

The Green Scare: Radical environmental activism and the invention of “eco-terrorism” in American superhero comics from 1970 to 1990

by

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A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2021

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## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## Abstract

American environmentalism became a recognizable social movement in the 1960s. In the following two decades the movement evolved to represent a diverse set of philosophies and developed new protest methods. In the early 1990s law enforcement and government officials in America, with support from extraction industries, created an image of the radical environmental movement as dangerous “eco-terrorists.” The concept was deployed in an effort to de-value the environmental movement’s position at a time of heightened environmental consciousness. With the concept in place members of the movement became easier to detain and the public easier to deter through political repression.

The concept of “eco-terrorism” enters popular media relatively quickly indicated by the proliferation of superhero comics in the early 1990s that present villainous environmental activists as “eco-terrorists.” This imagery contrasts comics from 1970 which depicted superheroes as working alongside activists for the betterment of the world.

This thesis analyses superhero comics as sites of political and cultural messaging during periods of major influx in environmental consciousness. The representation of “eco-terrorism” in relation to superheroes is understood as an important part of the political repression campaigns aimed at radical environmentalism by the American government. These activists represented a disruption to the “standard view” of understanding relationships between humans and the environment, a change that would impact the profits of extraction industries, and the governments that depend on them.

## Acknowledgments

A huge thank you to my supervisor Jane Hutton for pushing me to dig deep on this topic and all of your guidance over the last year.

Thank you Marie-Paule Macdonald for being a part of my team as the committee member, and for your insight and wonderful conversation.

Thank you to James Nugent from the *School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability* at Waterloo for being the internal reader, and thank you to Marc Ngui of *Happy Sleepy* for being the external reader.

I also want to thank Pamela Jackson at the University of San Diego for putting together the reading guide to comics and sustainability which was a crucial starting point for this project.

I thank my spouse Brenda for her unwavering support and encouragement.

*For Brenda*

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# 1

## Introduction

### Disaster in Alaska

On the night of March 24, 1989, a laden oil tanker, the Exxon Valdez, left the port of Valdez Alaska where the Trans-Alaska Pipeline terminates on route to California. The ship deviated from its scheduled course to avoid the sea ice encroaching on the shipping lanes. At approximately 12:00am, the Third Mate of the ship was steering the vessel and, having lost track of the ship's location, failed to alter course striking Bligh Reef. The impact tore open the single hull of the tanker releasing its contents into the dark waters of Prince William Sound, one of the most biodiverse regions in America. At the time of the incident the ship's Captain, Joseph Hazelwood, was not on the bridge but was in his cabin and blood tests later revealed alcohol in his system. The unlicensed Third Mate had steered the tanker 1.5 miles off of their shipping lane and into the well-marked hazard of Bligh Reef.<sup>1</sup>

Eleven million gallons of oil gushed out of the Exxon Valdez. Nine hours after the crash, activists flew over the floundering ship in helicopters to find that not a single one of the promised response crafts from Exxon had arrived or begun to contain the rapidly spreading oil. Equipment was scrambled but had to be shipped from far off locations arriving too late to effectively contain the spill which, exacerbated by high winds, now pushed 1,000 square miles of slick oily waves and sticky fouled beaches.<sup>2</sup> Pre-emptive mechanical contain-

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1 "Exxon Valdez: High Winds Threaten Alaskan Oil Slick - Archive, 27 March 1989," last modified Mar 27, accessed Oct 19, 2020, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/27/exxon-valdez-oil-slick-arctic-1989>.

2 *Exxon Valdez Oil Spill: In the Wake of Disaster*, Digital documentary, directed



Fig. 1.1—*The Exxon Valdez, aground on Bligh Reef, gushing oil into Prince William Sound, Alaska.*

Fig. 1.2—*(Top right) Workers use high pressure water to wash oil from a beach on Smith Island.*

Fig. 1.3—*(Bottom right) A volunteer uses paper towels and spoons to wipe oil off her beach at Larsen Bay, Kodiak Island.*

ment methods failed. For months teams of people wiped oil up by hand with towels and washed down kilometers of sensitive beaches with high-pressure hot water removing the oil from the ocean with pump-barges. Hundreds of thousands of birds and marine animals are estimated to have died, not to mention the impact on the livelihoods of locals who depend on certain animal populations. In the thirty years since, many species are beginning to recover, but many more will never.<sup>3</sup>

In the following months Captain Joseph Hazelwood was charged and stood trial for three felonies, and three misdemeanors. He was acquitted of all charges except the misdemeanor<sup>4</sup> for “negligent discharge of oil”. The sentence was a \$50,000 fine and 1000 hours of community service. Exxon-Mobil on the other hand, by 1991, was facing more than 330 separate lawsuits in addition to felony charges from the Alaska State Government and the Federal Government of the USA. Exxon shelled out billions of dollars in clean-up costs, and after pleading guilty, sent out hundreds of millions more in settlement fees and fines.<sup>5</sup>

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by Seth Bomse (New York: Retro Report, 2013)

3 Martin Robards, “Exxon Valdez: What Lessons have we Learned from the 1989 Oil Spill Disaster?” *The Guardian* Mar 24, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2014/mar/24/exxon-valdez-oil-spill-disaster-arctic>.

4 A misdemeanor is considered a lesser, or minor, crime in relation to a felony which is a major crime.

5 Keith Schneider, “Exxon to Pay \$100 Million Fine and Plead Guilty in Spill,” *The New York Times* Mar 13, 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/13/us/exxon-to-pay-100-million-fine-and-plead-guilty-in-valdez-spill.html?auth=login-google>.







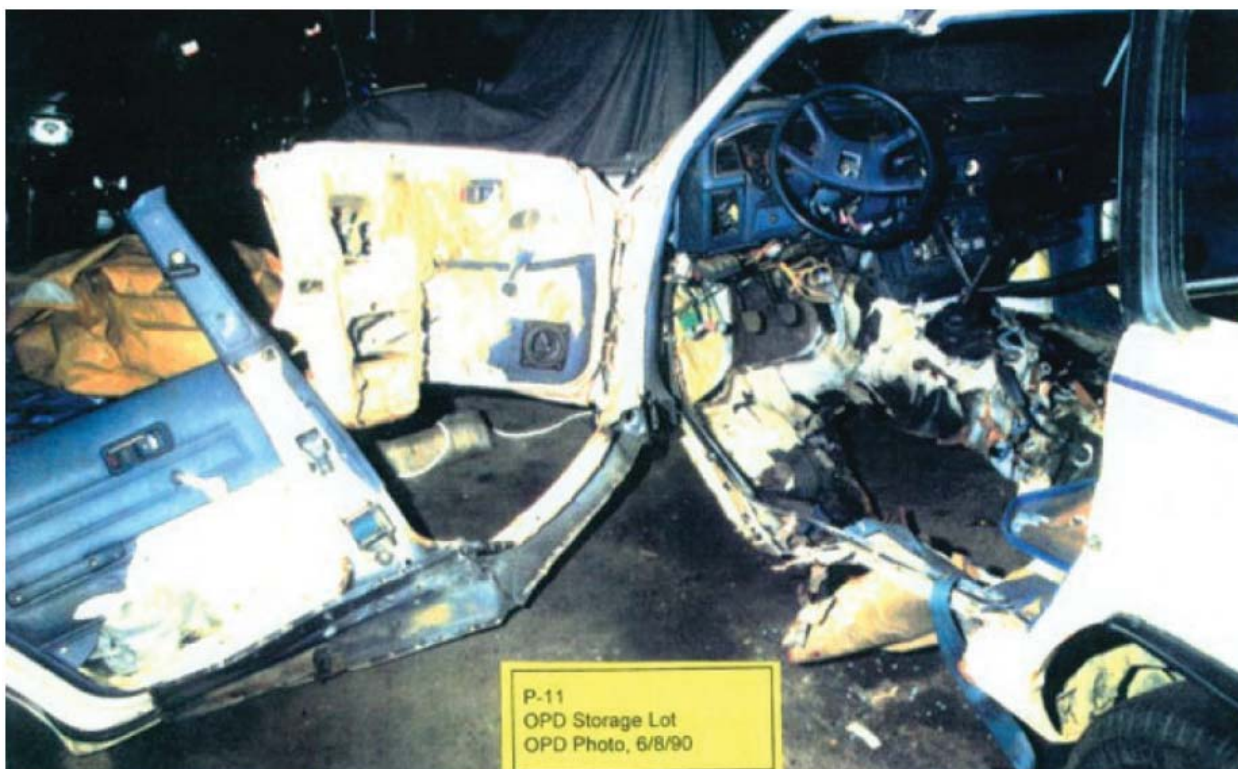


Fig. 1.4—Crime scene photo of Judi Bari's car after the bomb.

### “Who bombed Judi Bari?”

Just over a year after the Exxon Valdez disaster, while the company was still embroiled in court cases, another story was unfolding around environmental crimes. On May 24, 1990, two *Earth First!* activists, Judi Bari and Daryl Cherney, were driving in Oakland California on their way to a meeting about the upcoming *Redwood Summer*, a three month non-violent protest campaign against logging old-growth forests in California. At an intersection Bari put her foot on the brake and a pipe bomb planted under her seat exploded, sending shrapnel flying and critically damaging her lower body.

When Bari awoke in the hospital after emergency surgery, immobile in a bed, two police officers immediately informed her that she and Cherney were under arrest for the possession and transportation of explosives. On the news the pair were labelled “eco-terrorists” by the FBI and the Oakland Police Department, refusing to consider them victims of an attempted assassination. For the next seven weeks the police and media continued to focus their investigation on the activists and their associates. They did not investigate suspects outside the victim’s circles, despite even a letter claiming responsibility by a vigilante. False claims were made to the press by police alleging that Bari had built the bomb in her ex-husband’s house, giving the incident national attention.<sup>6</sup> Eventually the District Attorney dropped

<sup>6</sup> The FBI’s investigation was led by Special Agent Richard Held, who in the early 1970’s was an operative in the COINTELPRO – a covert series of illegal FBI actions targeting political activists like the Black Panther Party, Feminists, and Environmentalists. This detail helped Bari and Cherney in their Civil Rights suit against the Oakland Police and FBI following the bombing.

all charges on account of insufficient evidence, yet the damage had already been done. *Earth First!*'s protest methods had been lauded as controversial in the past but never with the intention of harming humans. The FBI and OPD's investigation insinuated the escalation from militant direct-action to terrorism, aiding the notion that activists from *Earth First!* were capable and willing to use violent methods to pursue their goals.

Yet, both Bari and Cherney were committed to non-violent methods, previously denouncing tree-spiking in the *EF!* Journal. Participants in the *Redwood Summer* were required to sign a pledge of non-violence if they wanted to participate. Bari was also known as a labour organizer, and her efforts to bring workers and activists together resulted in the creation of an *International Workers of the World* chapter composed of timber mill workers allied with environmentalists like *Earth First!* A year after the bombing Bari and Cherney filed a civil rights lawsuit against the FBI and Oakland Police for violations of first and fourth amendment rights. The suit was won in 2002, after Bari died of cancer in 1997, proving that law-enforcement involved in the case falsified information and unjustly pursued these two activists in a crime they did not commit.<sup>7</sup>

## **A New Supervillain Emerges**

At the same time in 1990 the comics industry was having a boom like never before. Stocks soared and collectors snapped up limited edition comics in the hopes of selling them for a small fortune in the near future. Marvel and DC, the two largest comic publishers in the US, were expanding their monthly line of titles and bringing talented new artists and writers to take on well-known characters. Among these was a dramatic increase in comics which focus on environmental themes. At Marvel no less than 9 new series were launched in the early 1990's that incorporate environmental messaging reflecting the shift in public consciousness at the time.

Environmentally focused comics of the 1970s centred on pollution of all forms and the industrial and energy processes that caused them: Oil drilling, poor air quality from coal burning power plants, industrial wastes dumped into waterways by the steel and paper industries. Superheroes in 1970 sided with activists, fought land developers, and gave dire warnings to the public that major changes are needed or the Earth faces catastrophic consequences. Conversely the comics of 1990 reflected not only the popularity of environmentalism in media but also a different way of engaging with it. The heroes in many of these environmental stories face a new supervillain, an

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<sup>7</sup> *Who Bombed Judi Bari?* Digital documentary, directed by Mary Liz Thomson (Garberville, CA: Hokey Pokey Productions Llc, 2017)

image of activism turned deadly, the “eco-terrorist.” These comic villains have the noble intention of saving the earth from the pitfalls of the human race but wield weapons of mass destruction to create disasters like oil spills, or nuclear meltdowns in order to convince the public of their cause. The image constructed of the eco-terrorist is not simply exaggeration for the sake of an entertaining comic but reflects a larger move by resource industries, backed by the FBI, to criminalize forms of environmental activism which disrupt economic progress, resulting in surveillance and infiltration campaigns later termed “The Green Scare”.

American superhero comics in 1990 reflect the attitudes exemplified by the Exxon Valdez disaster and the attempted assassination of activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. The difference is this; human error and relaxed emergency response protocols from Exxon allowed an enormous oil spill to take place in an ecologically sensitive area of Alaska, devastating wildlife populations and human livelihoods for decades. According to the FBI this is considered an “environmental crime,”<sup>8</sup> and though Exxon payed out hundreds of millions of dollars in damages and plead guilty, no parties involved in the disaster would serve time. On the other side are two activists charged with “environmental terrorism” despite the evidence suggesting they were the targets of an assassination attempt. With the FBI and Oakland Police’s investigation using the “terrorist” frame they were attempting to prosecute Bari and Cherney for the *possible intent* to commit a crime, not an actual crime in itself. The worldview that calls a disaster, ecologically and economically, like the Exxon Valdez an “accident” and allows the culprits to continue operating is the same one that will label activists “eco-terrorists” if they are *perceived* as a threat to the business interests of extraction industries. This critical misalignment of threat response, to condemn activism but not enact stricter measures against corporations – in comics and real life, reveals the American public’s values and what are “appropriate” actions for a global ecological crisis. I believe in our time it is especially important to understand the how the messages of State powers, industrial interests, and political activism are embedded within popular media.

## **Project methods**

The thesis is broken into three main research sections. *Chapter 2* develops a background of the laws related to “eco-terrorism,” the influence from resource industries, and the development of the Environmental Movement as well as political and environmental

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8 "The Exxon Valdez, 25 Years After," last modified Mar 14, accessed Oct 22, 2020, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/the-exxon-valdez-25-years-after>.



events that influenced the public from 1970 to 1990. *Chapter Three* gathers a spread of environmental comics over time and puts them into historical context by discussing how they reflect environmental thinking of their times, economic and political forces within the Comic Industry, and the sociopolitical meaning of superheroes. *Chapter 4* discusses three comics from 1990 in greater depth: *Namor the Sub-Mariner* (1990), *The New Warriors* (1990), and *Brute Force* (1990), all published through Marvel Comics.

The comic book industry is a vast resource of cultural artifacts and in the thousands of stories published each month, which ones should be studied? I used the technique of relevance sampling, done in two stages, to gather the comic sources that are most important to the study and subject matter.<sup>9</sup> The first cut was to identify comics that use themes of environmentalism in their plots. This larger body of material for this research initially came from a reading list of comics with themes of sustainability and environmentalism, compiled by Pamela Jackson for the University of Dan Diego.<sup>10</sup> Jackson's list contains around 50 distinct titles, including single book length graphic novels and serialized monthly comics. Through my own research I added a further 10 titles to the list. When individual comic issues are totalled, the number of artifacts is more than 375! Of the final 64 distinct titles, I found that a full 32 of them were about superheroes or characters with super-human abilities.

A second round of relevance sampling was needed to pull the material for my particular analysis project. I looked only at comics that had superheroes as the predominant character type. Superheroes are individuals who exhibit more-than-human abilities like the power of flight, extreme strength, the ability to breathe underwater or even laser vision.<sup>11</sup> What I found most interesting was not only how the superheroes acted in an ecological crisis but also how they interacted

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9 Adam Veitch and Laszlo Kulcsar, "Malthus Meets Green Lantern: Comic Book Representation of Malthusian Concerns," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 10, no. 1 (Jan 2, 2019), 140-154. doi:10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798>.

10 "Sustainability and Environmentalism in Comics," accessed September 16, 2019, <https://libguides.sdsu.edu/comicsbytopic/sustainability>.

11 Superpowers can be gained via accident or disaster as is the case of Firestorm (when his former self was fused to a genius physicist in a nuclear blast altering his molecular structure into a super-human) and the Hulk (the scientist Bruce Banner is similarly caught in a nuclear blast). Powers can also be gained through innate DNA mutations as in many Marvel superheroes like the X-Men and Wolverine. A superhero can be non-human like Superman (who is an alien from the planet Krypton), or Swampthing (who is a sentient plant being) in fact many superheroes are from other worlds! Superheroes might even have no powers at all, relying instead on technology and supreme fighting skills like Iron Man (a genius industrialist in high-tech armour), Batman (a billionaire vigilante with lots of gadgets) or Brute Force (a team of animals given human-level intelligence). Non-powered heroes could also be given powers through outside forces such as Dr. Strange (who trains as a sorcerer and accesses magic) or Green Lantern (who is given a ring of power from an intergalactic police force).

with environmental activists. So finally, the comics must include a representation of activism or activists in the story, either as the protagonists or antagonists.

Superheroes represent a direct visual link to collective ideas of morality, ethics, and justice. Consequently their actions within these stories interacting with the themes of environmentalism reveal dominant ideas of power relations.<sup>12</sup> This project concerns how messaging of the environmental movement and ongoing crisis is represented to a public, and in particular a younger public. How is the comic medium being used to engage with this complex discourse?

In order to understand these relationships in detail, this thesis will take cues from a method developed by Casey Brienza called the Sociological Approach to Comics Culture.<sup>13</sup> Brienza's method relies on the Production of Culture framework which itself has three main approaches to analysing cultural artifacts:

- (1) *The study of its production and transmission, or diffusion, (2) the study of the construction of its message, and (3) the study of its reception and appropriation.*

Brienza contends that typically scholarly research using this framework restricts itself to one of the three approaches. To capture the widest perspective on the complexities of comic culture, Brienza argues, comic studies should use all three simultaneously. This method recognizes that comics, like other creative works are part of many overlapping influences from other people, events, and disciplines.

To analyse the comics for their political messaging a close reading was done keeping in mind Marvel's position as a producer of pop-culture, any references to world events that may have been in the media, the opinions of the creative team behind each comic, the imagery of the hero's actions contrasted with the portrayal of the villain (the "eco-terrorist"), and the language used to valorize or villainize those actions. For example in 1970 the superhero Namor joins a group of activists in their cause against industrial development of parkland.<sup>14</sup> Yet in 1990, with explicit references to the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989, Namor fights an environmental activist whose zealous conviction for saving the planet threatens to kill everyone in NYC.<sup>15</sup>

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12 Because what is a superhero comic without super powers?

13 Casey Brienza, "Producing Comics Culture: A Sociological Approach to the Study of Comics," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 1, no. 2 (Dec 22, 2010), 105-119. doi:10.1080/21504857.2010.528638. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21504857.2010.528638>.

14 Roy Thomas et al., "Youthquake!" *Sub-Mariner*, Aug 10, 1970, .

15 John Byrne, Glynis Oliver and Ken Lopez, "All the Rivers Burning," *Namor*:

## A note on databases

Initially my pool of resources included the public library system in Kitchener, the Library at the University of Waterloo, the comic collections at Wilfred Laurier University, the University of Guelph, and used book stores here in Kitchener where I live. Typically libraries carry “trade paperbacks”, which are monthly comic issues collected and re-published as a book. This is now a common step in comic publishing but this wasn’t always the case. In the early years of the comic industry those serialized stories were seen more as ephemera than collectibles, tracking down missing pieces of a story arc or completing a collection could be a tedious search. This is compounded with the understanding that comics were *cheap*, often costing no more than 25 cents, and printed on newsprint which degrades quickly. The exception is with popular story arcs from years gone by, or the re-releasing of landmark collections of work important to the history of the art form. I also had a wonderful day reading comics at the *Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy*, in the Toronto Public Library.

