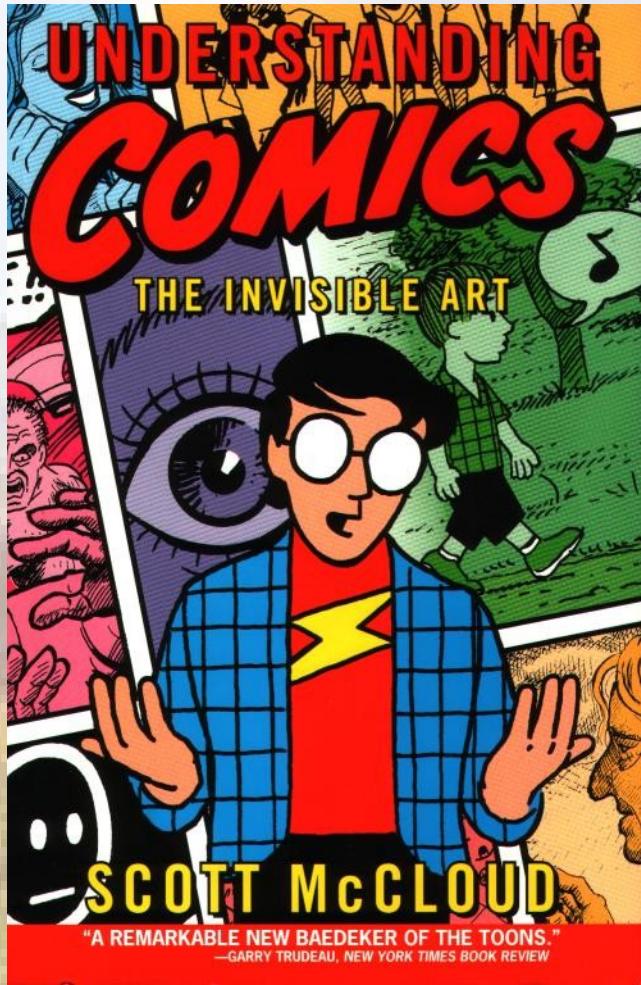


Graphic novel | Graphic narrative

