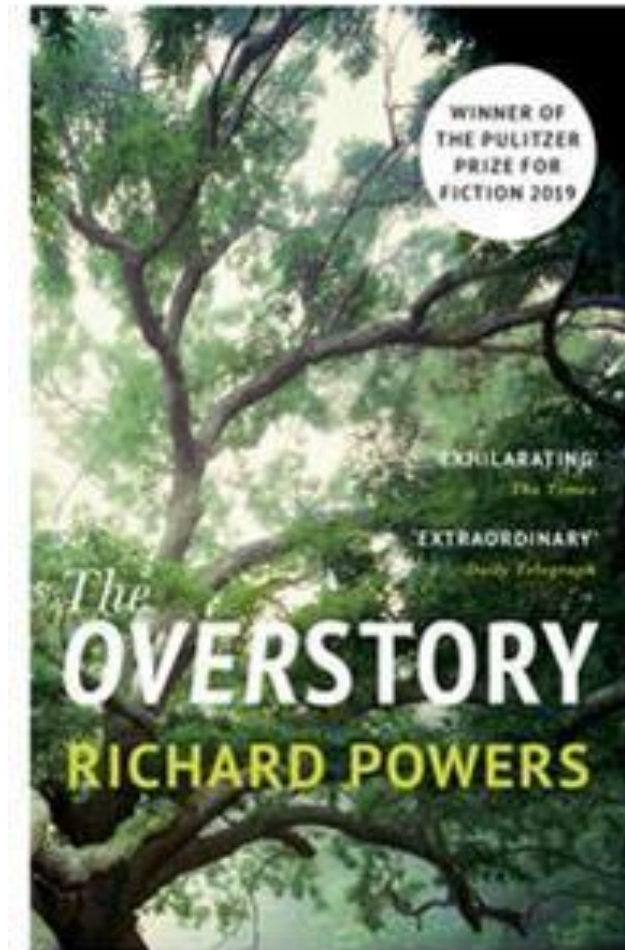
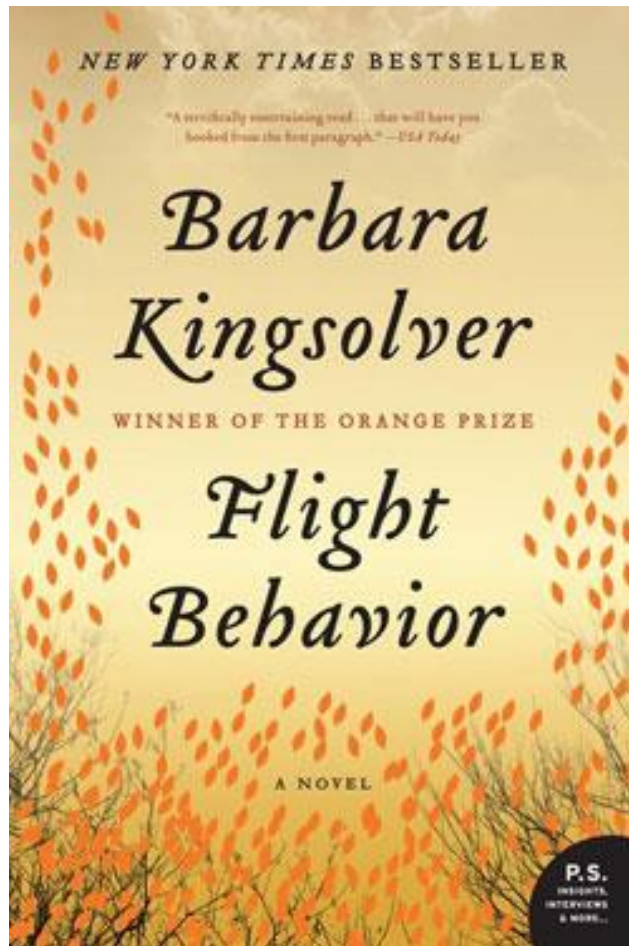


Narrative Understanding of Biodiversity: Problems and Possibilities

Markku Lehtimäki
(Comparative Literature, UTU)

Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior* (2012)
Richard Powers, *The Overstory* (2018)



Biodiversity for Sustainable Development

- 1)** biodiversity—the diversity of life on Earth—is defined as the variability among living organisms from all sources, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems
- 2)** biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and human well-being; it supports human health, and provides jobs in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and many other sectors
- 3)** without effective measures to conserve biodiversity and use its components in a sustainable manner, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achievable