When libraries closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, online resources became invaluable to my work. Fan-sourced wiki pages and forums helped direct me in the vast world of comic culture, and the dedicated digital archives from Marvel and DC provided the majority of my primary resources for this thesis. For a monthly subscription to Marvel’s app, *Marvel Unlimited*, I had access to tens of thousands of digitized comics going all the way back to the beginning of Marvel’s superhero revival in the early 1960’s. New and old comics are continuously added to this archive each month. While the other major comic publisher, DC, doesn’t have a subscription service they do have an extensive digital library of (to my knowledge) their entire publishing history, where comics can be purchased for very reasonable prices. These digital sources were an amazing way to circumvent the pitfalls of tracking down original print materials mentioned earlier. Yet even with these digital resources opening many doors some comics remained unavailable.<sup>16</sup>

Because of the focus on Superheroes, the comics represented in the thesis are really only from the two major comic publishers: Marvel Comics, and DC Comics. Here I need to acknowledge that the comics market is changing all the time, and though superheroes are an enduringly large part of the industry, there are a fantastic number of comics out there addressing all kinds of issues. The initial reading

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*The Sub-Mariner*, Aug 1, 1990, .

<sup>16</sup> For example the entire three year run of the series of *Ravage 2099* is represented by only a single issue on *Marvel Unlimited*.

list of material included some great graphic novels and educational comics which I was fortunate to get a hold of and had the pleasure to read. While Marvel and DC share some major similarities in their approach to superhero narratives, I cannot ignore the fact that my analysis is focused on only one of the major publishers. What this means is that the conclusions drawn from *Chapter 4*, are not indicative of comics as a whole or even Marvel as a whole, but is a deep dive into one part of a much larger story.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> A complete list will be included at the end of the thesis for further reading.

# 2

## The Invention of “Eco-terrorism”

In the time immediately following the tragic events of 9/11 the FBI, bolstered by wide support for national security, made environmental activist groups like the *Earth Liberation Front* and *Animal Liberation Front* (ELF and ALF respectively) their number one priority for Domestic Terrorism.<sup>1</sup> Activists and scholars refer to this period of political suppression as *The Green Scare*, in recognition of the similar circumstances in which governments targeted Communists during *The Red Scare* after World War II. In 2004 the FBI began an intense crackdown on earth liberation and animal liberation activists as part of their massive investigation *Operation Backfire*, capturing and prosecuting dozens of environmental activists. The investigation is still ongoing.

However there is a mismatch between what the statistics reveal and the perception of these groups by law enforcement officials and the public. Between 1996 and 2009 the ELF claimed responsibility for 707 actions, largely vandalism, arson, and destruction of property, in America and Mexico.<sup>2</sup> None of these events resulted in, or were intended to cause, loss of human life. At a senate hearing in May 2005, then senator, Barrack Obama testified that in 2003 alone there were 7400 hate crimes committed in America. At the same hearing Senator Frank Lautenberg noted that the Oklahoma City bombing

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1 "The Green Scare: How a Movement that Never Killed Anyone Became the FBI's no.1 Domestic Terrorism Threat," last modified Mar 23, accessed June 16, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/ecoterrorism-fbi-animal-rights/>.

2 Michael Loadenthal, "Eco-Terrorism? Countering Dominant Narratives of Securitisation," *Perspectives on Terrorism (Lowell)* 8, no. 3 (Jun 1, 2014), 16-50. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26297171>.

of 1995 which killed 168 people, injuring hundreds more,<sup>3</sup> was an attack carried out by Timothy McVeigh, a white supremacist.

State powers maintain control by suppressing opposition. The pursuit of environmental activists by the FBI, despite the knowledge and proof of more dangerous threats to national security, makes it clear that they are being specifically targeted. However the “threat” that they pose has been consciously constructed to achieve certain goals. “Eco-terrorism”<sup>4</sup> is a concept constructed and applied to radical environmentalists in order to de-value their political position and make suppression actions against them easier. The term, created by anti-environmentalists and extraction industries, is a framework of thought and was famously defined by Ron Arnold in 1983 as “a crime committed to save nature.” This label has been examined and refuted by many scholars as dangerously misguided (Bron Taylor 1998 and 2003, Rebecca Smith 2008, Steve Vanderheiden 2008, Michael Loadenthal 2013 & 2014, and David Naguib Pellow 2014).

### State Repression

In David Naguib Pellow’s book, *Total Liberation: the power and promise of animal rights and the radical earth movement*, he describes how the methods employed by the State and corporations follow “a set of practices that involves coercion or violence against people who contest existing power arrangements” known as State Repression. These practices are designed to physically stop political dissent in the present, which could involve sanctioned violence directed at activists, and prevent future dissent through suppression. Suppression involves “raising the costs or minimizing the benefits of dissent through infiltration, manipulation of media reporting, firings, extraordinary rules and laws, harassment, propaganda, surveillance, and grand jury interrogations and indictments.”<sup>5</sup> Companies also regularly take part in these tactics by creating lawsuits that drain activists’ funds and create a fear of retaliation for protesting.<sup>6</sup>

Pellow argues that repression of differing political voices by State powers has been present throughout the history of America, and is hardwired into how a State operates.<sup>7</sup> Two relatively recent exam-

3 Rebecca K. Smith, ““Ecoterrorism”?: A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists,” *Environmental Law (Portland, Ore.)* 38, no. 2 (Apr 1, 2008) p548. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43267209>.

4 Throughout this thesis the term “eco-terrorism” is intentionally left in quotations to emphasize its political construction.

5 David Naguib Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) p163.

6 David Naguib Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) p175.

7 See Pellow’s book for a timeline of laws passed in America that target

ples describe this relationship of maintaining power by suppressing opposition. Throughout the 1960's until 1971 the FBI ran a covert Counter Intelligence group called COINTELPRO, which, in the name of national security, carried out surveillance, propaganda, intimidation, and even assassinations against radical political groups like the Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army, American Indian Movement, Puerto Rican independence movements and even Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>8</sup> COINTELPRO was shut down by congressional investigators, only after another group of activists broke into an FBI office and stole documents on the operations and leaked them to the press.<sup>9</sup> From this example we can see the FBI is targeting activists of colour as they represent a "threat" to the continuation of State power which is primarily concerned with white interests.

Recently as the pandemic continues there has been a dramatically visible increase in active protest on a number of important issues, most notably systemic and unchecked police violence against Black and Indigenous people across North America. There has also been an increase in vocal White Supremacy groups and individuals conspiring to commit violent crimes against civilians and law enforcement officers alike. Yet instead of condemning these known groups and their violent crimes, President Donald Trump, sought to criminalize the activist organization, ANTIFA (Anti-Facism), officially as terrorists in July of 2020. When this story surfaced I was immediately struck by the similarities to how environmental activists were persecuted since 1980. Trump's insistence on villainizing political dissent that could undermine his power, and that of the State, is consistent with how the US government, and other State organizations, operate on a fundamental level.

## **A Spectrum of Environmentalisms**

The Environmental Movement in North America, or the Green Movement, has a complicated history that includes the formation, and amalgamation, of many separate political and activist groups, all working with some similar values, but often different worldviews and tactics. During the research I came across many different ways of describing dominant ideologies or tactical tendencies to define groups within the environmental movement. The lines that can be drawn around them are numerous. Here I will briefly describe some of the frameworks that I am working with.

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groups, from anarchists to the LGBTQ+ community, deemed an opposition to "normalcy" and therefore considered a "threat" to the nation.

8 David Naguib Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) p171.

9 Smith, "'Ecoterrorism'?: A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists," p548



### *“The Standard View” or Conservative/Neo-Liberal Environmentalism*

This form of environmentalism has a continued emphasis on technological/industrial progress and capital accumulation as fundamental to aspect of humanity. It asserts that “progress” can happen in tandem with environmental protection, or is even necessary to reverse negative effects through the free market. Geographer David Harvey also describes this discourse as the “*Standard View*” of *environmental management*. He outlines a few characteristics of this model of thought, first intervention into environmental effects always happens after a disaster or incident has occurred, which leads to a focus on remediation and the thinking that the effects are always reversible. Thus “end-of-pipe” solutions to all forms of pollution are prioritized so as not to impede existing practices. Second, because solutions are created post-event policy and regulation becomes “ad-hoc” at all levels of government as it is dealt with case-by-case. Third there is a focus on how the market plays into the necessary actions for dealing with disasters, Harvey notes that this manifests as extremely careful cost benefit analysis of growth vs. environmental degradation which generates action only “when there is clear evidence of serious damage through market failure and preferably when that damage can be quantified.”<sup>10</sup>

To be clear this form of Environmentalism is not Climate Denial. At its most innocent it represents a cautious, data driven model, and Harvey recognizes that some major governmental wins for the environment have happened under this discourse such as the establishment of the EPA and the Clean Air and Water Acts in the early 1970’s. The more sinister side is that the advancement of business interests over public good happens very easily and regularly. Industries that are most effected by environmental regulation like Oil and Gas, Forestry, Mining, and Metal Refinement have a lot of financial power to maintain a discourse that impedes them the least. In either case this form of environmentalism does not challenge existing power relations in any way and instead works to maintain them.

### *Mainstream Environmentalism*

This describes any environmental activism that operates through established legal channels and is generally accepted by the public. It may not necessarily directly challenge existing power structures in the way that Radical Environmentalism does, but “leans toward reformism...better management of industrial processes, recycling, [and] limitations on pollutants”<sup>11</sup> as well as conservation and pres-

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10 David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) p374.

11 Kenn Kassman, *Envisioning Ecotopia: The U.S. Green Movement and the*



ervation of sensitive land. This includes the “big 10” (the largest environmental groups): Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Greenpeace, the National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and the World Wildlife Fund. Mainstream Environmentalism recognizes many problems facing the world but perhaps doesn’t seek to rewrite fundamental relationships.

### *Radical Environmentalism*

“Radical” is used to describe environmental worldviews that depart from or oppose the “standard” or dominant view in method and discourse. Environment and religion scholar Bron Taylor asserts that “radical environmentalism [is] a cluster of environmental political philosophies, and corresponding social movements, which claim to understand the roots of the environmental crisis and offer effective solutions to it.”<sup>12</sup> Understanding and offering reasons for why the crisis is happening is a major factor in differing the work of radical environmentalists from mainstream environmentalists. Additionally through these proposed solutions, Ken Kassman adds radical environmentalism “demands fundamental changes in present political, social, and cultural beliefs, values, and structures.”<sup>13</sup> The majority of literature I studied focussed on three major groups: *Earth First!* (EF!), *Earth Liberation Front* (ELF), and the *Animal Liberation Front* (ALF).

*Earth First!* was formed in 1980 by Dave Forman and 4 or 5 others with the slogan “No compromise in defense of Mother Earth.” The initial intention in the early years was to fight environmental degradation by “waging economic warfare” predominantly against natural resource industries through sabotage and civil disobedience that reduced those companies’ profits<sup>14</sup>. Targets included logging of old-growth timber in the Pacific North West, and oil exploration projects. *EF!* Used tactics like tree-sitting (camping out in tree tops to prevent them being cut down), tree-spiking (driving nails into tree trunks that would damage saws, and deterr loggers), road blockades, equipment sabotage (filling fuel tanks with sand, cutting wires etc.), and removal of survey markers. Towards the end of the 1980’s members of *EF!*, notably Judi Bari, were distancing themselves from direct action methods and focussing on cross-movement organization with worker’s rights and labour unions in the logging industry.

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*Politics of Radical Social Change* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1997) p32.

12 Bron Taylor, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2005) p1326.

13 Kassman, *Envisioning Ecotopia: The U.S. Green Movement and the Politics of Radical Social Change* p32

14 Taylor, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* p518

*Earth First!* is still an active movement.

The *Earth Liberation Front* formed in England around 1992, and claimed its first action in the USA in 1996. They would be most active in the period from 1996 to 2009, claiming more than 700 actions according to their official press office. Michael Loadenthal makes it clear that although the *ELF* emerged in parallel to *EF!* It should not be thought of as merely a radical splinter group, but because it has no leaders is a distinct social movement. *ELF* most often works in extra-legal ways through direct actions like equipment sabotage, building vandalism, arson, or graffiti tagging, targeting construction sites, vehicles like SUV's, and business properties that engage in environmentally damaging practices. *ELF* has a strict code of zero harm done to humans and non-humans. Despite exaggerated fears that this group is an irrationally violent threat to the entire USA, Loadenthal's analysis of *ELF* reveals that actions are concentrated along the Western Coast, and the targets are part of a strategic method in line with the group's values.<sup>15</sup>

The final group that is discussed most often in connection to Radical Environmentalism is *the Animal Liberation Front* or *ALF*. *ALF* emerged in 1976 in England and appeared in the USA in 1979. Similarly the *ALF* utilizes direct-action methods, like arson and vandalism, to target animal-based industry and animal-research that is deemed inhumane. In response to *ALF*'s methods, the involvement of the Fur and Biomedical Research industries with the FBI led to the creation of the laws discussed later on in this chapter like the *AEPA* and the *AETA* which form the basis of defining "eco-terrorism."

From a more contemporary perspective eco-feminist scholar Noel Sturgeon offers an additional dimension to consider when discussing radical environmentalism. She notes that radical groups like *Earth First!* don't often include intersectional perspectives in their discourses, as the movement was largely dominated by white males in the early 1980s. The term radical should also describe radical modes of thought, not just action. In this way we should include *Environmental Justice* as a form of radical environmentalism since it seeks to position the environmental crisis in relation to issues of race, class and gender.<sup>16</sup>

## **Environmental Discourses 1960-1970**

Although environmental ideologies can be found as part of cultures

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<sup>15</sup> Loadenthal, "Eco-Terrorism? Countering Dominant Narratives of Securitisation," , 16-50

<sup>16</sup> Noël Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture : Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009) p8.

around the world and particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> century America, a more explicit vision of environmentalism coalesced towards the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s.<sup>17</sup> The momentum for this movement can be traced very clearly in books and other media published during the decade but also laws passed and public reaction to an increasing number of environmental disasters.

In 1962 Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* presented to the people of America the powerful effects of chemical pesticides on ecosystems, wildlife, and the connection human health has to these systems. The book was wildly popular. The following year she testified in a Senate hearing on the subject of pesticides.<sup>18</sup> In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson passed into law the landmark Wilderness Act.<sup>19</sup>

Concerns around the environmental effects of a growing global population was also a major current of thought in this period. In a recent study of over-population themes in comic books, Adam Veitch and Laszlo Kulcsar describe that throughout the 1960s and 1970s this theme was very popular in science fiction and movies spinning off of a societies anxieties. They note that the publication of *The Population Bomb*, by Paul R. Erhlich and Anne Erhlich, in 1968, and I add *The Tragedy of the Commons* by Garrett Hardin, connected these popular concerns to academic concerns.<sup>20</sup> These two publications both put forth the idea that the Earth had only a finite amount of resources meaning there was a maximum number of people that could live on the planet. They also attributed much of the ecological destruction, which was becoming more visible to the public, to the "uncontrolled" population growth of the human race putting pressure on the environment.<sup>21</sup> Hardin's theory adds that humans by nature are greedy and need an incentive to maintain shared resources cooperatively.

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17 Kassman, *Envisioning Ecotopia: The U.S. Green Movement and the Politics of Radical Social Change* p4

18 "How 'Silent Spring' Ignited the Environmental Movement," last modified Sept. 21, accessed Nov. 20, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/magazine/how-silent-spring-ignited-the-environmental-movement.html>.

19 This act poetically defined "Wilderness" as empty and untouched. This definition is now in contention since it fails to acknowledge the centuries of human occupation on the continent before settler colonization.

20 Adam Veitch and Laszlo Kulcsar, "Malthus Meets Green Lantern: Comic Book Representation of Malthusian Concerns," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 10, no. 1 (Jan 2, 2019), 140-154. doi:10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798>.

21 However the "ecological destruction by population growth" theory has been since argued to obscure the actual causes and instead continues a system of oppression. The theory assumes that all populations grow at the same rates and pressure the biosphere equally. Since Western (global north) industrialized nations have lower population rates and also use more global resources/energy/ create pollution, this framing of the environmental crisis easily shifts the blame to other populations in the world.

1968 was, by all accounts, a year of massive change.<sup>22</sup> Political assassinations, a war nobody wanted, and police violence towards activists created an atmosphere where many people, including many young people, became vocal and active about the kind of change that needed to happen in America. A strong counter-culture to the status quo had developed by this time to tackle a diverse range of social issues, many pulling expertise and protesting tactics from the more established *Civil Rights Movement*.

In September of that year Stewart Brand released the first issue of the *Whole Earth Catalogue* which was a review guide and catalogue of tools and skills necessary for people to live sustainably. A few months later, on December 24th, the world would see the Earth for the first time from the Moon during the Apollo 8 mission. On their television screens the view of the Earth Rise, as a singular object in space, fragile, and devoid of borders, would become a symbol of cooperation and peace. It has been thought that this view from space created a shift in human thinking and served as a point of imagination for the emerging Environmental Movement.<sup>23</sup>

On January 28, 1969, barely a month after the successful Apollo mission, and only 8 days after Richard Nixon is sworn in as the 37<sup>th</sup> President, a well from an offshore oil rig along the California coast near Santa Barbara ruptured releasing 16,000 m<sup>3</sup> of oil into the ocean. At the time it was the largest spill in American waters, now third after Deepwater Horizon in 2010, and the Exxon Valdez in 1989. At this time environmental protection was not part of legislation, and the company that owned the well didn't have a plan for such a situation.<sup>24</sup> Beaches remained closed for months, thousands of birds and marine animals died, and the residents of Santa Barbara were furious. As the story goes the environmentally minded Wisconsin senator, Gaylord Nelson, was flying to California after the well spill and saw the enormous black ocean from his plane. This catastrophe was the jumpstart for him to begin creating a way to advocate environmental issues to a wider audience. The following year his work would become the very first Earth Day.<sup>25</sup>

On June 22, 1969, another environmental incident caught the na-

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed account see Mark Kurklansky's *1968 The Year That Rocked The World*

<sup>23</sup> John Noble Wilford, "On Hand for Space History, as Superpowers Spar," *The New York Times* July 13, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/14/science/space/14mission.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>24</sup> "'The Ocean is Boiling': The Complete Oral History of the 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill," last modified April 18, accessed Sep 14, 2020, <https://psmag.com/news/the-ocean-is-boiling-the-complete-oral-history-of-the-1969-santa-barbara-oil-spill>.

<sup>25</sup> "How the 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill Sparked Earth Day," last modified April 21, accessed Sep 14, 2020, <https://www.kcrw.com/news/articles/how-the-1969-santa-barbara-oil-spill-sparked-earth-day>.

tion's attention; The Cuyahoga River, running through Cleveland Ohio, caught fire. Though dramatic, the fire didn't last very long, didn't cause that much damage, and was apparently something that happened regularly. Despite the apparent inconsequence of the fire by locals, in a year where the public's awareness of environmental issues were already heightened, the story made headlines. Cleveland's mayor had been pushing for clean-up of the river, and for regulation of industry effluent that had been flowing freely into the waterway since the early 1800's.<sup>26</sup>

1969 also saw the publication of two influential books relating the growing environmental concerns to solutions of design: *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* by Buckminster Fuller and *Design With Nature* by Ian McHarg. Both books introduced theories of systems thinking into conversations of environmental management and the role design professionals might play in addressing these complex issues. Fuller's book seems particularly related to the new perspective people had of the Earth following the Apollo 8 mission (and the Moon landing of Apollo 11 in July of 1969). According to McHarg, in the late 1960's the group of design experts and academics seriously discussing environmental degradation was relatively small. Habitat loss, species extinction, air and water pollution were all topics of concern to many people at this time, but big groups like the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, and grassroots organizations often focused on specific issues. With their books, McHarg and Fuller, seem to say, yes ecological destruction is real and it affects everybody, but it is also a problem we can solve together and to use McHarg's description, by the end of the decade support for environmental issues would become a tidal wave.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Environmentalism Becomes a Movement*

On April 22, 1970 thousands of high school and university students took to the streets and lecture halls for the first Earth Day in American history. The nationwide event was organized by Senator Gaylord Nelson, activist Dennis Hayes and many others. In all the estimation is a mobilization of 20 million Americans to show support in protest for the ecological destruction of the planet. A news segment from CBS with Walter Cronkite on that day suggests that the event was less successful than the organizers hoped, with youth also protesting President Nixon, the ongoing war in Vietnam, and anti-nuclear pro-

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26 "The Cuyahoga River Caught Fire at Least a Dozen Times, but no One Cared Until 1969," last modified June 19, accessed Nov 27, 2020, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/cuyahoga-river-caught-fire-least-dozen-times-no-one-cared-until-1969-180972444/>.