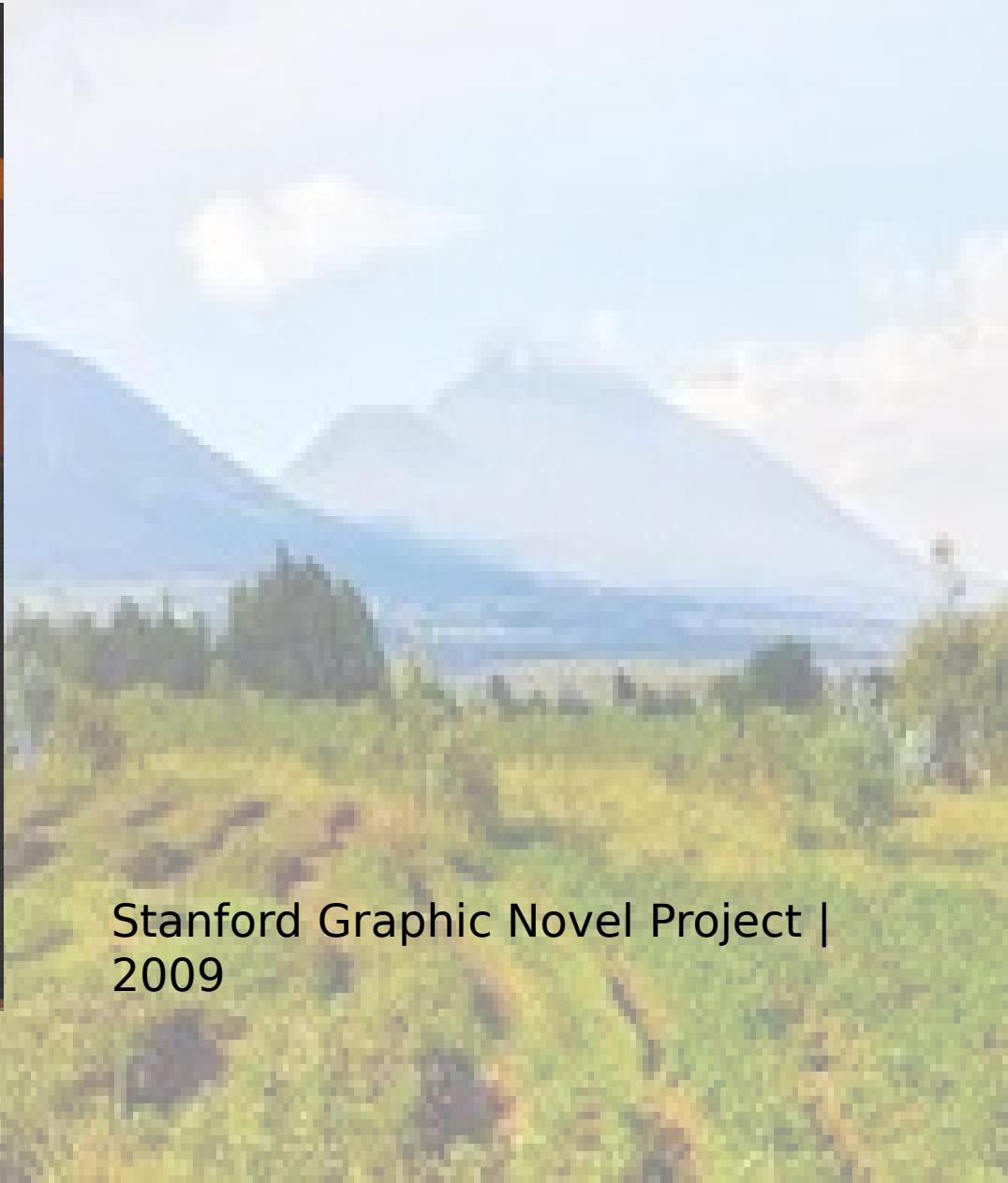
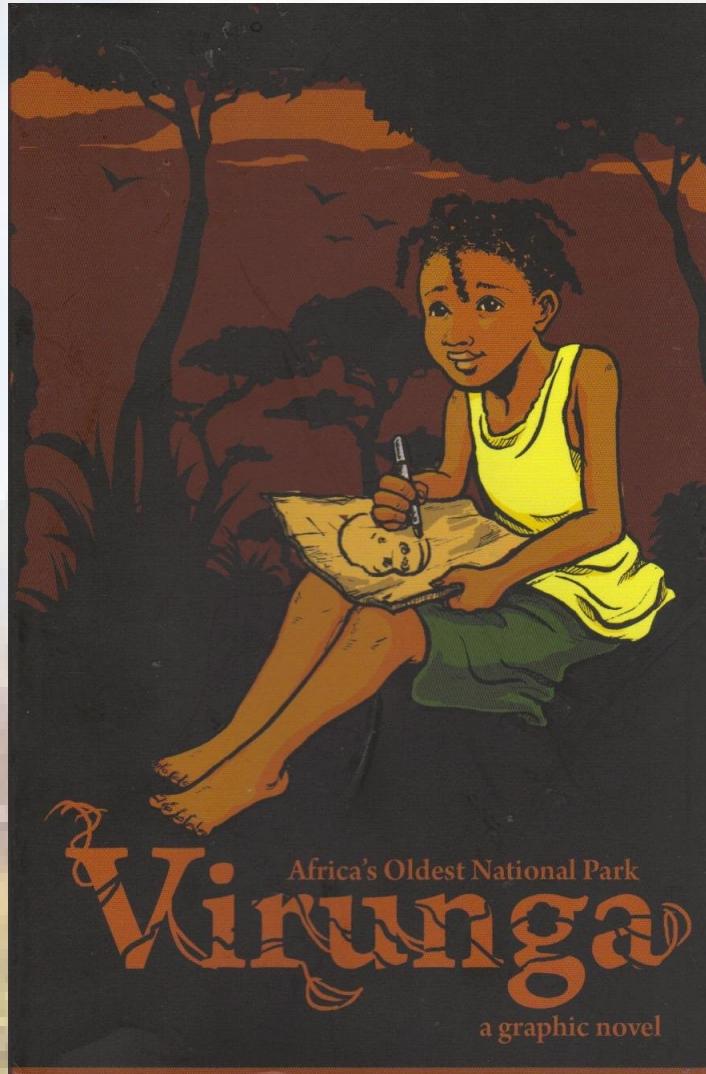


Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (1986, 1991)

Graphic novel | Graphic narrative



Scott McCloud,
Understanding Comics:
The Invisible Art
(1993)



Stanford Graphic Novel Project |
2009

Charismatic megafauna!





20

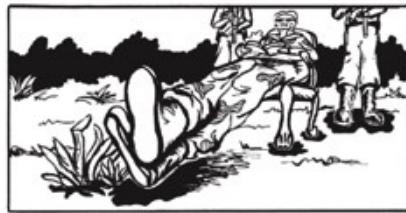


Malika's runs through the forest (*Virunga* 14, 20-21)

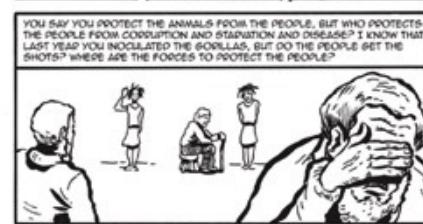


60

Chairman Sakombi



60



64



65

Chairman Sakombi (60, 64-65)



Drawing styles in *Virunga*: camera shots, children's drawings, scientific field journal (31, 80, 85)



31



85

Drawing styles in *Virunga*: camera shots, children's drawings, scientific field journal (31, 80, 85)



31



80

Drawing styles in *Virunga*: camera shots, children's drawings, scientific field journal (31, 80, 85)



Esther Illingo's drawings of gorilla noses: script? abstract art? (*Virunga* 81-82)



Esther's reflection on the
gorillas (*Virunga* 84)



37



Esther's imagination of the weaverbird in Virunga (37-38)



