



SDSU CENTER FOR COMICS STUDIES

# Why This Comic for Social Justice?



## *Against the Ecofascist Creep*

Ecofascism is a vital social justice concern given accelerating climate change, its unequal impact on already marginalized populations, and the growing embrace of environmental concerns in the far-right. *Against the Ecofascist Creep* is a comic, research compendium, and teaching resource that intervenes in the increasing popularity of ecofascist sentiment in contemporary media. For example, Thanos, the central villain in two of the highest-grossing films of all time *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018) and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), was an ecofascist. The films suggest Thanos truly believed he was helping solve real problems and many fans felt he made some good points, as no characters nor plot points challenged Thanos' widely disproven arguments. In this way, the films helped normalize the creep of ecofascism.

- **Ecofascism is environmentalism that advocates or accepts violent actions.**
- **Reinforces existing systems of power and inequality.**
- **Suggests that certain kinds of people are naturally and exclusively entitled to control environmental resources.**

Some people proudly self-identify as ecofascists. Others unintentionally repeat busted myths that support ecofascism. Ecofascism is a slippery idea. What we do know is that ecofascist myths fuel white supremacy, ultra-nationalism, patriarchy, ableism, authoritarianism, and mass murder. They are also common misconceptions or deliberate misunderstandings about the world. Ecofascist myths can creep into actual environmentalists' rhetoric and efforts—and doom a real chance at a just, sustainable future. The goal of *Against the Ecofascist Creep* is to work together to recognize and remove ecofascist ideas from the way we think and talk about the world.

**Ecofascist myths can creep into actual environmentalist rhetoric and efforts—and doom a real chance at a just, sustainable future.**





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# About the Comic



## Summary of Material

The comic portion of *Against the Ecofascist Creep* imagines an alternate universe where the Marvel Avengers disproved Thanos' arguments. The comic begins by quoting the dialogue between Thanos and Gamora in *Infinity War*:

*Thanos:* Going to bed hungry. Scrounging for scraps. Your planet was on the brink of collapse. I was the one who stopped that. You know what's happened since then? The children born here have known nothing but full bellies and clear skies. It's a paradise.

*Gamora:* Because you murdered half the planet!

*Thanos:* It's a simple calculus. This universe is finite, its resources finite... if life is left unchecked, life will cease to exist. It needs correction.

*Gamora:* YOU DON'T KNOW THAT!

*Thanos:* I'm the only one who knows that. At least I'm the only one with the will to act on it...

Immediately, the zine reminds readers that "Though Thanos was a powerful supervillain, he wasn't original. His plan repeated long-held ideas that extreme violence is necessary to save the environment. It isn't." The comic portion of the zine re-imagines the Avengers' response to Thanos. The characters of Thor, Captain America, Iron Man, Black Panther, Okoye, Dr. Strange, Wong, Spider-Man, the Hulk, Winter Soldier, Nebula, the Scarlet Witch, Captain Marvel, Ant-Man, the Wasp, and Groot all refute Thanos' ecofascist myths, explaining why his ideas do not work.

**While Thanos was a powerful supervillain, he wasn't original. His plan repeated long-held ideas that extreme violence is necessary to save the environment. It isn't.**



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# About the Creator



## Creators and Designers

**Against the Ecofascist Creep** was created by The Anti-Creep Climate Initiative in collaboration with graphic designer Melody Keenan.

The Anti-Creep Climate Initiative was formed by April Anson, Cassie Galentine, Shane Hall, Alex Menrisky, and Bruno Seraphin.

April Anson is an Assistant Professor of Public Humanities at San Diego State University, core faculty for the Institute for Ethics and Public Policy, and affiliate faculty in American Indian Studies.

Cassie Galentine is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Oregon.

Shane Hall is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Salisbury University.

Alex Menrisky is an Assistant Professor of English and affiliate faculty in American Studies at University of Connecticut.

Bruno Seraphin is an assistant professor of Anthropology and affiliate faculty in Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Connecticut.