27 Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature*, Twenty Fifth anniversary edition. ed. (New York; Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1992).

liferation.<sup>28</sup> What Cronkite misses, and seems clear from this side of the new millennium, is that the Environmental Movement was not isolated in its causes, and likely owed its very visibility to the convergence of social movements and political dissent which happened towards the end of the 1960's.

Seeming to echo the sentiment of the public, President Nixon announces the creation of a new department called the *Environmental Protection Agency* on July 9, 1970. The EPA would officially begin work in December of that year, going on to influence the passing of the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Federal Insecticide Fungicide & Rodenticide Act, and the banning of DDT.

Around this time more environmental advocacy groups also began appearing. *Friends of the Earth* was formed in 1969 in San Francisco, but went international in 1971, partnering with organizations from France, England and Sweden. *The National Resources Defence Council* was also formed in 1970. NRDC is now a major environmental non-profit lobby group backed by lawyers and scientists. *Greenpeace* formed in 1971 as a response to nuclear weapon testing in the ocean. In other parts of the world environmentally focused political parties gain official recognition, starting with the New Zealand Values Party in 1972 by Tony Brunt. International conferences on the environment were also taking place, namely the 1972 UN conference in Stockholm out of which the *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP) was established.

## Origins of *The Green Scare*

### *Evolving Protest Tactics*

In 1977 industry groups within the biomedical research community began collecting information on the activities of animal rights groups. This followed a liberation action by the *Undersea Railroad* of two dolphins held at the University of Hawaii. According to documents analysed by *The Intercept*, biomedical, fur, and meat industry groups collaborated with the FBI throughout the late 1980's and 1990's to assess threats to their business.<sup>29</sup> The late 1970s also saw a shift towards direct action and away from established civil disobedience methods with Captain Paul Watson splitting from *Greenpeace* to form the *Sea Shepard Conservation Society* (SSCC).

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28 "The History of Earth Day," accessed Sep 14, 2020, <https://www.earthday.org/history/>.

29 "The Green Scare: How a Movement that Never Killed Anyone Became the FBI's no.1 Domestic Terrorism Threat,"



1980 starts with the formation of the influential earth liberation group *Earth First!* which centres philosophy and protest methods around direct action tactics called “ecotage.” SSCC and animal liberation groups like *ALF* were visibly active along with *Earth First!* throughout the 1980s signalling that a decade after a more cohesive environmental movement formed activists were seeking more substantial ways of engaging with the issues. This includes the development of Environmental Justice, which saw public attention when Lois Gibbs began organizing against improper toxic waste disposal underneath her neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York, now known as the *Love Canal Disaster*. In the early 1980s she formed the *Citizen’s Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste*.

In February of 1983, Ron Arnold publishes an article in *Reason Magazine* titled, *Eco-Terrorism: Environmental extremists have declared guerilla war on resource developers...and the environmental mainstream stands silently by*. Ron Arnold is a founder of the *Center for Defense of Free Enterprise*, a conservative property rights research group formed in 1976. The CDFE is tied to an ideology of “Wise Use” which advocates for de-regulation of land. Arnold’s article is probably one of the first times that “eco-terrorism” is discussed in print. The article effectively portrays radical activists engaged in direct-action tactics as dangerously violent. Arnold’s main thesis is to develop a theory that “eco-terrorism” is a growing threat, and has been since the beginning of the environmental movement, and intends to coerce the public into changing through threat of violence. Arnold valorizes workers in the extraction industries and creates a fear that the environmentalists would take away the “normal” American’s way of life, enacting a sense of personal threat.<sup>30</sup>

### *Disasters and Discoveries*

In 1985 a hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica was detected leading to the creation of the *United Nations Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer*.<sup>31</sup> There was support and excitement within the scientific community. Later that year, on July 10, a bomb detonated underneath *The Rainbow Warrior*, the flagship vessel of *Greenpeace*, as it sat in in the Port of Auckland, New Zealand. A second bomb explodes sinking the ship and kills a photographer trapped inside. It was discovered that the act was carried out by covert French Foreign Intelligence Officers in retaliation for *Greenpeace*’s campaigns protesting France’s nuclear testing practices in the South Pacific. New Zealand’s Prime Minister denounced France’s

30 Ron Arnold, "Eco-Terrorism," *Reason*, Feb, 1983, .

31 "The Discovery of the Antarctic Ozone Hole," Nature Publishing Group, last modified Oct 23, accessed Dec 1, 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02837-5>.



Fig. 2.1—Sinking of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior*, Auckland, New Zealand, August 1985.

operation on foreign soil as an act of terrorism.

On April 26, 1986, Reactor Number Four at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power plant suffers a malfunction during a test procedure causing a meltdown leading to several explosions. The area around the disaster continues to be affected to this day. In 1987 the UN World Commission on Environment and Development published its report titled *Our Common Future*, or more commonly called the *Brundtland Report* after the chair of the WCED Gro Harlem Brundtland. This highly influential document sought to study the many interconnected issues of global ecological breakdown, and reconcile the pervasive model of globalized economies with the need to care for the planet's future generations. It outlined and defined Sustainable Development which forms that basis of many conversations around sustainability today.

The following year, in June of 1988, Dr. James E. Hansen from NASA testifies that he is 99% certain that Climate Change is real and caused by human activity exacerbated by the Greenhouse Effect.<sup>32</sup> Shortly after the *United Nations Environmental Program* (UNEP) and the *World Meteorological Organization* (WMO) formed the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) to assess science related to climate change, impacts, risks, and mitigation. It would release its first report two years later in 1990.

32 Philip Shabecoff, "Global Warming has Begun, Expert Tells Senate," *The New York Times* Jun 25, 1988.





Fig. 2.2—Dr. James Hansen testifying on the topic of climate change in 1988.

*Visible Radical Activism, a Conscious Public, and Legal Groundwork*

In 1988 some of the tactics specific to *Earth First!* were written into criminal law as part of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act. During congressional testimony Senator James McClure called out *Earth First!* as “eco-terrorists” and “terrorist thugs.” He plays on congress’s emotions by claiming members are trying to run the public out of parks by using devices like spikes placed across trails with the intention to injure.<sup>33</sup> Part of the resulting law, *18 U.S Code section 1864: Hazardous or injurious devices on Federal Lands*, details three specific clauses intended to target *Earth First!* and by extension any other radical environmental group. First someone can be charged under this law if they have the “intent to obstruct or harass the harvesting of timber.”<sup>34</sup> Second if any property damage is caused or bodily injury<sup>35</sup> inflicted the activist could be imprisoned for 20 years. Third, tree-sitting and tree spiking are both protest tactics specific to *Earth First!* at that time which are singled out as hazardous devices<sup>36</sup> allowing

33 Smith, ““Ecoterrorism”?: A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists,” Pg.546

34 “18 U.S. Code § 1864 - Hazardous Or Injurious Devices on Federal Lands,” , accessed Oct 28, 2020, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/1864>.

35 **A cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement; physical pain; illness; impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary.**

36 **A device, which when assembled or placed, is capable of causing bodily injury, or damage to property, by the action of any person making contact with such device subsequent to the assembly or placement. Such term includes guns attached to trip wires or other triggering mechanisms, ammunition attached to trip wires or other triggering mechanisms, or explosive devices attached to trip wires or other triggering mechanisms, sharpened stakes, lines or wires, lines or wires with hooks attached, nails placed so that the sharpened ends are positioned in an upright manner, or tree spiking devices including spikes, nails,**

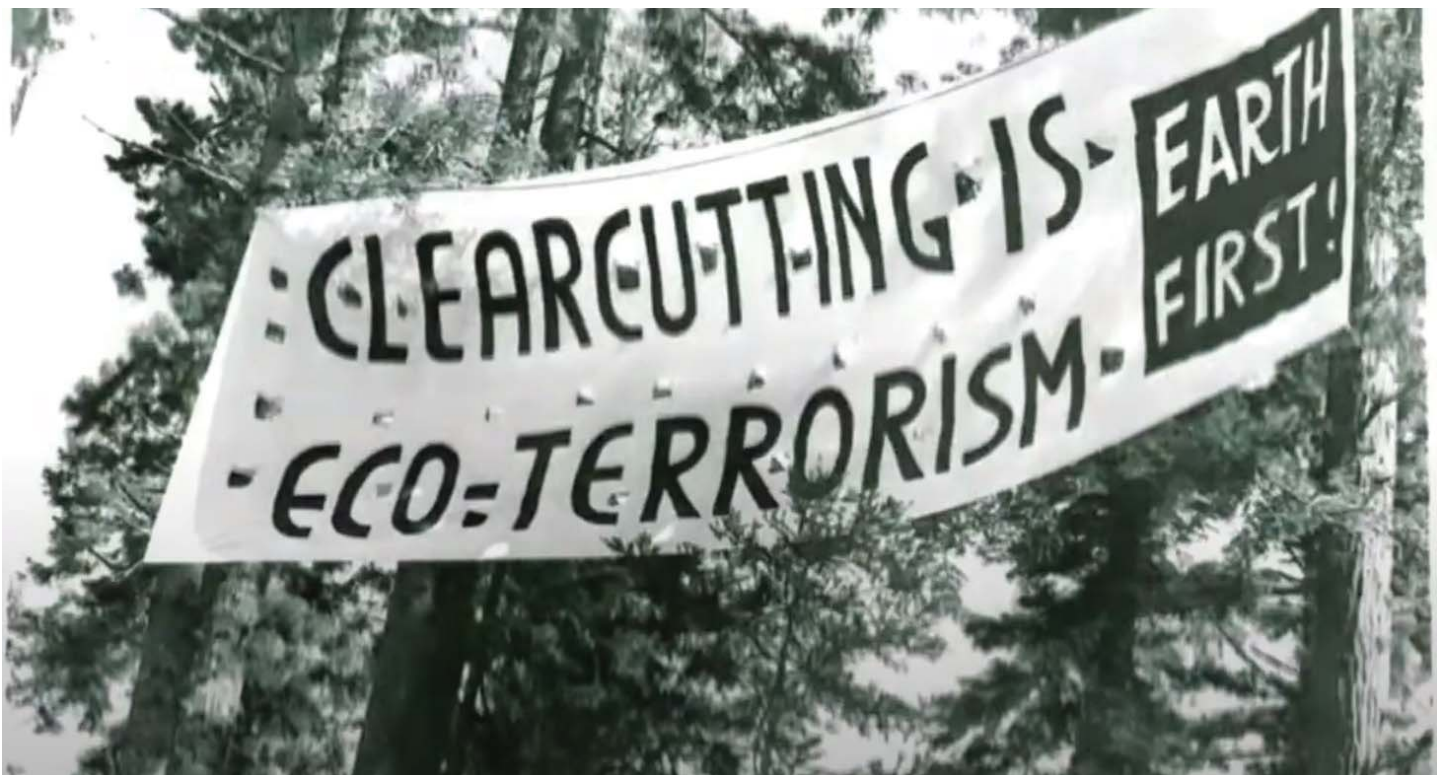


Fig. 2.3—Banner hung from trees during an Earth First! protest. Likely in 1990 during the “Redwood Summer” campaign following the publicity of the term “eco-terrorism” used in connection to the bombing of fellow activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney.

further sentencing. Rebecca K. Smith notes that in a later case it was ruled that visible nylon ropes used as part of the tree-sitting structure would be considered under the “dangerous device” clause.<sup>37</sup>

In December a well-respected Brazilian rubber tapper, labour organizer and environmental activist, named Chico Mendes, is murdered by a cattle rancher during a period of intense conflict between the two groups. His death sparks an outcry and international support for the battle to save the Amazon. All throughout the year 1988 presidential candidate George Bush Sr. campaigns as the “Environmental President.” In January of 1989 Time Magazine names Earth “Planet of the Year”, in lieu of their annual “person of the year”. The issue features ongoing ecological crisis, including the conflict in the Amazon. Two months later in March, the Exxon Valdez runs aground in Prince William Sound, triggering decades of devastation for the region. At the end of the year amidst a failing Soviet Union, the announcement is made that citizens from East and West Germany would be allowed to visit and travel, effectively dismantling the ideological boundary constructed by the Berlin Wall for nearly 30 years, leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a whole by 1991.

The following year, in 1989, an FBI infiltration operation called THERMCON resulted in the arrest of 4 Earth First! activists including Dave Foreman one of the original founders of the group from 1980. Undercover agents infiltrated a group in Arizona and con-

***or other objects hammered, driven, fastened, or otherwise placed into or on any timber, whether or not severed from the stump.***

<sup>37</sup> Smith, ““Ecoterrorism”?: A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists,” p548

vinced them to carry out an act of sabotage by dismantling an electrical power tower connecting to a nuclear plant. Foreman was not involved but arrested because of his political connection. Despite no danger to the nuclear facilities if the action had been successful, the FBI immediately portrayed the incident as part of a campaign by Earth First! to create a nuclear meltdown and endanger public safety.<sup>38</sup> Shortly after this episode we get the FBI again directing investigations solely at Earth First! and publicly making false allegations when Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney are involved in a car-bomb attack in 1990.

In 1992 Congress, with the support of the *National Association for Biomedical Research*, passed the *Animal Enterprise Protection Act* (AEPA).<sup>39</sup> The law created a new designation called “animal enterprise terrorism” making any action that intentionally causes disruption, destruction, or economic damage to any business or group<sup>40</sup> primarily involved with animals an act of terrorism. David Pellow points out that this ruling blockades activists from engaging in legal protest actions like boycotting which are “*designed* to produce losses in profits.”<sup>41</sup>

In 1996 ELF claimed responsibility for its first arson in the USA, and the next few years would see a number of high profile campaigns catch the attention of authorities. A horse slaughterhouse in Redmond Oregon was burned in 1997, as well as a ski resort in Vail Colorado, which was developing into Lynx habitat, in 1998.<sup>42</sup> Earlier that year in June 1998, Congress again convened to hold a hearing on “Ecoterrorism by Radical Environmental Organizations.” The intent of the hearing was to convince congress to change the AEPA to include not just animal enterprises but natural resource companies as well. Smith notes that those testifying in the hearing were clearly stacked in favour of, and would profit from, this change. She says:

*“The witnesses called to testify at the hearing were  
Ron Arnold (the creator of the term “ecoterrorism”),  
Barry Clausen (a private investigator hired by timber,*

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38 "Targeting Earth First!" last modified Dec 11, accessed Oct 29, 2020, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2009/12/11/targeting-earth-first/>.

39 "H.R.2407 - 102nd Congress (1991-1992): Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992," last modified 08/04/, accessed Oct 29, 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/102nd-congress/house-bill/2407>.

40 An animal enterprise is: (1) a commercial or academic enterprise that uses animals for food or fiber production, agriculture, research, or testing; (2) a zoo, aquarium, circus, rodeo, or lawful competitive animal event; or (3) a fair or similar event intended to advance agricultural arts and sciences.

41 Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* p174

42 "The Green Scare: How a Movement that Never Killed Anyone Became the FBI's no.1 Domestic Terrorism Threat,"

mining, and ranching interests to investigate acts of sabotage), a former Forest Service employee, Representative Frank Riggs, one of Riggs' staff members, and Bruce Vincent, President of the wise use umbrella group Alliance for America."<sup>43</sup>

### *The Green Scare*

The AEPA was not amended at that time. However as mentioned above, immediately following the tragic events of 9/11, 2001, a focus on terror threats and national security opened up even more support for the FBI to pursue environmental activists if they were perceived as "terrorists." One month after the attack, the PATRIOT Act was passed and defined "domestic terrorism" as any activity that would "intimidate or coerce a civilian population [or] to influence the policy of government by intimidation or coercion."<sup>44</sup> Pellow and Smith state that shortly after the PATRIOT ACT passed James F. Jarboe, the Domestic Terrorism Section Chief for the FBI, expanded the definition of "domestic terrorism" in the Act to include, "the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target often of a symbolic nature."<sup>45</sup> With this broad definition the State could target any group engaged in direct action protest tactics as "terrorists" regardless if they harmed any humans or not. Steve Vanderheiden notes that this completely removes the distinction between vandalism (damage to property) and terrorism (killing innocent people).<sup>46</sup> *Operation Backfire* begins in December of 2005 when Mouhamad Dibbee and other environmental activists go on the run who were connected to a series of high-profile arson actions, notably the burning of the ski resort in Colorado.

In 2006 the final part to this case is passed into law as the AEPA is amended to become the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA). In addition to formally adding "terrorism" to the title, the act changes the previous clause of causing "physical disruption" to simply "interfering with operations" which is also true for any "entity having a connection to, relationship with, or transactions with an animal

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43 Smith, "Ecoterrorism": A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists," p548

44 Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* p173

45 Smith, "Ecoterrorism": A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists," p553

46 Steve Vanderheiden, "Radical Environmentalism in an Age of Antiterrorism," *Environmental Politics* 17, no. 2 (Apr 01, 2008) p305.

doi:10.1080/09644010801936248. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09644010801936248>.



enterprise.”<sup>47</sup>

What we can see from this string of events is a vocal opposition to the environmental movement that begins by creating a fear-based de-humanized image of these activists as “eco-terrorists.” This image is then used in moves to criminalize specific tactics and protest methods of this particular political group, and with public investigations in the late 1980’s, direct the general public’s opinion towards viewing earth liberation and animal liberationists in a negative way. Following 9/11 fear and nationalism are used to stoke a massive government effort to catch and prosecute environmental activists instead of more dangerous far-right groups. This is all done with support from the industries these environmental activists seek to expose, and the intention of squashing a movement that threatens the fundamental values of State power in America.

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47 *Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act*, Public Law 109-374, (2006): .





# 3

## Environmental Comics

This chapter provides some background on how comics have been used for political messaging and an analysis of how a changing environmental crisis has been understood and acted upon in those same comics. There are loosely three “blips”<sup>1</sup> of time where the publishing of comics with environmental themes is concentrated around the years 1970, 1990, and 2010. In working with Brienza’s Sociological approach to Comics Culture as discussed in *chapter one*, I contextualize the methods that comics from each “blip” take in representing environmentalism and thinking about action in a crisis.

When the events discussed in *chapter two* are shown alongside the publication of comics with environmental themes, as seen on the following chart, some patterns emerge. The first “blip” in 1970 coincides with the formation of a visible Environmental Movement amidst ongoing social unrest. The second “blip” in 1990 happens within a period of renewed public consciousness of environmentalism pushed by major disasters like the Exxon Valdez spill, scientific evidence of Global Warming, visibility of deforestation in the Amazon jungle, and the creation of “green” consumer products by corporate interests. The third “blip” around 2010 appears at a time when environmental issues are again more visible following devastating hurricanes like Katrina, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown, and the impending pressure of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris, France.

In America comic books, as we would recognize them, were just

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<sup>1</sup> I call these “blips” because the themes in question are not sustained and by volume represent a minority among other themes.