Narratives of Biodiversity

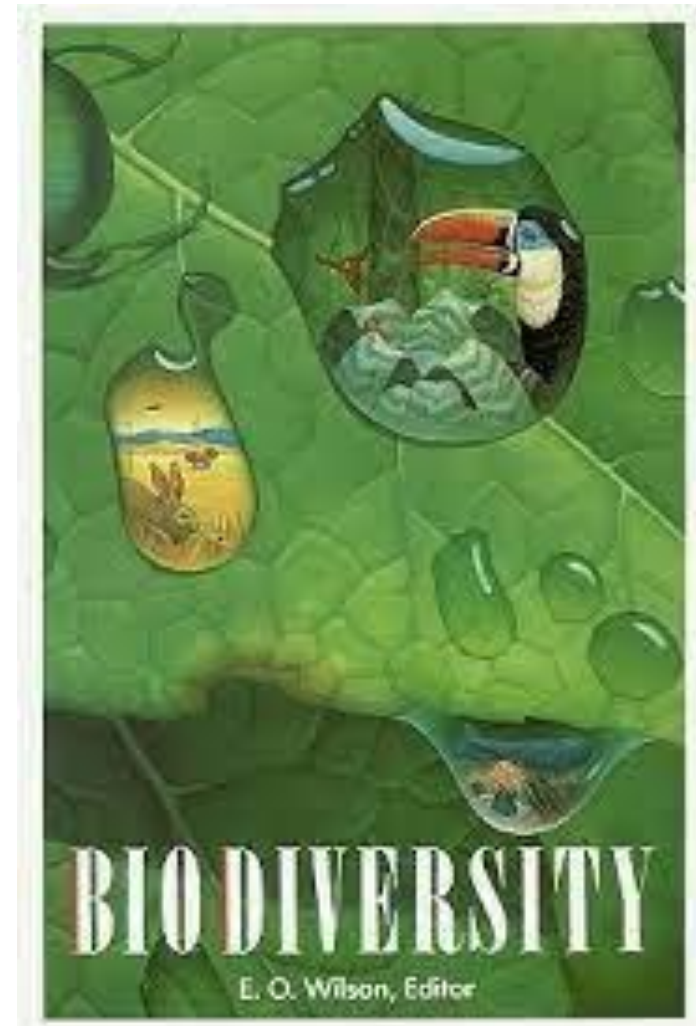
- *Eco-centric*: nature needs to be conserved for nature's sake
- *Faith, spirituality and ethics*: conservation is a spiritual imperative
- *Anthropocentric*: nature needs to be conserved because it provides important things for humans
- *Economics*: conservation needs to work with the economic powers, not against them
- *Crisis narrative and the sixth mass extinction*: humans are destroying the planet and ourselves
- *Big data, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and ecomodernisation*: technology will save humanity
- *Anthropocene*: nature is fatally impacted by the human deeds
- **Louder, Elena & Carina Wyborn: "Biodiversity narratives. Stories of the evolving conservation landscape." *Environmental Conservation* 47:4 (2020), 251–259.**

Community Conservation Narrative

- The rapid acceptance of the community conservation narrative within international policy was due to at least two reasons.
- First, it tied conservation to sustainable development, and captured the upwelling of political and policy commitment to sustainable development arising from the Brundtland Report (1987) and the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio in 1992.
- Second, it drew on the rediscovery of idealist and romantic ideas about the ‘community’ (and ‘local’ and ‘grass-roots’ action, and the participatory approach) as an alternative to the state as a means of achieving positive social change.
- **Hutton, Jon M., William M. Adams & James Murombedzi: “Back to Barriers? Changing Narratives in Biodiversity Conservation.” *Forum for Development Studies* 32:2 (2005), 341–370.**

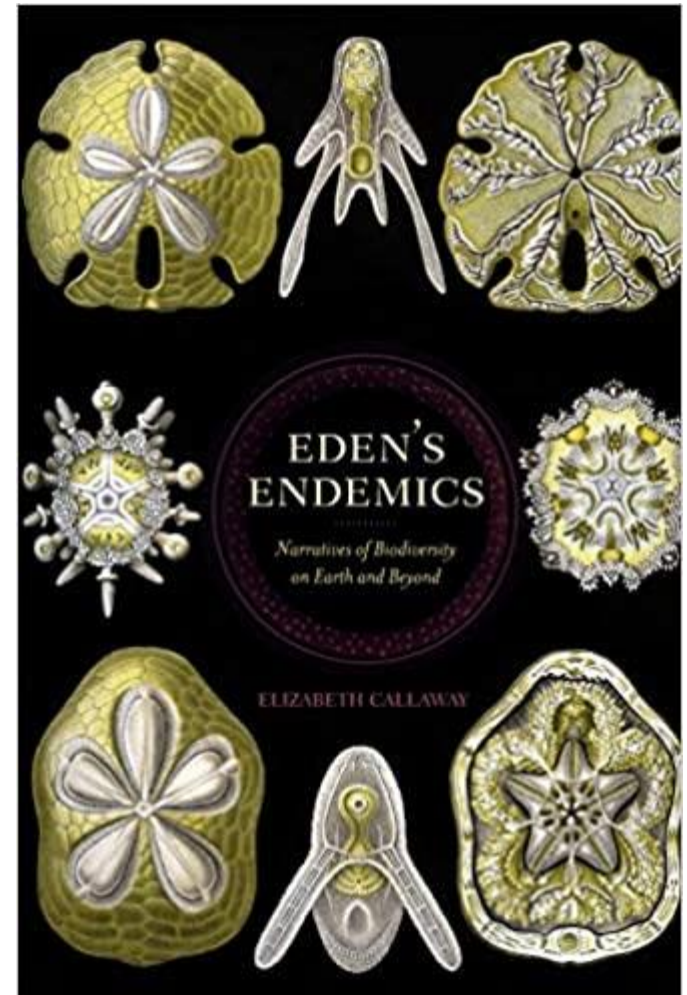
Edward O. Wilson (ed.), *Biodiversity* (1988)

“First, exploding human populations are degrading the environment at an accelerating rate, especially in tropical countries. Second, science is discovering new uses for biological diversity in ways that can relieve both human suffering and environmental destruction. Third, much of the diversity is being irreversibly lost through extinction caused by the destruction of natural habitats, again especially in the tropics.”



Elizabeth Callaway, *Eden's Endemics: Narratives of Biodiversity on Earth and Beyond* (2020)

"This narrative of a savior science rescuing biodiversity from 'the tropics' (a surrogate for the Global South in general) is only one of the prevalent narratives told about biodiversity, (...). The consequence is that biodiversity is framed as a resource for the enjoyment and enrichment of citizens of Global North, (...). (...) the choices made in representations of biodiversity have consequences to what spaces, species, and people are positioned as contributing to biodiversity."



Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN): “New narratives for biodiversity”



Global Youth
Biodiversity
Network



“Youth can be an enabling factor that can turn your weakness into strength” (GYBN)



Thank you!