**Joined together in common, anti-ecofascist cause, the Anti-Creep Climate Initiative smashes ecofascist mythology, champions liberatory environmental futures, and has fun doing it!**

***Against the  
Ecofascist  
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champions  
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environmental  
futures!***



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# Discussion Questions



## Questions for Group or Individual Discussion:

1. Does Thanos's status as a supervillain make his ecofascism more or less sympathetic as a supervillain? Why or why not? In other words, how does the comic form or superhero storytelling affect the message?
2. Which of the ecofascist myths have you seen in media and pop culture?
3. What kinds of popculture forms do you see ecofascist ideas in most often? Why do you think that is?
4. What popculture forms are most effective in combatting ecofascist ideas? Do you think comics, scifi, superheroes, or cartoons are or can be effective mediums? Why and how?
5. Have you seen ecofascist myths outside of "environmental" discussions? Where?
6. What are the core fallacies of ecofascism? How does ecofascism misconstrue ecology, economics, and social inequality?
7. How is ecofascism connected to social and climate justice issues?
8. Refer to the "Tactics and Strategies" at the end of the comic/document:
  - a. What are some ways you could counteract ecofascist ideas in your own life?
  - b. What are some actions or tactics that you think you could try?
  - c. Are there any difficulties or barriers you anticipate to doing so?
  - d. Can you imagine any specific ways to address those challenges?



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# Activities and Assignments



## PLAY BINGO WITH 6 ECOFASCIST MYTHS

Either students come to class having read *Against the Ecofascist Creep* or give students 15-20 minutes to read through all six myths and why they are wrong...

Then breakout into 5 minute individual free-writing session to answer the following:

Where have you come across the 6 “Everyday Ecofascist” myths? For each one, think of an example in the media, films, television, comics, or any other art forms where you have seen a version of this myth. (Remind students that it is okay to be unsure of their example, they will get a chance to workshop it next!)

Next: In groups of 3 to 4, discuss each myth and the examples students brought. The groups should agree on one example for each.

Now: Reconvene as a whole class and repeat the process - aim to find the best contemporary example of each of the myths.

\*Modification: a blackout version that does not start with an individual free-write but, instead, each pair or group tries to fill in every square first. First one to blackout wins, but they must be able to explain the example of the myth.

Much of the fun of this activity is in the explanations and debate!





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# Activities and Assignments



## Additional Read and Discuss Activities

**Assignment #1** - Read the comic *Mayah's Lot* and/or watch the animated version of it (links for both listed in 'Further Reading' section). Have students take notes on form and message. They must note 1 specific place where they really noticed the comic form itself adding to the social justice message.

Next:

- Pair and Share
- Share out loud
- Discussion:
  - Are there any emerging patterns in the places where we noticed the form amplifying or clarifying the social justice message?
  - Based on the answers to the above, can we make any tentative claims about the relationship between the comic form and social justice concerns?

**Assignment #2** - Read the comic *Because IPCC* and/or watch the animated version of it (links for both listed in 'Further Reading' section).

Have students take notes on form and message. They must note 1 specific place where they really noticed the comic form itself adding to the social justice message.

Next:

- Pair and Share
- Share out loud
- Discussion:
  - Are there any emerging patterns in the places where we noticed the form amplifying or clarifying the social justice message?
  - Based on the answers to the above, can we make any tentative claims about the relationship between the comic form and social justice concerns?