**LEGEND**

Environmental  
Comic Publishing

The World

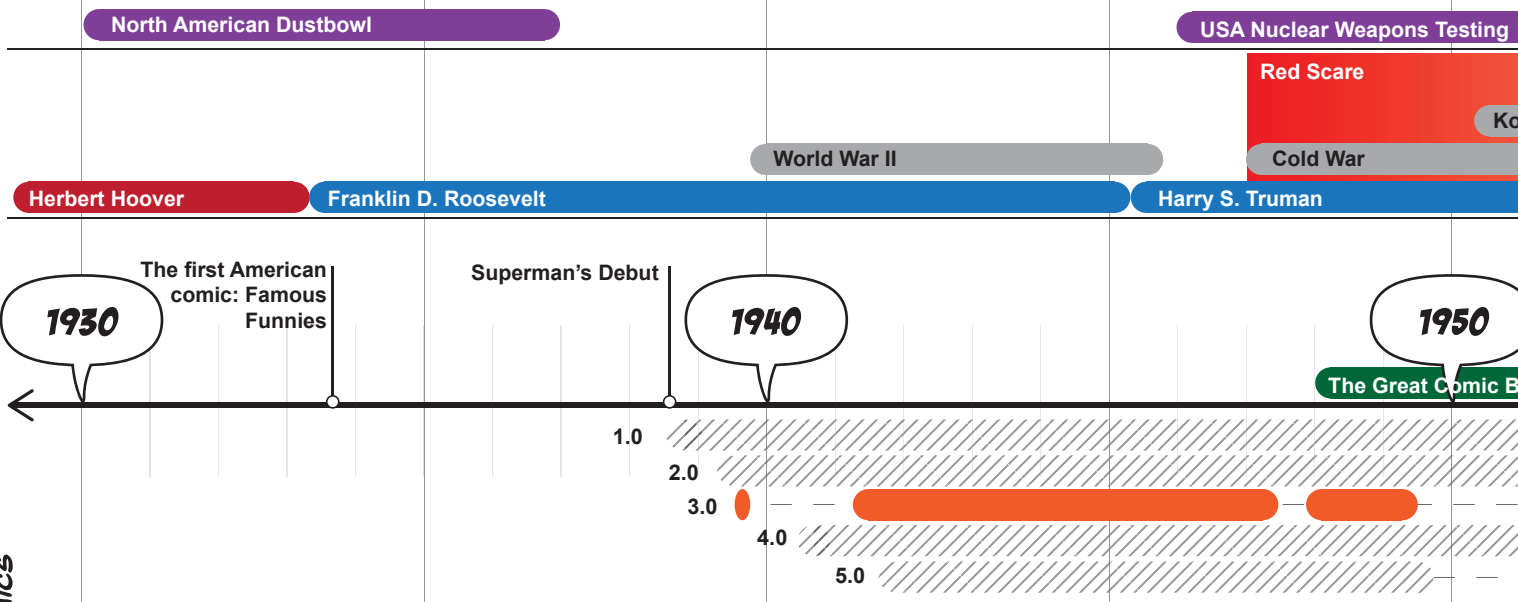
- Superheroes
- Non-Superhero
- Non-eco theme
- Suspended publishing
- Eco-comic "blips"

- Comic history
- Democrat Presidents
- Republican Presidents
- Conflicts involving America
- Un-Natural disasters

ENVIRONMENTAL  
MOVEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMIC HISTORY  
CONFLICTS  
DISASTERS

ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMICS



1930 The first American comic: Famous Funnies

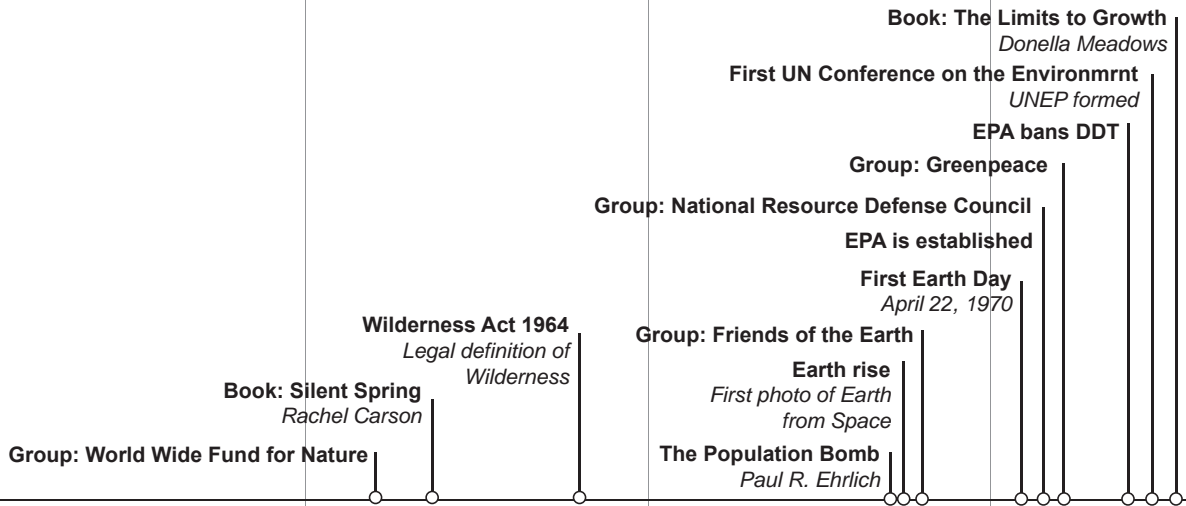
Superman's Debut

1940

1950 The Great Comic B...

1. SUPERMAN
  - 1.1 THE WORLD OF TOMORROW, #46, 1990
  - 1.2 THE NAME, PARTNERS, IS TERRA MAN, #52, 1991
  - 1.3 SUPERMAN FOR EARTH, 1991
  - 1.4 GROUNDED PART 5, #707, 2011
2. DETECTIVE COMICS (POISON IVY APPEARANCES)
  - 2.1 BRAMBLES, #534, 1984
  - 2.2 KNOW YOUR FOES, #566, 1986
  - 2.3 FOR THE LOVE OF IVY, #589, 1988
  - 2.4 BATMAN'S GOOTH, #627, 1991
  - 2.5 SYSTEMIC SHOCK, #693, 1996
  - 2.6 VIOLENT REACTIONS, #694, 1996
  - 2.7 A WALK IN THE PARK, #751, 2000
  - 2.8 A WALK IN THE PARK, #752, 2001
  - 2.9 STALKED, #823, 2006
3. NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER
  - 3.1 A WORLD MY ENEMY! #25, 1970
  - 3.2 YOUTHQUAKE! #28, 1970
  - 3.3 PURPOSE! #1, 1990
  - 3.4 EAGLE'S WING AND LION'S CLAW, #2, 1990
  - 3.5 MEETING OF THE BOARD, #3, 1990
  - 3.6 BLACK WATER, #4, 1990
  - 3.7 ALL THE RIVERS BURNING, #5, 1990

4. BATMAN (POISON IVY APPEARANCES)
  - 4.1 BEWARE OF POISON IVY, #181, JUN 1966
  - 4.2 A TOUCH OF POISON IVY, #183, AUG 1966
  - 4.3 IMPORTANT WOMEN IN HIS LIFE, #208, FEB 1969
  - 4.4 A SWEET KISS OF POISON, #339, SEP 1981
  - 4.5 MAN-BAT IS BACK! #342, DEC 1981
  - 4.6 A DAGGER SO DEADLY, #343, JAN 1982
  - 4.7 MONSTER MY SWEET! #344, FEB 1982
  - 4.8 THE GREEN GHOSTS OF GOTHAM, #367, JAN 1984
  - 4.9 STRANGE DEADFELLOWS, #495, JUN 1993
  - 4.10 NO MAN'S LAND: FRUIT OF THE EARTH, #568, AUG 1999
  - 4.11 - 4.22 HUSH, #608-619, DEC 2002 - NOV 2003
5. GREEN LANTERN
  - 5.1 EVEN AN IMMORTAL CAN DIE! #80, OCT 1970
  - 5.2 DEATH BE MY DESTINY! #81, NOV 1970
6. JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA
  - 6.1 THE COMING OF THE DOOMSTERS! #78, FEB 1970
  - 6.2 DEATH COME SLOWLY COME SLYLY! #79, MAR 1970
7. AQUAMAN
  - 7.1 - 7.6 AMERICAN TIDAL, #15-20, APR-SEP 2004
8. AMAZING SPIDER MAN
  - 8.1 DOC OCK LIVES! #89, OCT 1970
  - 8.2 SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP SPECIAL, MAY 2005



Santa Barbara Oil Spill  
Offshore oil rig

World War II      Vietnam War

Dwight D. Eisenhower      John F. Kennedy      Lyndon B. Johnson      Richard Nixon

Comic Code Authority established

Book Scare

Marvel Universe is created

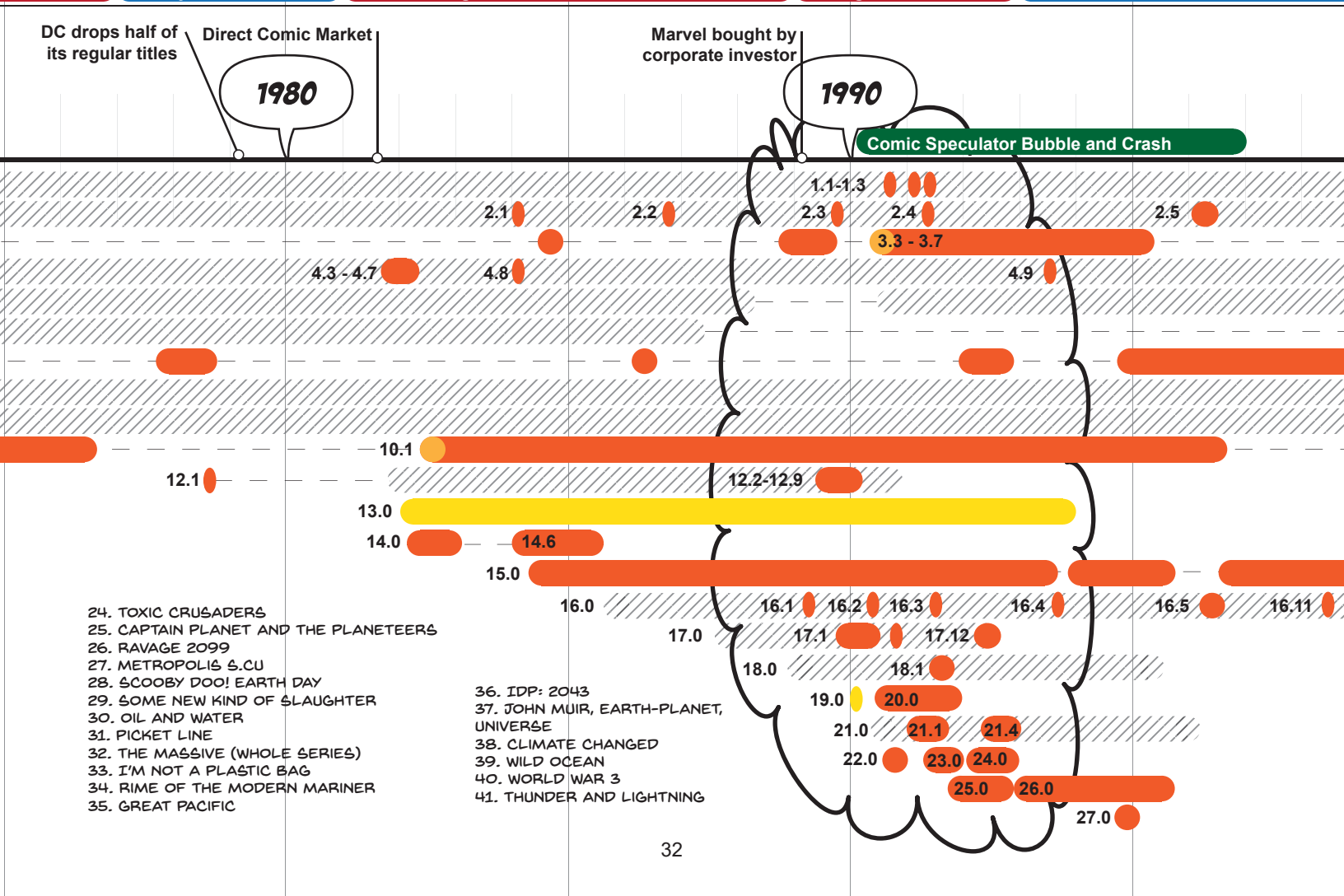
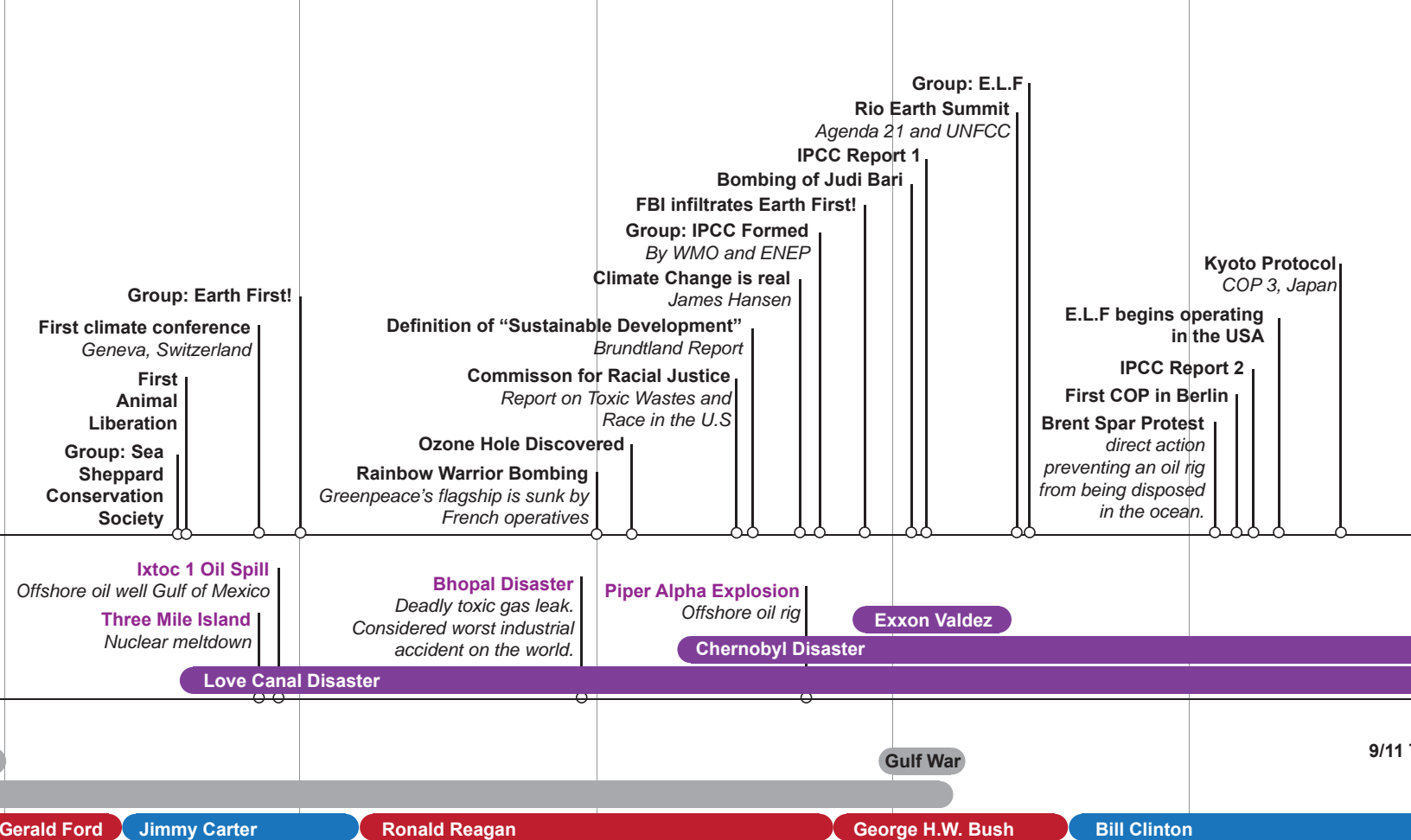
1960

"Radicalization" of Superheroes

1970

- 9. IRON MAN
  - 9.1 THIS DOOMED LAND -- THIS DYING SEA! #25, MAY 1970
  - 9.2 THE FURY OF FIREBRAND! #27, JUL 1970
- 10. SWAMPTHING
  - 10.1 - 10.5 THE SAGA OF THE SWAMPTHING, #20-24, JAN-MAY 1984
- 11. POPEYE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CAREERS, 1974
- 12. FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN
  - 12.1 FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN, #1, MAR 1978
  - 12.2 - 12.5 THE JANUS DIRECTIVE, #86-89, JUN-SEP 1989
  - 12.6 - 12.9 THE ELEMENTAL WAR, #90-93, OCT 1989-JAN 1990
- 13. NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND
- 14. ATARI FORCE
- 15. TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
- 16. CONCRETE
  - 16.1 STAY TUNED FOR PEARL HARBOUR, MAR 1989
  - 16.2 CONCRETE CELEBRATES EARTHDAY, APR 1990
  - 16.3 OBJECTS OF VALUE, APR 1991
  - 16.4 STEEL RAIN, MAY 1993
  - 16.5 - 16.10 THINK LIKE A MOUNTAIN, #1-6, MAR-AUG 1996
  - 16.11 RIOTOUS LIFE, JUN 1998
  - 16.12 - 16.17 THE HUMAN DILEMMA, #1-6, DEC 2004-MAY 2005
- 17. SUICIDE SQUAD (POISON IVY APPEARANCES)
  - 17.1 - 17.11 SUICIDE SQUAD, #33-43, SEPT 1989-JUL 1990
  - 17.12 - 17.14 SUICIDE SQUAD VOL.2, #64-66, APR-JUN 1992

- 18. PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL
  - 18.1 PIPELINE, #31, JUN 1991
  - 18.2 BLOW OUT, #32, JUL 1991
  - 18.3 FIRE IN THE HOLE, #33, AUG 1991
- 19. STREET POET RAY
- 20. KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON
- 21. THE NEW WARRIORS
  - 21.1 THE HEART OF THE HUNTER, #7, JAN 1991
  - 21.2 DEVIL'S AT THE DOORSTEP, #8, FEB 1991
  - 21.3 FOLLOWING THE LINE ALONG THE MIDDLE, #9, MAR 1991
  - 21.4 THIS LAND MUST CHANGE, #29, NOV 1992
  - 21.5 THIS LAND MUST BURN, #30, DEC 1992
- 22. BRUTE FORCE
  - 22.1 FAST FEUD, #1, AUG 1990
  - 22.2 BLACK GOLD!, #2, SEPT 1990
  - 22.3 WILD WILDLIFE, #3, OCT 1990
  - 22.4 CHAIN REACTION!, #4, NOV 1990
- 23. THE INFINITY GAUNTLET



Green Score

IPCC Report 3

An Inconvenient Truth  
*All Gore*

IPCC Report 4

Fukushima Daiichi Disaster  
*Nuclear meltdown*

Deepwater Horizon Disaster

Paris Agreement  
*COP 21, Paris*  
Project Drawdown  
IPCC Report 5  
*"Extremely Likely"*

IPCC Special Report on Oceans  
Group: School Strike 4 Climate  
Group: Extinction Rebellion  
IPCC Special Report 1.5C