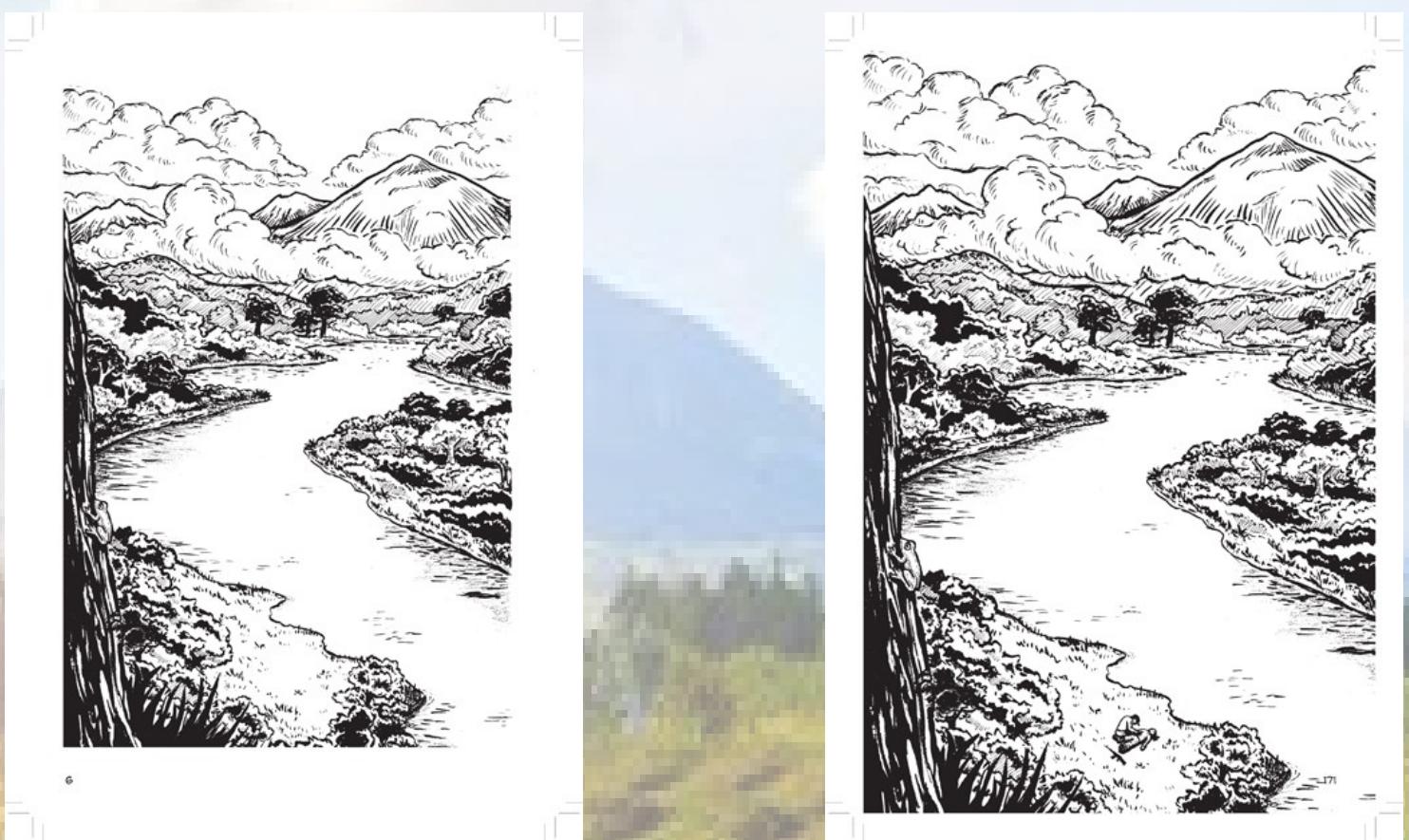
The weaverbird speaks (*Virunga* 74, 76)



Gazes and faces in Malika's encounter with a mountain gorilla (*Virunga* 23-24)



Gazes and faces in Malika's encounter with a mountain gorilla (*Virunga* 23-24)



Virunga's opening and closing panels (6, 171)



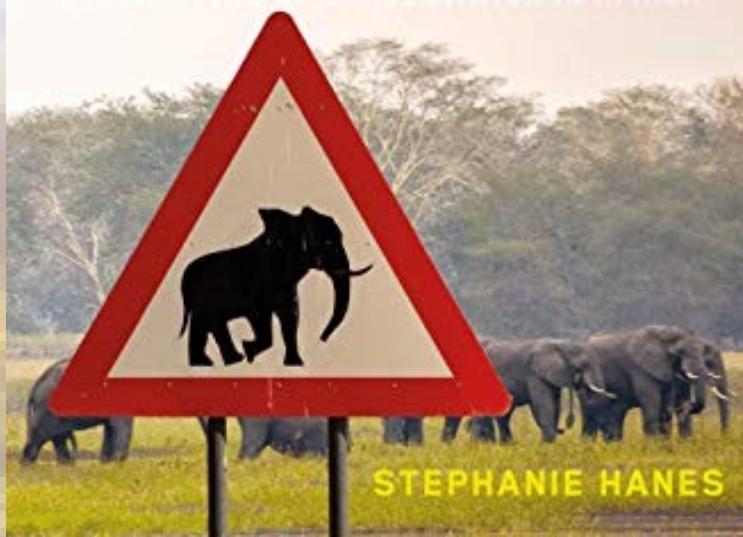
"The Amazing Adventures of Esther and Malika," Malika's comic-within-the-comic (*Virunga* 203, 207): will be discussed in section!



2014

WHITE MAN'S GAME

SAVING ANIMALS, REBUILDING EDEN, AND
OTHER MYTHS OF CONSERVATION IN AFRICA



2017