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"Ecocomics: Vivid Worlds in Images and Text"

Ludewig, Julia



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I grew up on Disney's *Duck Tales* (1988–) comics, casually enraptured by the adventures of ducks, mice, and dogs. Later, I encountered the chilling kind of rapture that comes with Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1992), a Shoah family memoir in comics form and likewise a page-turner with mice and cat protagonists. Yet another foray took me into abstract comics where blobs and squiggly lines were the only "protagonist" available. In hindsight, I appreciate how normal it is for comics to feature nonhuman agents. Comics invite nonanthropocentric characters and stories with a certain nonchalance, and they do so arguably not despite, but because they've been a marginal medium for a long time: The cover of a lesser literature left much space for artistic liberty. Add to that comics' inherent multimodal complexity, that is to say, the fact that they stitch together images and text. By nature, then, comics ask a lot of readers. It should therefore not surprise us that, thematically and structurally, comics are well suited for complex topics including those that pertain to the relation between humans and the environment—the genre critics have termed "environmental comics," "ecocomix," or, as I do here, "ecocomics." (From the article)

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