Global Climate Strike  
*Sept 20-27, 2019*

Trade Centre Attack

War on Terror

George W. Bush

Barrack Obama

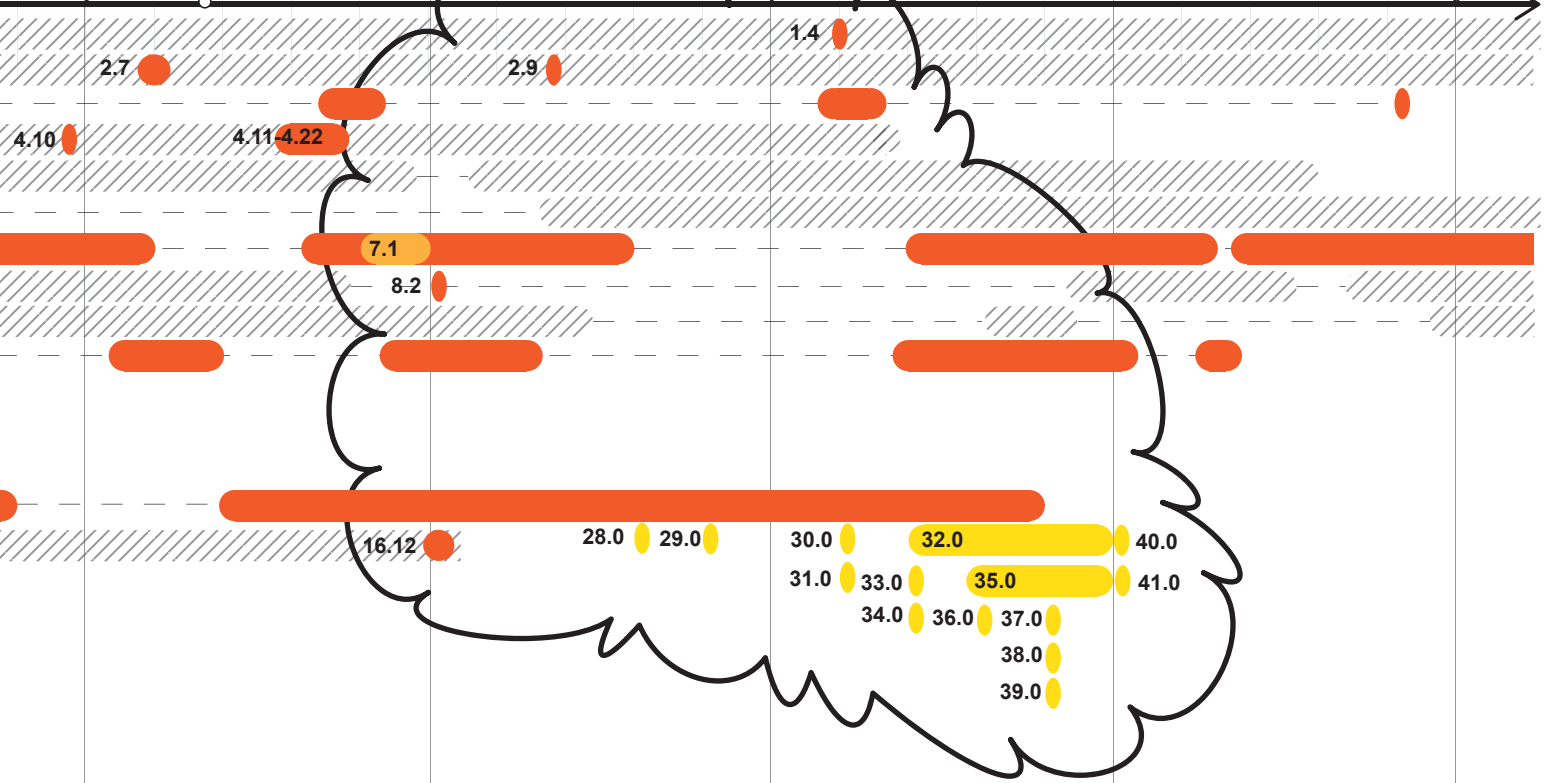
Donald Trump

Marvel Drops CCA

2000

2010

2020



starting to appear on newsstands as magazines independent of newspapers around 1930. Comic strips had been part of syndicated newspapers in New York as early as 1896. There is plenty of debate and research by other comic scholars about the historical legacy of comics, most recognize the illustrated fables of William Hogarth (1697-1764), or the caricatures of Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846), and some practitioners and theorists like Will Eisner and Scott McCloud go back even further highlighting the Bayeaux Tapestry, Mayan, and Egyptian cultures.<sup>2</sup> However, I defer to comic critic Douglas Wolk's opinion of the historical debate, in that we will effectively ignore most of it.<sup>3</sup> Not because it isn't important but because it is too large and an entirely separate focus. For instance even though concepts of environmentalism have existed in Western cultures for years before 1930, it isn't until 1970 that they become relevant enough to the general public to register in superhero comics.

Importantly for this thesis the first superhero, Superman, debuted in 1938. The discussion in this chapter centres on methods of representation in superhero comics because of their concentrated political mythologies, and as a genre, focus on narratives of action in crisis. For this reason non-superhero comics are not included in the larger discussion. However this brings up an interesting point revealed by the comics charted on the timeline. The third "blip" on the chart around 2010 is almost entirely made of stand-alone graphic novels and a few educational comics. This leads me to wonder why superheroes are no longer tackling environmental issues. The answer is likely a combination of two things; first my data is incomplete, second is the evolving nature of the comic industry and art-form. Independent and alternative comics,<sup>4</sup> which made use of the larger book-like "graphic novel" format, didn't gain much traction with wider audiences until in the early 1990's notably when Canadian small press publisher *Drawn & Quarterly* began operations in Montreal in 1989, and when Art Spiegelman's comic about his father's experiences during the holocaust, *Maus*, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992.<sup>5</sup>

### **Comics as a media of political messaging**

Superheroes have been an avenue for political messaging since their inception. In 1938, as the world teetered on the brink of war, the first superhero was introduced to America and his name was Super-

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2 Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (New York, N.Y: Harper Perennial, 1994) p10-20.

3 Douglas Wolk, *Reading Comics : How Graphic Novels Work and what they Mean* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007) p29.

4 Including the thriving underground comic scene (called comix) in both America and Canada.

5 John Bell and Seth, *Invaders from the North: How Canada Conquered the Comic Book Universe* (Toronto, Ont: Dundurn, 2006) p178.



man.<sup>6</sup> The character, created by teenagers Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, was an immediate success garnering dozens, if not hundreds, of other hero spinoffs all following the formula the “Man of Steel” laid out. Superheroes represent a kind of modern mythology for North Americans, a visual metaphor for their struggles. Comic’s scholar Christopher Murray points to this mythology and the patriotic ideals that surround the “American Dream” as part of the reason for why superheroes are so persistent and powerful in the public’s imagination.<sup>7</sup> Superman in particular, he says, arrived at a time when Roosevelt was trying to create social policy that would work within a capitalist system, which is reflected in Superman’s liberal values of holding up all the forgotten people mixing with values of protecting property and respecting law.<sup>8</sup>

During the war years, and the first superhero boom, the qualities of Superman, and all other superheroes, created a powerfully relevant metaphor of society, its values, fears, and politics. These heroes operated as a kind of social propaganda giving civilians and people in the American Military strong role models with virtuous qualities that would inspire and reassure a country in an incredibly difficult time. In these comics the politics are clearly visible as the American superheroes denounce fascism, and aid the military in the war.<sup>9</sup>

Superhero comics, in addition to prescribing political and social values to the hero, are built on the friction generated between the archetypal Mythic Hero and Villain. It is this dialogue, in relation to different periods of history, which makes comics an important site to investigate power relationships, politics, and the images they generate. What is considered villainous in relation to the hero, and what is glorified as a result? Typically the villain is seeking power of some kind which they do not have. In the comics from the first “blip” in 1970 the villains are land developers, scientists, investors, and aliens who don’t believe environmentalism is an issue or think it will get in the way of progress. In 1990 the superheroes remain as the representation of correctness and justice, but the villain flips to become the environmental activists with dangerous ideals and methods.

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6 Action Comics #1, DC Comics, June 1938

7 Christopher Murray, *Champions of the Oppressed: Superhero Comics, Popular Culture, and Propaganda in America during World War II* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2011) p9.

8 Christopher Murray, *Champions of the Oppressed: Superhero Comics, Popular Culture, and Propaganda in America during World War II* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2011) p13.

9 Christopher Murray also discusses the fact that superheroes, in their development in the 1940’s, reflect a white, hetero-normative, anglo-christian, viewpoint of the Mythic Hero.

## The Great Comic Book Scare and the Re-birth of Marvel

After World War II superheroes fell out of fashion and a remarkably diverse range of genre's blossomed. Marvel, then called Timely, along with many other comic publishers produced westerns, sci-fi stories, romance, and horror comics. However the influence of conservative public groups and the anti-communist hysteria of the "Red Scare" propelled an anti-comic movement which nearly crushed the entire comic book industry.<sup>10</sup> What came out of this period was the *Comics Code Authority of 1954 (CCA)*, a self-regulatory (read censorship) body, and very few comic publishers left. Superheroes endured at DC (Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman never stopped publication) but in a sanitized way as they were required fit the content constraints set out by the CCA.<sup>11</sup> Timely stopped writing superhero stories altogether.

In general the code was aimed at a fear that depictions of crime in comics would promote the same behaviour in children and that they might somehow learn to be a criminal through comics. It also deals specifically with gory horror comics which had been increasing in popularity after the war. However in addition to some obvious clauses prohibiting nudity, vulgar language, and images of torture, this first version of the CCA also banned supernatural beings like werewolves and zombies. Even more importantly, I find, are the clauses which lay out connections to social morals: good will always triumph over evil, institutions and authority are to be respected, hetero-normative families were upheld as "natural," and no comic could be published that sought to tackle racial or religious prejudice.<sup>12</sup>

If a comic met these rules it would receive the CCA's seal of approval signalling to vendors it was safe to put out on the stand. A comic would not sell if it did not have the seal. For the next 15 years, until a revision of the Code in 1971, these restrictions would shape how superheroes operated in all situations.

In 1961, still under the control of the CCA, Stan Lee at *Timely* began re-vamping the publisher's comic line. With artist Jack Kirby the duo launched a new series about a super-family called the Fantastic Four, and with them the greater *Marvel Universe*. Lee's intention with the Marvel Universe was to create a more realistic setting inhabited with extraordinary, yet relatable, characters. The focus of which was a de-

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10 For more detail on this history, see David Hadju's *The Ten Cent Plague, The Great Comic Book Scare and How It Changed America*.

11 "The Insane History of how American Paranoia Ruined and Censored Comic Books," last modified -12-15T08:00:02-05:00, accessed Nov 19, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2014/12/15/7326605/comic-book-censorship>.

12 "The Comics Code of 1954: Code of the Comics Magazine Association of America," accessed Nov 19, 2020, <http://cblcdf.org/the-comics-code-of-1954/>.

tailed New York City where readers could recognize familiar landmarks and superheroes might bump into each other on the subway, contrasting DC's insistence on cities and settings that are more clearly metaphorical such as Metropolis, Gotham, and Starcity.<sup>13</sup> In this period of the early 1960's Marvel produced many of the best known superheroes around today: The Fantastic Four, The X-Men, Spiderman, The Hulk, Ironman, Thor, and the return of Captain America. These super-humans were infused with human struggles, arguments with family, battles with addiction, and guilt over their more-than-mortal privilege. And yet by the end of the decade there was again the desire to bring these heroes in line with the changing times, paralleling the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-war Movement, and the burgeoning Environmental Movement.

### **The first Blip, "Relevant" Comics in 1970**

Throughout the year 1970 a number of superhero comics from Marvel and DC appeared on newsstands that seemed to reflect a changing world. This was an important year for both publishers as they sought to bring their characters in line with the complexities of life their readers were encountering every day. Comics, like any creative medium, are not produced inside a vacuum; they are influenced by, and subsequently influence, the surrounding society and time. These new stories featured big "unanswerable" questions with heroes tackling head on, stories of racism, youth protest movements, the War in Vietnam, and environmental destruction. Called "The Radicalization of the Superheroes" on the October 1970 cover of *New York Magazine*,<sup>14</sup> this shift in content was driven partly by slow sales as Carmin Infantino, DC's editor in chief, admits to the New York Times in 1971.

*"I'd like to say I had a great dream," says Infantino, "but it didn't happen that way. Green Lantern was dying. The whole superhero line was dying. Everything was sagging, everything. When your sales don't work, they're telling you something. The front office told be, get rid of the book, but I said, let me try something, just for three issues. We started interviewing groups of kids around the country. The one thing they kept repeating: they want to know the truth. Suddenly the light bulb goes on: Wow, we've been missing the boat here!...What we're saying here," says Infantino,*

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13 Jörn Ahrens and Arno Meteling, *Comics and the City : Urban Space in Print, Picture, and Sequence* (New York: Continuum, 2010) p167.

14 Lindsay Van Gelder and Lawrence Van Gelder, "The Radicalization of the Superheroes," Oct 19, 1970, .



Fig. 3.1—*Sub-Mariner* #25 May 1970 thematically crosses over with *Ironman* #25 from 1970.

### Approaches to Environmentalism in Superhero comics from 1970

The approach to environmentalism represented in comics sampled from this particular period can be loosely summarized in three groups. First Environmental issues might be given a cursory treatment as a topical reference, which was a common way to introduce current events into the comic universe. Secondly the story could use an extended metaphor to comment on environmental issues more generally. Finally some of the stories directly fold environmentalism into the plot. In this “blip” the majority of the comics tackle pollution of various kinds as the main issue regarding environmentalism, which in line with the dominant discourses at the time.

#### *Topical References*

On the cover of issue 25 of Marvel’s *Sub-Mariner*, starring Namor the Atlantean Prince, is a dramatic underwater scene of Namor crying

*“is, there can be trouble with your Government unless you have the right leaders. Sure we expect flak from the Administration, but we feel the kids have a right to know, and they want to know. These kids are more sophisticated than anyone imagines, and we feel the doors are so wide open, here that we’re going in many directions.”<sup>15</sup>*

Both Marvel and DC were experiencing a slump in sales towards the end of the 1960’s, but with this new direction superheroes were taking, Stan Lee, the editor at Marvel, also felt strongly that the medium could be used as a platform for positive change. Comic historian, Danny Fingeroth, found this quote of Lee speaking in 1970:

*“As I realized that more and more adults were reading our books and people of college age (which is tremendously gratifying to me), I felt that now I can finally start saying some of the things I would like to say...about drugs and about crime and about Vietnam and about colleges and about things that mean something.”<sup>16</sup>*

15 Saul Braun, "Shazam! here Comes Captain Relevant," *The New York Times* May 2, 1971. <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/05/02/archives/shazam-here-comes-captain-relevant-here-comes-captain-relevant.html>.

16 Danny Fingeroth, *A Marvelous Life: The Amazing Story of Stan Lee* (London, England: Simon and Schuster UK, 2019) p197.





Fig. 3.2—Peter Parker (*Spider-Man*) is confronted by a friend for not attending a protest.

out in rage as his people lay dead on the ocean floor surrounded by punctured and leaking steel drums, some of which are labeled “Danger Chemical Spray” while others have D.D.T emblazoned across them. What’s interesting is the story that followed doesn’t discuss concerns of ocean pollution as the focus but is primarily about Namor waging war against the “surface dwellers” having used the popular topic of pollution merely to set up the plot. Near the end of the issue Namor is making an appeal at the UN to recognize Atlantis as a sovereign nation, and here there is a one page argument made shedding light on pesticide use killing sea-life, the devastation of oil-spills,<sup>17</sup> over-fishing, and the effects on whole food chains.<sup>18</sup>

In a *Spider-Man* story from October 1970, Peter Parker is invited to a protest against air pollution by a friend, who even promises that Ralph Nader (an American politician and environmental activist) is going to show up. Peter declines because he needs to continue his search for the villain Doc Ock. Yet he worries that his friends will think he doesn’t care about the environment.<sup>19</sup> Again like *Sub-Mariner* this type of interaction lasts only one page and Parker is soon back to swinging between buildings and fighting villains. This example reveals the use of environmentalism as a “hot button” topic, one that can be injected into a superhero narrative in order to make a statement.

17 Recall that the massive Santa Barbara Spill had taken place only a year prior.

18 Roy Thomas et al., “A World My Enemy!” *Sub-Mariner*, May 1, 1970, p17.

19 Stan Lee et al., “Doc Ock Lives!” *The Amazing Spider-Man*, Oct 1, 1970, p3.





"IS IT ATLANTIS WHICH HAS CALLOUSLY DROPPED CANS OF LETHAL GAS INTO AN OCEAN --CAUSING NEEDLESS DEATHS?"



"IS IT ATLANTIS WHICH HAS BECLOUDED A WORLD WITH PESTICIDES--WHOSE VILE AFTER-EFFECTS CAN TURN BOTH LAND AND SEA INTO ONE VAST SLAUGHTER-HOUSE?"

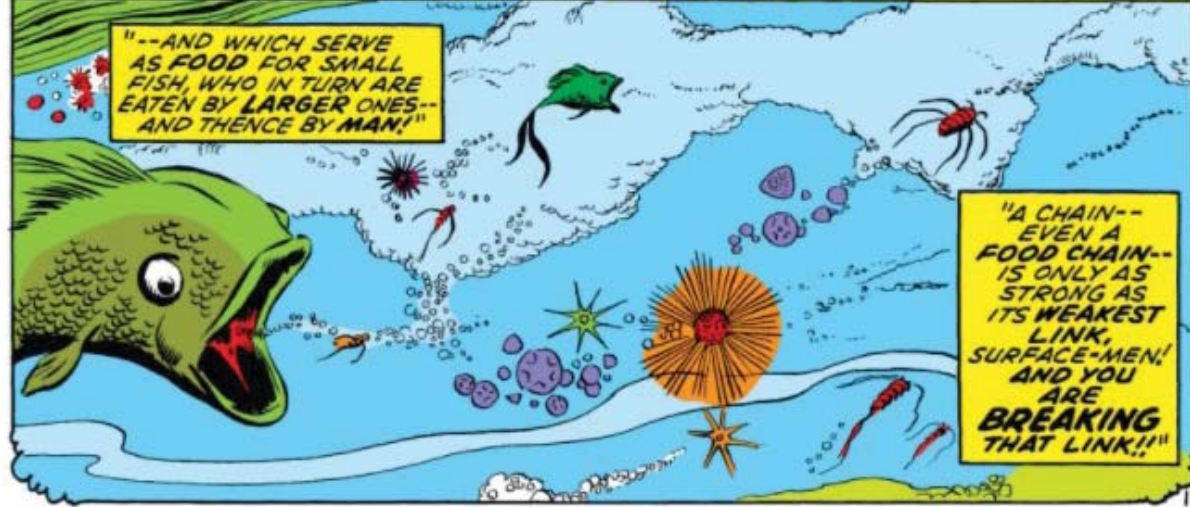


"IS IT FAIR ATLANTIS WHICH HAS SPILLED COUNTLESS GALLONS OF CRUDE PETROLEUM INTO THE SEAS, CAUSING THE NEAR EXTINCTION OF SPECIES AFTER SPECIES OF WILD-LIFE--"



"--OR WHOSE SEA-PLOWING VESSELS DUMP REFUSE AND TOXIC CHEMICALS INTO A SEA WHICH GAVE THEM LIFE?"