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# Further Reading

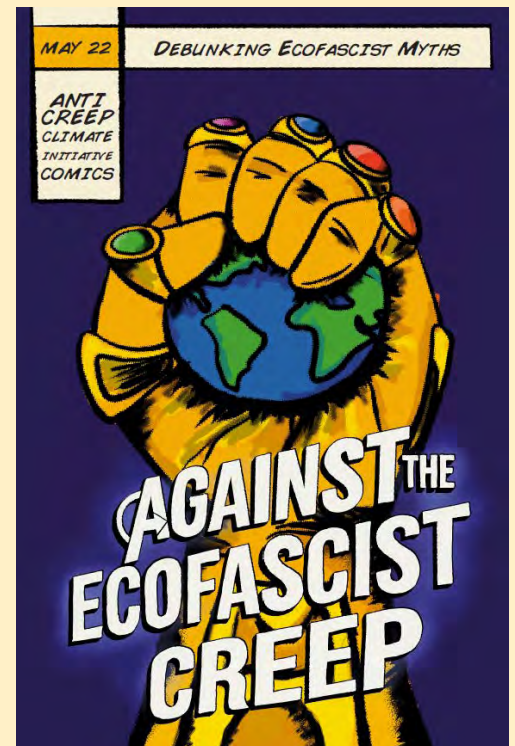


## Related Material

"Because IPCC: The History and Science of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change," Succession in collaboration with Ad Astra Comics, n.d. [[link here](#)]



*Mayah's Lot* by Rebecca Bratspies, Charlie LaGreca, et al, Color Lines, n.d. [[link here](#)]





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# Further Reading



## Additional Research

- April Anson, "No One Is a Virus: On American Ecofascism," *Environmental History Now* (21 Oct. 2020).
- Janet Biehl & Peter Staudenmaier. *Ecofascism Re-visited: Lessons from the German Experience* (New Compass Press, 2011).
- Adrienne Maree Bown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (AK Press, 2017).
- Shane Burley, *Fascism Today: What It Is and How to End It* (AK Press, 2017).
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2014).
- Bernhard Forchtner (ed.), *The Far Right and the Environment: Politics, Discourse and Communication* (Routledge, 2020).
- Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Beacon Press, 2019).
- John Hultgren, *Border Walls Gone Green: Nature and Anti-Immigrant Politics in America* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
- Indigenous Environmental Network, "Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon" (2021),
- Winona LaDuke, "Voices From White Earth: Gaa-Waabaabiganikaag," Thirteenth Annual E. F. Schumacher Lecture, Schumacher Center for a New Economics (1993).
- Bill V. Mullen & Christopher Vials (eds.), *The U.S. Anti-fascism Reader* (Verso, 2020).
- Ia paperson, "A Ghetto Land Pedagogy: An Antidote For Settler Environmentalism," *Environmental Education Research*, 20, 1, pp. 115-130, (2014).
- Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (Vintage, 2007).
- Olúfémi O. Táíwò and Beba Cibralic, "The Case for Climate Reparations," *FP: Foreign Policy*, 10 October 2020.
- The Red Nation, *The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save Our Earth* (Common Notions, 2021).
- Alexander Reid Ross, *Against the Fascist Creep* (AK Press, 2017).
- Devin Zane Shaw, *Philosophy of Antifascism: Punching Nazis and Fighting White Supremacy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).
- Southern Poverty Law Center, "Greenwash: Nativists, Environmentalism, and the Hypocrisy of Hate" (2020).
- Peter Staudenmaier, *Ecology Contested: Environmental Politics from Left to Right* (AK Press, 2021).
- Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Climate Change & Climate Justice: Teaching Materials and Advanced Bibliography," SEAS: School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan,
- Carl A. Zimring, *Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States* (New York University Press, 2015).

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# About the Educator



**Dr. April Anson is assistant professor of English, affiliate faculty in Native American and Indigenous studies, and American studies at the University of Connecticut.**

**Prior to that, April was assistant professor of Public Humanities at San Diego State University, core faculty for the Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs, and affiliate faculty in American Indian Studies.**

**Dr. Anson works at the intersection of the environmental humanities, Indigenous and American studies, and political theory. Using the methods of literary analysis and culture studies, Dr. Anson's research explores the historical and ongoing connections between climate change and white supremacy—and the Indigenous environmental justice traditions that eclipse those relations.**

**She is the co-founder of the Anti-Creep Climate Initiative, co-author of Against the Ecofascist Creep, and was a Mellon postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania in the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities.**

**Dr. Anson's work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in boundary 2, Resilience, Environmental History, Western American Literature, and others. In all, she remains committed to anti-racist and anti-colonial knowledge production and social movements.**



\*Formatted and Edited by Jenifer M. Glor, SDSU MA Student (History)