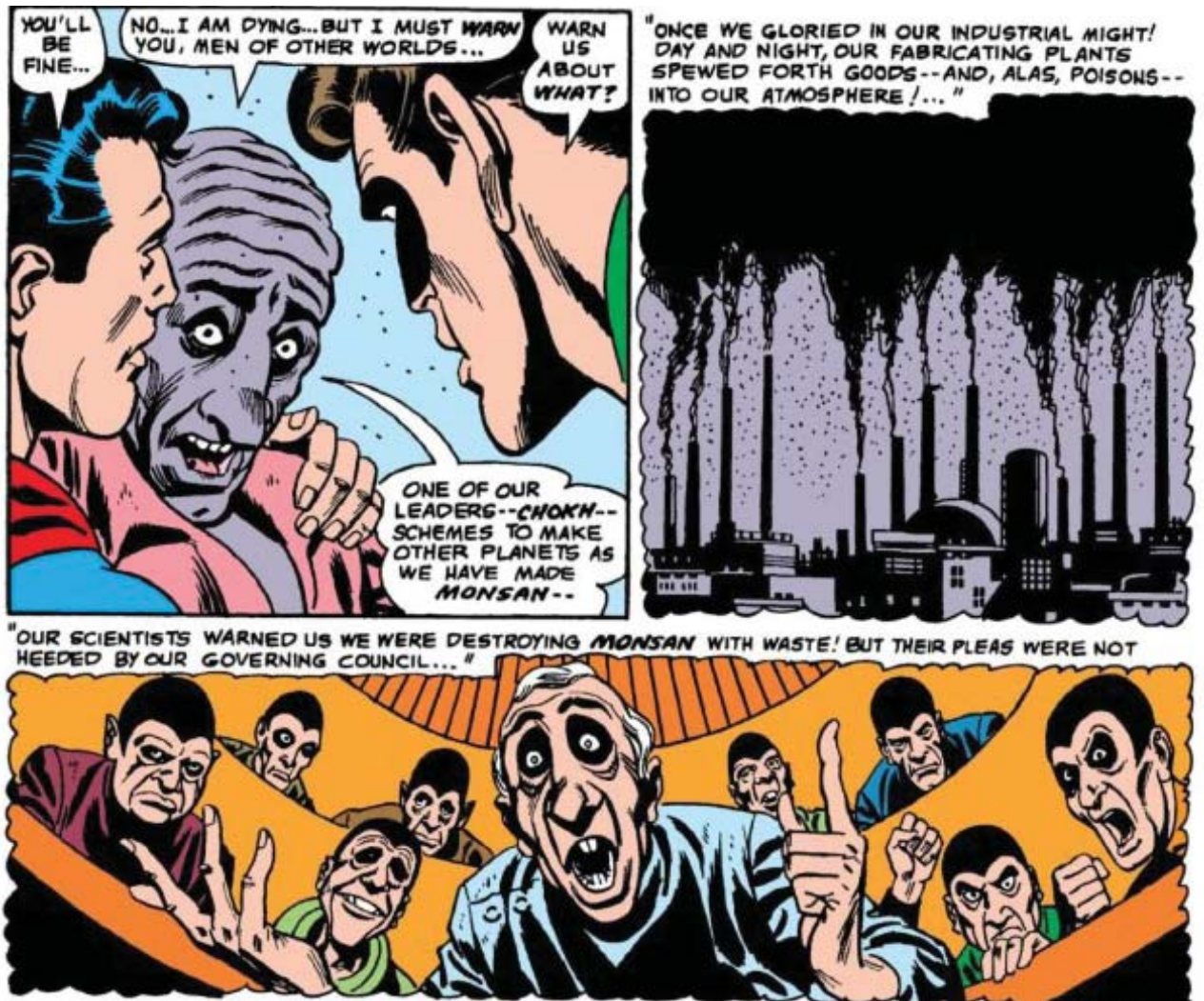
"FOR, MAKE NO MISTAKE, HUMANS--YOUR RANDOM, RECKLESS ACTS THREATEN THE VERY CORNERSTONE OF LIFE--THE MICROSCOPIC, SEA-DWELLING PLANKTON WHICH PRODUCE THE OXYGEN WHICH ALL LIFE NEEDS--"



"--AND WHICH SERVE AS FOOD FOR SMALL FISH, WHO IN TURN ARE EATEN BY LARGER ONES--AND THENCE BY MAN!"

"A CHAIN-- EVEN A FOOD CHAIN-- IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS WEAKEST LINK, SURFACE-MEN! AND YOU ARE BREAKING THAT LINK!"





### Extended Metaphors

Extended metaphors fit perfectly with how comics tell stories and is probably the most common way that they explore complex topics or present messages of morality. The idea is to use the fantastic situations only possible in comics as a mirror to comment on our contemporary conditions.

In February and March of 1970, DC published a two-part story in the *Justice League of America* (JLA) series which took on pollution as the central theme. In the first part, issue 78, the Justice League<sup>20</sup> discovers a factory that seems to be operating with the sole purpose of polluting water and air. Then it appears that the factory owners are actually aliens!<sup>21</sup> In the second part, Superman and Green Lantern travel to the alien's home-world of *Monsan* only to find that it is completely devoid of life due to excessive industrial pollution. The naming of this polluted planet is very close to the oft hated agrochemical company, *Monsanto*, who produced the controversial herbicide

20 The Justice League at this time includes: Superman, Batman, Flash, Black Canary, Green Lantern, Atom, and Green Arrow.

21 Dennis O'Neil, Dick Dillin and Joe Giella, "Come Slowly Death, Come Slyly!" *Justice League of America*, Mar 4, 1970a, p8.

Fig. 3.3—(Opposite) Namor outlines the effect humans have on oceans at the U.N.

Fig. 3.4—(Above) Superman and Green Lantern learn the fate of the planet Monsan.



Fig. 3.5—Green Lantern, Green Arrow, Black Canary and Old Timer soar over the crowded streets of Maltus.

“Agent Orange” used by the U.S military during the Vietnam War. It is revealed that the leader of the planet adapted to thrive on pollution and now colonizes<sup>22</sup> other planets by similarly destroying them with “TOTAL POLLUTION.”<sup>23</sup> The moralizing tone of the message is that focussing on practices that promote pollution will twist a person’s character, and perhaps lead to the destruction of an entire planet. At the end of the story, after the aliens have been defeated, Green Arrow looks across a horizon choked with smokestacks and smog, and wonders if they really did save the planet. The parallel to Earth is clear, yet by positioning the culprit of global ecological breakdown as a group of villainous aliens, the issues of who, and what, causes pollution is avoided.

Incidentally the following month, in April of 1970, the writer of the Justice League story, Dennis O’Neil, begins writing the *Green Lantern* series for DC along with artist Neal Adams. What follows in the series is an incredibly poignant, and unprecedented, discussion of social justice issues; A chapter in comic book history that continues to find relevance 50 years later.<sup>24</sup> In issue 80 of the series *Green Lantern*, along with Green Arrow and “Old Timer,”<sup>25</sup> are involved in an accidental ship fire which critically injures Green Lantern. The ship

22 A similar concept is used in Issue #3 of *Brute Force* from 1990, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

23 Dennis O’Neil, Dick Dillin and Joe Giella, “Come Slowly Death, Come Slyly!” *Justice League of America*, Mar 4, 1970a, p16.

24 “Green Lantern no. 76 was the Moment Superhero Comics Got Woke,” last modified Apr 17, accessed Nov 30, 2020, <https://www.vulture.com/2018/04/green-lantern-green-arrow-76-woke-superheroes.html>.

25 Old Timer is from an ancient alien race that protects all of space known as the Guardians of the Universe.





is transporting highly volatile and toxic chemicals. The heroes have the choice of saving their friend or eliminating the chemicals which threaten all of them. Having only enough energy to perform one of these tasks, Old Timer decides to save Green Lantern, leaving Green Arrow and the ship's crew to dump the cargo overboard away from the fire but polluting the river in the process. Since Old Timer's duty as a *Guardian of the Universe* is to do "the greatest good for the greatest number"<sup>26</sup> he is reprimanded by a high council for allowing the river to be polluted thereby furthering the destruction of an already damaged environment. This creates a platform for the comic to have a discussion about responsibility to future generations and acting for the collective over the individual.

Fig. 3.7—The heroes are accosted by a mob of citizens.

The following issue, #81, takes Green Arrow, Green Lantern, Black Canary and Old Timer to a planet called *Maltus* after Old Timer accepts his sentence for breaking his Guardian code. The planet is completely overpopulated with people and has extreme poverty, food shortages, and continuous violence and crime.<sup>27</sup> Again we find a cleverly named alien planet. The over-populated *Maltus* is clearly a reference to *Thomas Robert Malthus* who developed theories of population growth related to food supply and personal choices in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Fears of population growth in the late 1960's developed as a neo-Malthusian discourse perhaps best exemplified by Paul Ehrlich's 1968 book, *The Population Bomb*, and movies like

26 Dennis O'Neil, Neal Adams and Dick Giordano, "Even an Immortal can Die!" *Green Lantern*, Sep 30, 1970b, p4.

27 Dennis O'Neil, Neal Adams and Dick Giordano, "Death be My Destiny!" *Green Lantern*, Nov 20, 1970a, p12.



**CAPTAIN**

# ENVIRO<sup>®</sup>

*THE FIGHT TO  
SAVE THE  
MARITIMES!*



OUR BEAUTIFUL MARITIME  
PROVINCES THREATENED BY STRANGE CREATURES  
FROM THE PLANET **POLLUTO**  
CAN CAPTAIN ENVIRO SAVE US?



*Soylent Green*.<sup>28</sup> This use of an alien world allows the creators to explore the effects of overpopulation on environmental systems and social structures but without the complexities associated with this discourse on Earth.

Fig. 3.8—Cover of *Captain Enviro*, 1972.

### *Captain Enviro, Repression through “education” 1972*

In 1972 New Brunswick funded the development of an educational comic that would be distributed to schools alongside public T.V and radio messages. These environmental education measures were designed to help unify the Maritime region by improving communication and cooperation<sup>29</sup>. However Mark J. McLaughlin reveals that the provincial government’s intentions were largely to mitigate the disruption of resource extraction industries’ economic growth, of which New Brunswick depended, by an emerging Environmental Movement. In the comic a superhero fights alien invaders and promotes a type of environmentalism that centres on individual actions, like recycling, instead of larger structural changes in society. Campaign methods of environmental activists were referred to as “the scare technique” by The Committee of Environment Ministers.<sup>30</sup> Another issue, McLaughlin points out, is the fact that the comic manages to present environmental issues without discussing where they come from represented by a focus on the “true” facts and villains who are aliens invading Earth and creating pollution in order to colonize it. The plot of this comic is strikingly similar to that of JLA #78/79 discussed above. It is also a great example of the discussion from *chapter 2* around the repression of political opposition by State powers. With the intention (I may even say guise) of educating young people, New Brunswick’s provincial government was actively dissuading future participation in environmental activism by promoting conservative environmental values. This example uses the *extended metaphor* to willfully ignore the real causes of ecological degradation.

### *Environmentally Focused Plots*

This final approach is similar to the *extended metaphor* since it features plots which revolve around fictional events to discuss larger

28 Adam Veitch and Laszlo Kulcsar, "Malthus Meets Green Lantern: Comic Book Representation of Malthusian Concerns," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 10, no. 1 (Jan 2, 2019) p143. doi:10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21504857.2018.1431798>.

29 Mark J. McLaughlin, "Rise of the Eco-Comics: The State, Environmental Education and Canadian Comic Books, 1971-1975," *Material Culture Review* 77/78 (January 1, 2013) p14. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/22080>.

30 Mark J. McLaughlin, "Rise of the Eco-Comics: The State, Environmental Education and Canadian Comic Books, 1971-1975," *Material Culture Review* 77/78 (January 1, 2013) p15. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/22080>.

# THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN™







themes related to environmentalism. However these next stories take place on Earth and the environmental impacts which the heroes fight against are caused by people not externalized forces. Within this first “blip” of the timeline, I found that only two of the comics from my research utilized the full comic plot to cover environmental concerns.

Issue 25 of Marvel’s *Iron Man*, from May 1970, begins with Tony Stark presenting a movie about the dangers of environmental pollution to his investors. Since they are unmoved he recounts the incident that spawned his interest in environmentalism. On a visit to an island energy facility owned by *Stark Industries*, Tony Stark finds that his head engineer has developed the entire island to strip it of its resources and diverted parts of the facility budget towards building a massive experimental solar power plant. The cost saving measures meant critical chemical disposal equipment was never installed leading the facility to poison the surrounding ocean, prompting an attack from Namor the Sub-Mariner, Prince of Atlantis and defender of the sea. Stark’s head engineer is portrayed as blind to the effects his ambition has on the surrounding environment. Iron Man (Tony Stark) and Namor decide to work together to destroy the island and its pollution producing technology. In the end Tony Stark’s investors are still unmoved to consider investing in environmental causes, suggesting that his claims of global changes to the atmosphere within a decade are just theories and that there is “plenty of time” to make any changes.<sup>31</sup>

Fig. 3.9—(Opposite) Iron Man screens a dramatic movie for his investors.

Fig. 3.10—(Above) The scientist cannot believe the environmental destruction had anything to do with them.

31 Archie Goodwin et al., "This Doomed Land -- this Dying Sea!" *Iron Man*, May 1, 1970, p20.



Fig. 3.11—Namor is disgusted by the “surface dwellers.”

In issue 28 of Marvel’s *Sub-Mariner*, from August 1970 titled “Youthquake!” Namor is visiting a friend in New York after his failed plea to the UN to make Atlantis a sovereign nation and address ocean pollution. Namor is disgusted by the lack of foresight and the reckless way that the “surface dwellers” pollute their own environment, gesturing to a street crowded with cars and clouds of exhaust.<sup>32</sup> The pair come across a group of young activists protesting the purchase and development of a city park. Some of the developer’s security guards show up to dissolve the protest citing fearmongering on the part of the protesters. The guards attack a protester and Namor steps in to protect them. It turns out that the father of one of the activists is the person developing the park land, and has funded the design of an immense and terrifying excavation machine called “Brutivac.” When the protesters ask Namor to destroy the machine he speaks a very thoughtful truth:

*It is not truly the **machine** which is the menace, lad,  
but that which lurks in the hearts of **men!** I could  
destroy it, perhaps – yet, that is not the **answer!**<sup>33</sup>*

In the end Namor goes to an evening “teach-in” held by the activists at the park, to impress a sense of urgency to the youths of the planet’s situation. The developer-father crashes the party, and desperate to prove that his hard work and legacy means something, climbs into “Brutivac” and attacks the activists and Namor. The developer

32 Roy Thomas et al., “Youthquake!” *Sub-Mariner*, Aug 10, 1970, p2.

33 Roy Thomas et al., “Youthquake!” *Sub-Mariner*, Aug 10, 1970, p9.





almost runs over his own son and only then comes to his senses realizing that he's "in the dark on this ecology stuff..."<sup>34</sup>

### Take-away

While many of the stories from this time period address general symptoms and causes related to ecological degradation, like industrial pollution of air and water, and unsustainable rates of resource use, none of them call out specific events, catastrophes or culprits. The stories share a similar sense that the world is headed in a precarious direction which is the cause of or exacerbated by human activities. I found the sentiment somewhat apocalyptic as the heroes "solved" one small crisis but acknowledged the much larger problems on the horizon if we didn't act quickly and decisively as a society. Additionally these examples make use of the metaphor of Earth as a "lifeboat" in space, calling to mind Buckminster Fuller's analogy of "Spaceship

Fig. 3.12—(Top) The protesters signs display a NIMBY attitude, as noted by the moderator of [supermegamonkey.net](http://supermegamonkey.net).

Fig. 3.13—(Bottom) The developer boasts about his factory and equipment.

34 Roy Thomas et al., "Youthquake!" *Sub-Mariner*, Aug 10, 1970, p20.

Earth” which draws on collective cooperation to maintain and manage a finite planet.

Activists, if they appear at all, are secondary to the heroes’ actions. In the example from Spider-Man #89 the activists serve as a tie-in to current events of the time, and as background detail to the superhero/supervillain fight. In the example from Sub-Mariner #28, Namor sides with the activists, as their purpose and values are presented in a positive way. In an interesting flip from the 1990s the activists are not yet portrayed as “eco-terrorists” and instead it is the land developers or scientists who are too focussed on “progress” that are at odds with the superheroes and presented as the villains. The superheroes either work to stop pollution or unsustainable practices themselves, or support activists to that end.

The resistance to environmental values is presented by corrupt politicians who think “that conservation stuff is a lot of bunk,”<sup>35</sup> investors who don’t want to hear “scare talk” because they are “responsible to board members [and] stockholders,”<sup>36</sup> hired thugs making sure activists aren’t “goin’ around scarin’ people,”<sup>37</sup> or developers and scientists that don’t want anything to stand in the way of their progress. This echoes the mindset held by provincial politicians who were developing the educational comic *Captain Enviro* in the early 1970’s in New Brunswick Canada as discussed earlier in *Chapter 2*.<sup>38</sup>

We can infer with these representations and appeals to the environmental movement that even though environmentalism was an important public concern, and there was push-back from the establishment as to the legitimacy of those claims, it was not receiving the same attention from government sanctioned repression campaigns as other social movements. As an example in June of 1970 Marvel published its “most controversial villain” named “Firebrand.”<sup>39</sup> He is a disillusioned civil rights activist that utilizes direct action to support Black Power groups and anyone who wants to effect change, showing the contrast in opinion between these two movements.

It’s entirely possible the environmental movement had yet to shift into employing militant protest methods as an accepted approach. In my research I did not find any indication of groups in the 1970’s using what would later be termed “ecotage” as a method. In fact this concept was itself introduced in Edward Abbey’s novel *The Monkey*

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35 Dennis O’Neil, Dick Dillin and Joe Giella, “The Coming of the Doomsters!” *Justice League of America*, Feb 4, 1970b, p17.

36 Goodwin, “This Doomed Land -- this Dying Sea!” p20

37 Thomas, “Youthquake!” Pg.4

38 McLaughlin, “Rise of the Eco-Comics: The State, Environmental Education and Canadian Comic Books, 1971-1975,”

39 Archie Goodwin et al., “The Fury of the Firebrand!” *Iron Man*, Jul 1, 1970, .

*Wrench Gang* from 1975. Even *Greenpeace* which was founded in 1971, and to my knowledge was more “radical” in than other environmental groups at the time, leaned more towards “bearing witness” to events over direct action. Finally when the intentions of the FBI’s *Counterintelligence Program* (COINTELPRO) were exposed in 1971<sup>40</sup> the groups they were focussing on included: White Hate Groups, the New Left, Puerto Rican Groups, Black Extremists, Hoodwink<sup>41</sup>, Cuba, Socialist Workers Party, and Espionage programs. None of these are specifically “environmental” though it is possible the New Left captures some of these aspects.

### **The second Blip, Corporate interests and Environmental populism in 1990**

In addition to the complex socio-political context leading up to the year 1990, there is also an economic driver to this period in the comic book industry. Marvel had been recently purchased by an investment group and quickly became one of the fastest rising stocks of the early 1990s. A speculator bubble of collectors buying comics in the hopes they would re-sell at high prices in the future helped increase stocks and sales. Both Marvel and DC added to the bubble by creating “collector” issues, special “first” editions, and a slew of sales gimmicks ranging from holographic covers to including trading cards.<sup>42</sup>

“Environmentalism” was everywhere in 1990. David Cayley, a CBC radio host, noticed in late 1980’s a growing array of products, images, and people using environmental themes as an extension of capitalism. He also noticed a shift in the language people were using that took on an abstract globalized “we” and an urgent emphasis on survival.<sup>43</sup> Noel Sturgeon, a noted ecofeminist scholar, noticed in the early 1990’s a proliferation of environmental themes suddenly connected to everything her young son interacted, from T.V shows to school supplies.<sup>44</sup> Around this time as the Soviet Union was dissolving so was the threat of global nuclear war. Sturgeon’s theory is that a shifting of conscious global threat, from war to Climate Change, created a new way for pop-culture to take on messages of good and

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40 “The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.” Memo from FBI director on Black Nationalist – Hate Groups, Aug 25, 1967.

41 A plan to pit organized crime groups against the communist party in America.

42 Daniel Wallace, Alan Cowsill and Alex Irvine, *DC Comics A Visual History: Updated Edition* (NYC, New York: DK, 2014) p243.

43 David Cayley, *The Age of Ecology: The Environment on CBC Radio's Ideas* (Toronto, Canada: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1991) p115.

44 Noël Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture : Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009) p105.

evil in morality tales. A combination of a resurgent zeitgeist of environmentalism and a comic market boom likely helped create the dramatic increase in comic titles supporting environmental themes we see on the chart at the beginning of the chapter constituting the second “blip.”

#### *“Eco-terrorism” in Superhero Comics*

The combined shift of environmental populism and major threat reduction allows the public to be more receptive of the “eco-terrorist” narrative that industry and law-enforcement was creating. This is of course furthered when mass media and pop-culture accept and reproduce these narratives for consumption. “Eco-terrorism” enters superhero comics that feature environmental themes around 1990. In many of these stories the hero faces a villain that claims to be an environmentalist but through their methods or convictions is able to be de-valued as an “eco-terrorist.” This re-aligns the conversation of what environmentalism can and should be doing. The comics in 1970 display an understanding of the large-scale issues associated with industrial pollution and a society dependant on the continual growth of those industries. The main idea presented by those superheroes is a simplified concept of conservation and preservation of natural habitat and a reduction of pollutants and waste. The introduction of “eco-terrorism” into comics pulls the focus away from thinking about causes of ecological degradation and towards rhetorical debates around the ethics and morality of action methods. In the way that 1970s comics implicitly perpetuated the idea humans are separate from the natural world by using the conservation discourse, 1990s comics reinforce that conservative ideals of moderation and capitalistic mechanisms are the best ways of addressing climate change.

#### *Captain Planet, Repression through “education” 1991*

In perhaps the most memorable environmentally-themed and educationally-oriented animated cartoon and comic of the early 1990’s, *Captain Planet*, a message of conservative environmentalism is present. Noel Sturgeon notes that the creators were concerned that if the content focussed too closely on realistic scenarios that children, whose parents worked for industries causing environmental damage, might view their parents as villains.<sup>45</sup> Like *Captain Enviro* of 1972, there is an emphasis on participating in environmental discourse through individual lifestyle changes which was identified by Sturgeon as well

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45 Noel Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture : Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009) p116.



as Donna Lee King.<sup>46</sup> Both *Captain Enviro* and *Captain Planet* do not contain explicit representations of “eco-terrorism,” yet we can link these instances of “educational” comics to the larger strategy of suppressing political dissent. This is done by creating a public that accepts certain discourses of environmentalism that are amenable to businesses and governments yet counters the radical ideology of groups like *Earth First!*, *ELF*, and *ALF*.

### **Approaches to Environmentalism in Superhero comics from 1990**

In general I’ve found that comics from this era mirror those of the 1970s in their approaches to representing these themes with the majority representing Environmentally Focused Plots.

Two great examples of comics using the *Extended Metaphor* in 1990 are Marvel’s wildly popular *Infinity Gauntlet* series and *Ravage 2099*. The *Infinity Gauntlet* uses overpopulation on a universal scale allowing the cosmic villain Thanos to discuss imbalances in ecosystems. The world of *Ravage 2099* imagines an alternate reality where corporations rule in place of governments and soldiers fight in Pollution Wars.

The majority of comics from the selected list in this time period follow more closely to the category of *Environmentally Focused Plots*. In contrast to the 1970’s, comics in 1990 that have environmental themes instead of superheroes being aligned with environmental values and activists on a whole are centered as the ultimate moral authority of environmentalism. This changes the dynamic between superhero, activist, and villain, with the superhero taking on a policing role, instead of issuing dire warnings to society, which is shown to conflict violently with activists advocating for environmental values. In this way the villain is no longer the businessman or scientist who would seek to damage the environment for their own gain, but the activist whose values and methods are no longer supported by the public.

On the whole this aligns with Veitch and Kulcsar’s findings that in the late 1980’s superheroes focussed more on punitive action towards villains, treating villains as individual problems, and moving away from the exploration in the early 1970s of crime as a relation to social differences and injustices.<sup>47</sup> This is further supported by the

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46 Donna Lee King, "Captain Planet and the Planeteers: Kids, Environmental Crisis, and Competing Narratives of the New World Order," *The Sociological Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Feb 1, 1994), 103-120. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.1994.tb00401.x. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1994.tb00401.x>.

47 Veitch, "Malthus Meets Green Lantern: Comic Book Representation of Malthusian Concerns," , 140-154

U.S government's program, under the leadership of President Ronald Reagan, of increased prison construction and harsher mandatory sentencing as a "solution" to perceived increases in crime.<sup>48</sup>

Veitch and Kulcsar suggest that comics in the early 1970s (the first blip) focused on social problems at a society wide scale instead of individualistic villains. Because of the limitations of comic books in portraying concepts like overpopulation, or environmental degradation which take place over a long period of time, they distill them into tangible and actionable situation for the heroes to tackle.<sup>49</sup> For example, a superhero wouldn't be able to solve an environmental crisis alone, but they may be able to stop a fight over scarce water during a drought. However the heroes in the 1990s, in taking on punitive justice of individual villains, they obscure systems and institutions that perpetuate environmental destruction and environmental racism. In comics like *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*, the singling out of destructive villains that can be "dealt" with deflects blame, refuses to acknowledge systems of power, and places responsibility on the individual to solve global crises.<sup>50</sup> This is further compounded when the heroes are themselves fighting against individuals who would be considered activists outside of the comic. At the end of the story what are they really saying when the hero "wins" and every activist is shown as a villain?

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48 Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (Toronto, Canada: Publishers Group, 2003) p17.

49 Veitch, "Malthus Meets Green Lantern: Comic Book Representation of Malthusian Concerns," Pg.152

50 King, "Captain Planet and the Planeteers: Kids, Environmental Crisis, and Competing Narratives of the New World Order," Pg.115

# 4

## **Analysis of “Eco-terrorism” in Marvel Comics from 1990**

This chapter focuses on three Marvel comics from the early 1990s as part of the second surge in environmentalism as discussed in the last chapter. The comics, like many in their cohort, focus their entire plot on environmentalism. Unlike many others at the time, they specifically reference major ecological disasters or take place in those locations. The power interactions between heroes, villains, and activists are flipped in this time period as compared to environmentally themed comics from 1970. In 1990 heroes remain as the moral “good” and activists are presented as villains with extreme methods despite the possibility of having good intentions. The three comic series in this chapter take this imagery and amplify the villains, presenting them as terrorists. This is not by accident - around this time property rights groups, lobbyists for extraction and animal product industries, and politicians were working to construct an image of environmental activism that portrayed the movement as a dangerous threat to all of America: “Eco-terrorism.” Additionally each comic features an element of deliberate fact twisting which further implicates radical environmentalists as “eco-terrorists.” This chapter will analyse the ways that opposition to environmental activism and suppression of radical methods has been perpetuated through these superhero comics: Namor the Sub-Mariner, The New Warriors, and Brute Force. The analysis will deconstruct the image and actions of the villain as “eco-terrorist,” how these are contrasted against real world events, and how the superhero’s position reinforces the stigma around radical activism.



### **Namor the Sub-Mariner, Issues 1-5 1990**

#### *Keywords:*

Ocean, Oil-spill, Valdez, Terrorist, Animal Liberation Front

#### *Plot Synopsis*

This series is yet another reboot for Namor, marking the seventh since 1941. The first five issues of the 1990 series develop a new direction for the new decade. He will use money and corporate influence to fight ecological destruction. Issues #4 and #5 are the climax of this story arc, where a group of extreme activists called FORCE (Front for Organic Responsibility and a Clean Environment) sabotage an oil tanker with a bomb creating a spill in New York Harbour. They plan to set the spill on fire as it surrounds Manhattan in order to “cleanse” the land of those destroying it. Namor, Namorita, Susan Storm, Reed Richards and Iron Man work to contain the spill and stop the activists.

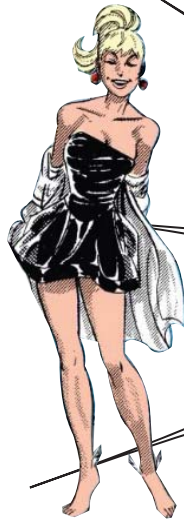
#### *Take-Away*

This depiction of violent extreme action, which claims to be rooted in environmental values, shows Namor’s position as the more reasonable and effective means of action for environmental change. This arc also draws on the public image around the events of the Valdez disaster in 1989 but changes some details to create a commentary on extreme forms of activism and the “correct” or “moral” way of dealing with an environmental crisis.

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT...



NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER, THE HALF-HUMAN HALF-ATLANTEAN PRINCE OF ATLANTIS...



...HIS COUSIN, NAMORITA!



IRON MAN (AKA TONY STARK)



THE INVISIBLE WOMAN & MR.FANTASTIC (AKA SUE STORM) (AKA REED RICHARDS)

AS THE ALL FIGHT THIS "ECO-TERRORIST"

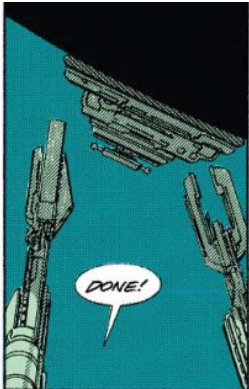


GLORIA MORGAN OF FORCE



THIS IS JOHN BYRNE (B. 1950 ), THE WRITER AND ARTIST OF THIS SERIES.

**F** FRONT FOR  
**O** ORGANIC  
**R** RESPONSIBILITY AND A  
**C** CLEAN  
**E** ENVIRONMENT



WHO PLANTED A BOMB ON AN OIL TANKER, IN ORDER TO "CLEANSE" NYC





Fig. 4.1—Gloria Morgan of FORCE demonstrates a reckless and paranoid personality.

*Author, biases, character background*

John Byrne is an established artist and writer who is also known for his re-boots of classic character lines like the Fantastic Four, X-Men, and even Superman. His method is to bring the characters back to their origins and amplify key relationships in the stories, particularly between the hero and the villain. (cite)

Namor the Sub-Mariner is Marvel's first superhero, with a long history debuting in 1939 before World War II. He is the son of a sea captain and princess from the kingdom of Atlantis. Because of his roots, he has dual interest in both the human (surface) world and the undersea realm. This has led Namor to be portrayed as an antagonistic anti-hero for much of his publication history. When human interests impose on the health and safety of the ocean, he is often pitted against the main hero or team - as he is famously against the Fantastic Four - and has paired with known super-villains like Dr. Doom when the circumstances suit his needs. In this new series Byrne recasts Namor as an objectively good hero, and amplifies his interests in defending the natural world.<sup>1</sup>

**Analysis**

*The "Eco-terrorist" Discourse*

How Gloria Morgan and her activist group FORCE are represented in the comics describes and reinforces the public's impression of

<sup>1</sup> "Namor #1," last modified May, accessed Apr 05, 2020, [http://www.superme-gamonkey.net/chronocomic/entries/namor\\_1.shtml](http://www.superme-gamonkey.net/chronocomic/entries/namor_1.shtml).



their methods and motives. Despite the fact that Gloria is the main villain she only appears in three encounters in the last installment of the story arc. She is shown interacting with her teammates on a rooftop, in a video declaring the group's intentions for the oil spill, and in an underwater showdown with Namor and a bomb.

Fig. 4.2—Gloria reveals her plans and motives behind the oil-spill.

FORCE is seen on a rooftop in Manhattan, watching the events of the oil spill unfold after the bomb detonates, and the "good" superheroes leap into action. Gloria Morgan's colleagues are concerned and wish to exercise caution if superheroes are involved. She takes the question as an affront to her leadership, punching one colleague, and saying "Caution? I didn't get where I am today by being cautious..."<sup>2</sup> This interaction gives the reader an indication of the leader's personality. She appears reckless and perhaps a little paranoid. It also shows

2 John Byrne, Glynis Oliver and Ken Lopez, "All the Rivers Burning," *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, Aug 1, 1990a, p7.



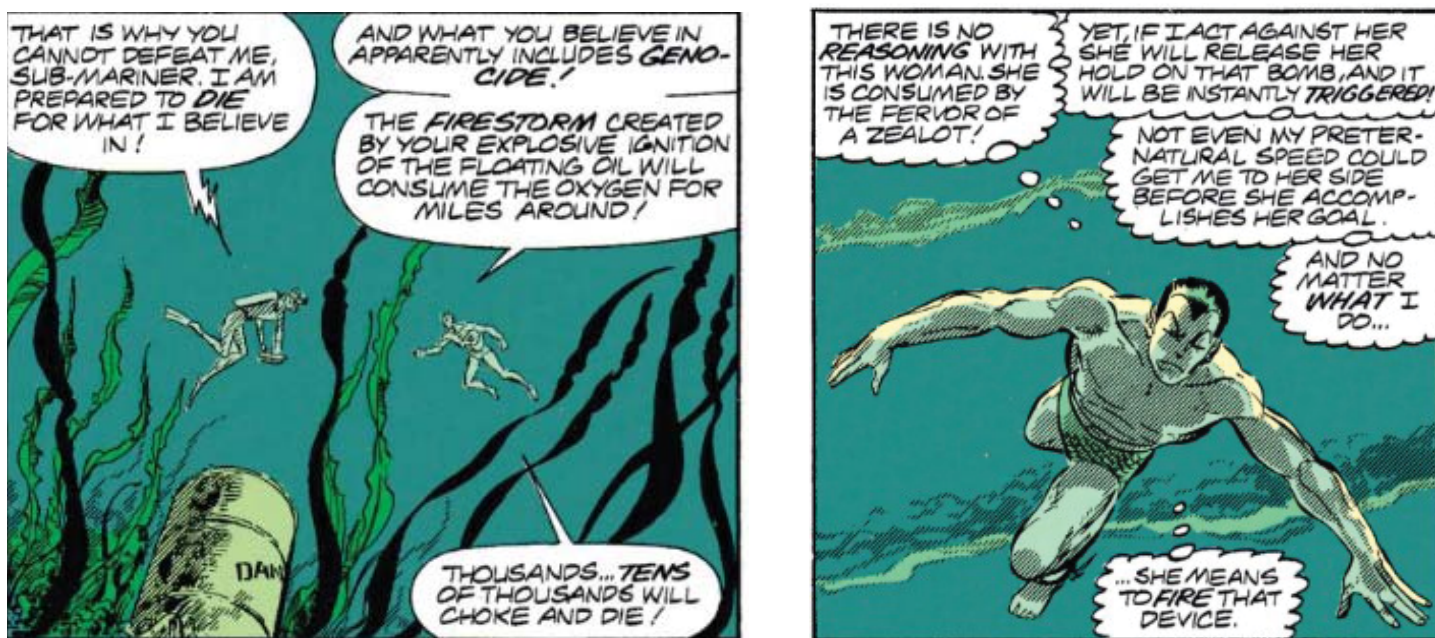


Fig. 4.3—Gloria is confronted by Namor under water as she delivers the bomb.

that she is not on the same page as others in her group, signalling that the motivations of the plot are that of an individual and not a collective.

Next Gloria appears on a videotape sent to the Chief of Police and the superheroes outlining her group's motivation for the bombing of the oil tanker. She states on screen: "Attention, people of New York! I am *Gloria Morgan*. I am head of the *Front for Organic Responsibility and a Clean Environment*. You may call us FORCE. We claim responsibility for the oil spill currently threatening to pollute all of New York harbour. And More! New York City is the single greatest *blight* on the face of our beloved planet! We intend to use the oil spill to *expunge* this matrix of moral and physical corruption. Your attempt to contain the spill will avail you *nothing*. In precisely *one hour*, at *dawn*, a second bomb will *ignite* the spilled oil. The two rivers which bracket Manhattan will *burn* – The land will be *cleansed!*"<sup>3</sup>

This kind of representation creates a vision of environmentalism that is easily disregarded as extremism, and hypocritical since Gloria's "solution" for one environmental mess is to create another. Additionally FORCE is willing to cause mass casualties in the name of their cause suggesting a devotion to a higher order, and with the language making use of morality as an argument and references to "cleansing" allows the reader to make an inference that this group has a religious zeal which is often attributed to radical environmentalism. This position is further cemented when Gloria encounters Namor underwa-

3 John Byrne, Glynis Oliver and Ken Lopez, "All the Rivers Burning," *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, Aug 1, 1990a, p10.



ter as she delivers the aforementioned bomb to ignite the oil spill. In an exchange where Namor calls Gloria a zealot, she asserts that her motivation in inflicting the same damage on humans that they have caused the environmental is justifiable landing her in the realm of traditional villains. The one exception is this motivation is relate to an environmentally themed cause and not simply a singular hatred or need for power.<sup>4</sup>

Fig. 4.4—Using the recent Valdez disaster, the comic draws a narrative link to the actions of radical environmentalists.

*Real world references: The Exxon Valdez Disaster*

When issue one of *Namor: The Sub-mariner* was published in May of 1990, barely a year had passed since the Exxon Valdez ran aground in Prince Williams Sound, Alaska, creating the largest oil spill in US history at the time. The damaged ship released 41,000 m<sup>3</sup> of oil, affecting 2,100 km of sensitive coastline. The remote location hindered clean-up operations and furthered ecological damage. Immediately following the disaster, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 was passed, barring any oil tanker from entering Prince William Sound if it had been involved in a spill larger than 3,800 m<sup>3</sup>. The Act also put in place regulations to make oil tankers safer with a double-hull design.

In Issue 3, two dockworkers in South America discuss getting threats of sabotage to their oil tanker operation from eco-activists whom they describe as “bozos” and “eco-clowns.” They dismiss the threats as not serious even though one of the workers cites recent events in saying “I mean, if anything goes wrong it’ll make the Valdez spill

4 John Byrne, Glynis Oliver and Ken Lopez, "All the Rivers Burning," *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, Aug 1, 1990a, p14.



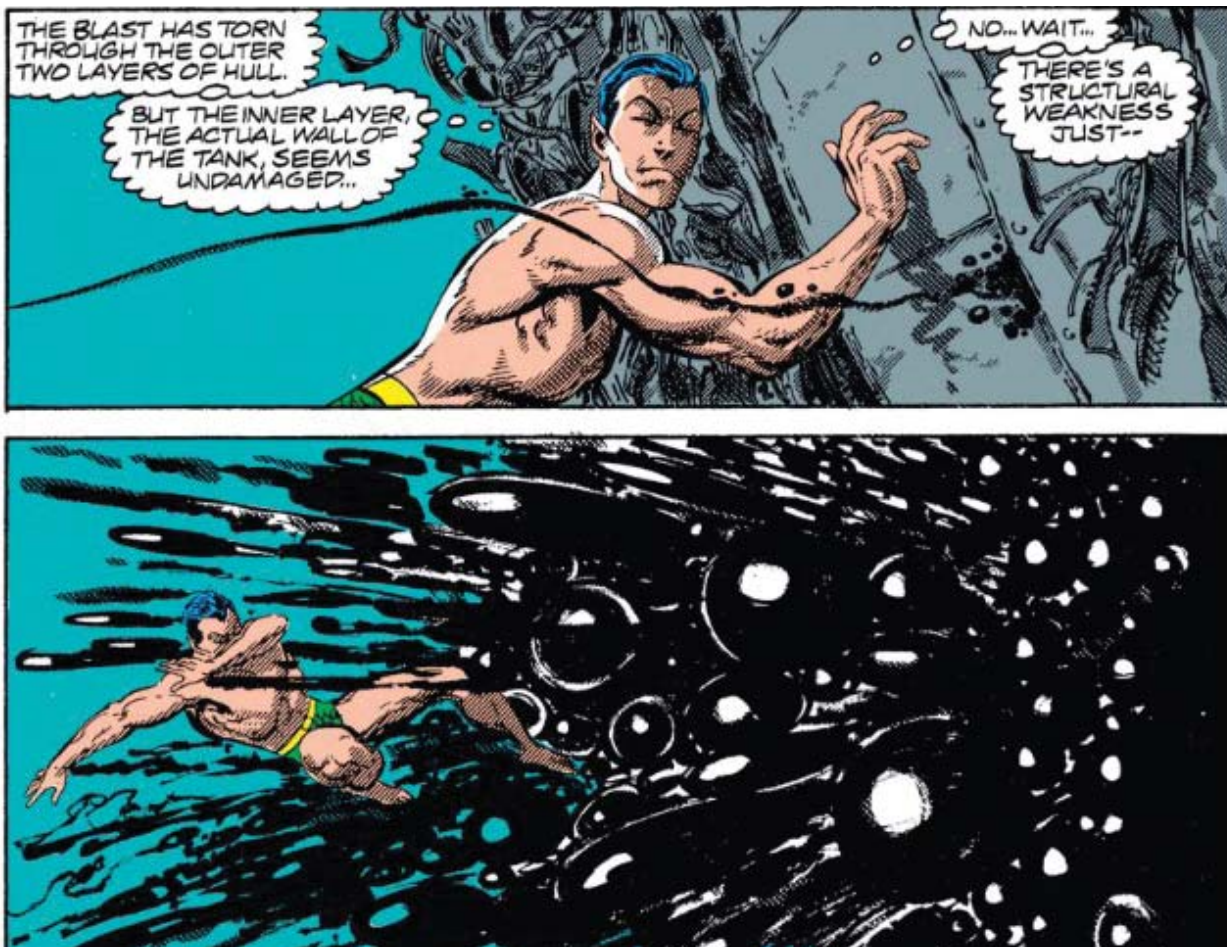


Fig. 4.5—Even three hulls could not save the ill-fated tanker.

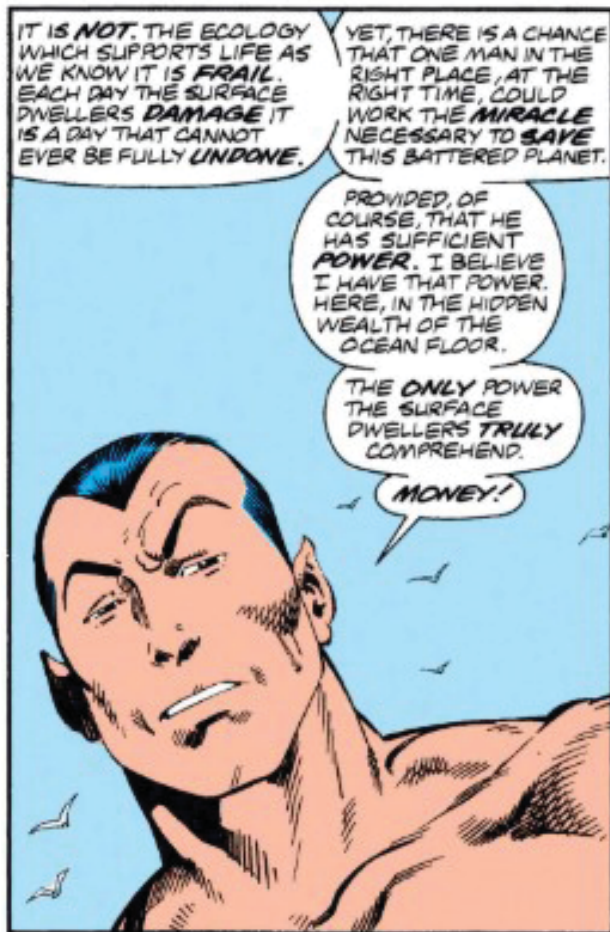
look like a leaky can of three-in-one oil!”<sup>5</sup> This exchange implies that the *Exxon Valdez* disaster was also perpetrated by environmental activists, simultaneously building the image that they are dangerous to business operations and obscuring the negligence in human error which actually caused the spill.

Later in Issue 4, after the bomb detonates underneath the tanker, Namor inspects the hull noting that “the blast has torn through the outer two layers of hull. But the inner layer, the actual wall of the tank, seems undamaged...”<sup>6</sup> A moment later the final hull bursts and Namor is enveloped in oil. This calls to mind the specific regulation of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which mandated the use of a double-hull design for tankers entering Prince William Sound immediately following the *Exxon Valdez* disaster.

Finally the naming of FORCE, *Front for Organic Responsibility and a Clean Environment*, clearly plays off of visible, sometimes controversial, groups like the *Animal Liberation Front* (ALF), and the associations of radical liberation groups using the term “Front” as a moniker. Interestingly what would be the most active and visible group

5 John Byrne et al., “Meeting of the Board,” *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, Jun 1, 1990a, p10.

6 John Byrne, Glynis Oliver and Ken Lopez, “Black Water,” *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, Jul 1, 1990b, p21.



with this naming, the *Earth Liberation Front* (ELF), wouldn't become active until 1992 two years after this story was published.

#### *Namor's Environmental Position*

In contrast to the extremism of FORCE Namor's position is one of moderation. In issue 1 Byrne, is clearly outlining that the best way to make a change for the benefit of the environment is through the established structures of business and global markets. He does this by having Namor create a company and use its influence and money "to save this battered planet."<sup>7</sup> The problems of this position become apparent as Namor and Namorita make their way to a party commemorating the arrival of the oil tanker which was purchased as an asset during Namor's corporate takeover. He explains that even though he may be against the tanker, it was commissioned years prior and is worth billions in research investment, so he has an obligation to investors in order maintain the influence of his own company.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Synthesis*

Despite Namor's affinity with the ocean, and their non-human populations, he is adamant that change for the environment is only

Fig. 4.6—Namor decides the only way to fight environmental destruction is through established economic systems.

Fig. 4.7—Namor explains to Namorita that he has to maintain appearances on Wall Street for his company to carry out its environmental work.

7 John Byrne et al., "Purpose!" *Namor: The Sub-Mariner*, April 1, 1990b, p20.

8 Byrne, "Black Water," p14

possible with money and the power of corporate interests. He is in-line with a general globalization of the environmental movement that was happening at that time. Economists and businesses were promoting capitalism as a way to save the environment also known as “green capitalism.” Sometimes this is genuine though often not, as we saw with the example of the invention and promotion of plastic recycling as a major solution, in *chapter 2*.

Gloria Morgan and FORCE are a violent contrast to Namor’s seemingly reasonable methods of environmental action. The representation of “eco-terrorism” in this comic is trying to suggest that radical environmental activists are blind to reason and logic. This is achieved with a plot to cause irreparable damage and harm to NYC via oil spill and fire, in the name of saving the planet. A reference to the recent *Exxon Valdez disaster* is construed to suggest it was perpetrated by radical environmentalists further compounding the reader’s impression of Gloria Morgan’s, and the movement, as highly dangerous.







### **The New Warriors, Issues 7-9 1991**

#### *Keywords:*

Amazon jungle in Brazil, Deforestation, Land Development, *Earth First!*, Chico Mendes

#### *Plot Synopsis*

In this story arc Speedball is concerned about his mother's disappearance since joining an environmental group operating in the Brazilian Amazon to oppose deforestation. Speedball convinces the New Warriors to travel to South America to find his mother. In the jungle they are apprehended by another super team (villains/mercenaries) called the *Force of Nature* who it turns out are hired by *Project:Earth* to disrupt a land development project in the jungle. Once the Force of Nature begins attacking the developers the New Warriors jump in to stop them. During the battle the leader of *Project:Earth* attempts to make a martyr of Speedball's mom but is stopped from killing her. *Project:Earth* slips away while the Force of Nature is caught and the New Warriors return the US. The subtext of these three issues is the theme of "hard choices". Speedball gives most of the narration throughout the story weighing the morality of the *Force of Nature* and *Project:Earth's* methods to enact change in a complex situation.

#### *Take-Away*

The New Warriors in this adventure give us an argument about the ethics of methods, and ask, does the end justify the means? This is a similar representation of "eco-terrorism" as the Namor story, posi-

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT...



AS THEY SEARCH FOR SPEEDBALL'S MOM



MOM JOINED A RADICAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP CALLED PROJECT: EARTH TO HELP STOP THE DEFORESTATION.

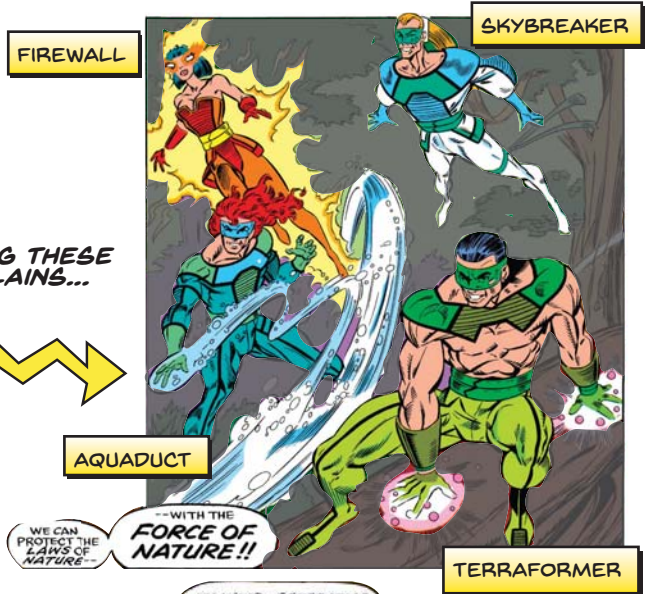


OMAR BARRENOS, LEADER OF PROJECT: EARTH...



...HAS OTHER PLANS.

LIKE HIRING THESE SUPERVILLAINS...



...TO ATTACK THE DEVELOPERS CUTTING DOWN THE RAINFOREST!





tioning the heroes as neutral moderates, and the activists as violent, zealous, and hypocritical. The New Warriors take on a discussion of conservatism veiled at providing equal weight to the complexities of overlapping interests in the Amazon. This position always falls in favour of those parties who are causing the most ecological destruction while suppressing the ones most effected. The New Warriors call into question the validity of *Project:Earth*, and by extension *Earth First!* And other radical activism, when they argue about the methods used to achieve their goal.

#### *Author, Biases, Character Backgrounds*

When the *New Warriors* was released in 1990 it's tagline in the first issue was "a new generation of heroes." The *New Warriors* are a team of teenage superheroes brought together by a wealthy tech-wielding orphan named Night Thrasher. The warriors are effectively not old enough to join the more "mature" super-team *Avengers*, so they form their own. The other members of the team are Namorita (Namor's cousin, also half-atlantean), Speedball (who uses a kinetic energy field), Kid Nova (who can fly and blast things?), Firestar (has microwave blasting powers), Marvel Boy (has telekinetic powers), and Night Thrasher (has no powers, but is a trained martial artist and uses advanced armour-tech).

### **Analysis**

#### *The "Eco-terrorist" Discourse*

After the *New Warriors* are captured by the *Force of Nature* and introduced to *Project:Earth*, the activists reveal that the kidnapping of Speedball's mom was staged in an attempt "to discredit the developers as prone to rash, violent action."<sup>9</sup> We are presented with an environmental group who is fed up with trying to achieve results through the usual channels, yet this portrayal is clearly trying to give the reader the impression that these activists are themselves reckless, violent, and deceitful. Nova is quick to point this out leading the reader to position themselves with the New Warriors in the idea that justice is not true or valid if the means are not an accepted course of action.

The leader of *Project:Earth*, Omar Barrenos, suggests that superheroes have been used to further political agendas, ideologies, a way to enforce laws and by extension ways of life. Omar concludes that they will use the hero/villain group the *Force of Nature* to enforce fair treatment of the planet. Despite the fact that superheroes them-

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9 Fabian Nicieza et al., "Hard Choices Part 2: Devils at the Doorstep," *New Warriors*, Feb 1, 1991b, p20.



selves usually operate above the law they maintain a monopoly on sanctioned and justifiable violence, much like any State powers such as the Police or Military, this reversal of using violence or aggression to achieve goals that are counter to the interests of the State is seen as unacceptable.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 4.8—*Project:Earth* reveal how they intend to “defeat” the land developers.

The *Force of Nature* team is made up of four super-humans that wield an elemental power (earth, wind, fire and water). Their futuristic costumes complete with sporty visors contrast with the members of *Project:Earth* who are drawn in plain utilitarian clothes. To further the message that *Project:Earth* is supposedly on the side of the people, the team features a “diverse” cast of nationalities: Omar Barrenos a Brazilian, Li Muan Ho a venture capitalist from Hong Kong, Sasha Yamir an Israeli political scientist, Michael Shauneghann a (likely Irish) military strategist, and Speedball’s mother an American actress. This calls to mind Noel Sturgeon’s critique of the “weak multiculturalism” found in *Captain Planet* or the *Power Rangers*, also from 1991, which presents equality as simply equal representation, as well as the now globalized environmental movement of the early 1990s. Curiously Michael Shauneghann’s nationality is not named but his red hair, last name, and profession is likely a reference to the *Irish Republican Army* (IRA), a militant separatist group in Northern Ireland.

Towards the end of issue 9, as the *New Warriors* fight the *Force of Na-*

10 David Naguib Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) p164.



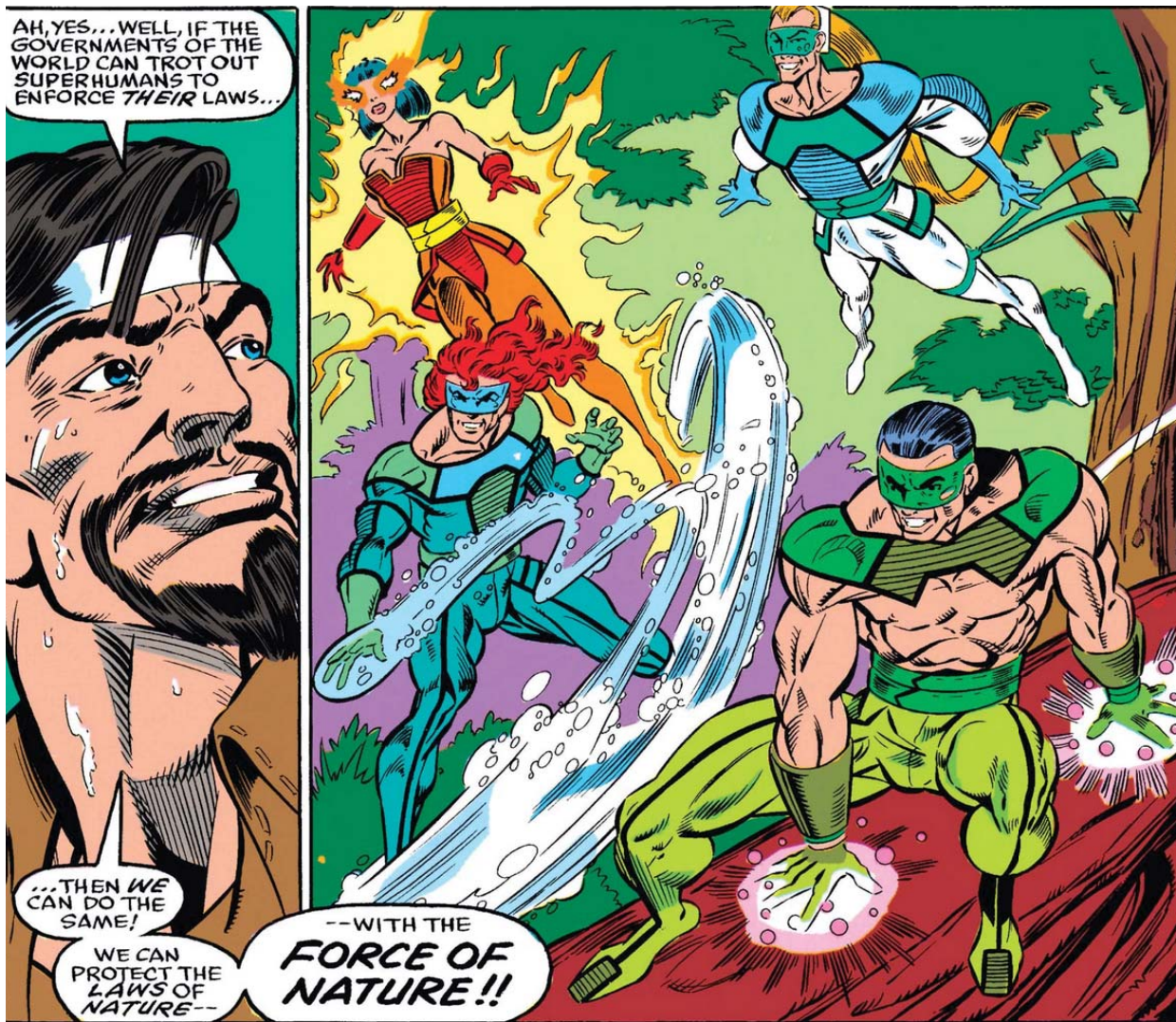


Fig. 4.9—An Eco-super-team for the 90's!

ture to save the land developers, Omar Barrenos attempts to murder Speedball's mom in an effort to pin the death on the land developers thereby creating a martyr for the cause. Speedball saves his mom in at the last second, but this furthers the idea that the convictions of radical activist groups are perhaps hollow, since Barrenos is willing to create a martyr but not put himself in that position and the need to also generate public support through actions that are not true.<sup>11</sup>

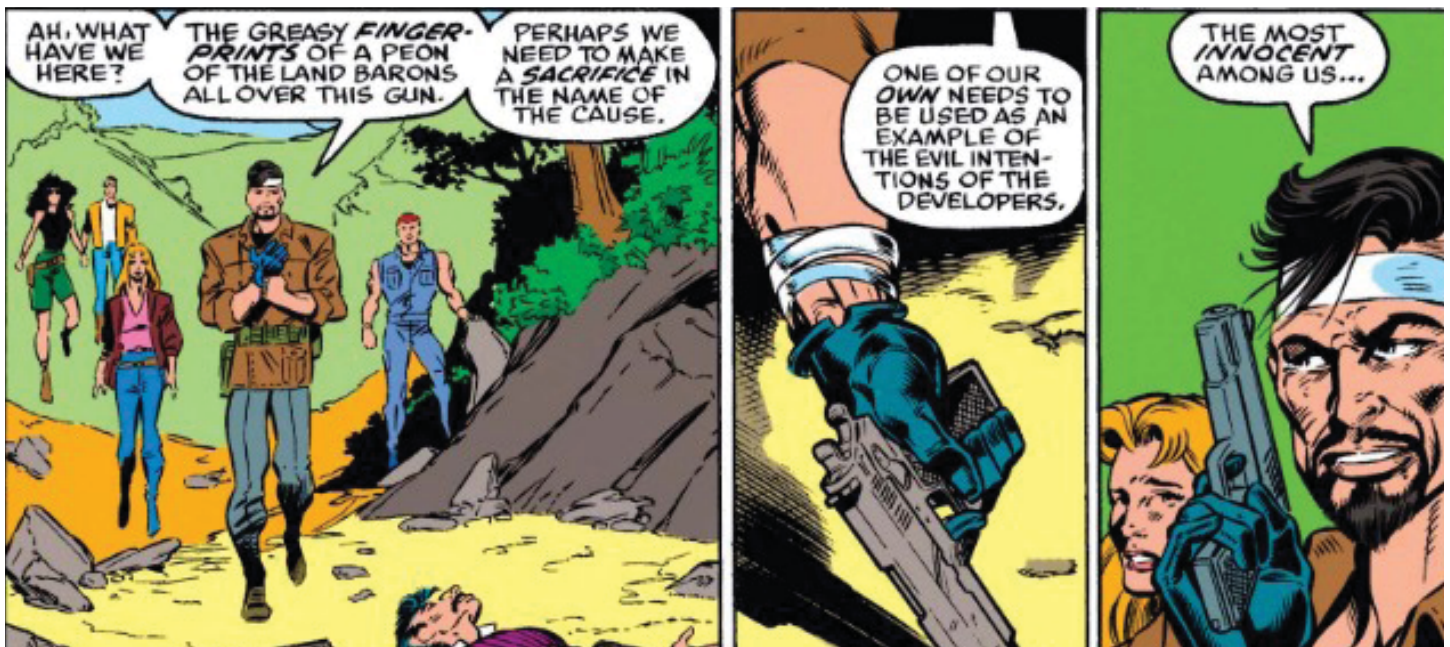
*Real World References: Violence in the Amazon and the Murder of Chico Mendes*

Throughout 2019, and into 2020, the Amazon rainforest in Brazil faced devastating fires and the highest rates of deforestation it had seen in years. Critics traced much of the destruction to gutted environmental policies, increased illegal activities, and the climate skepticism of a new right-wing president: Jair Bolsonaro.<sup>12</sup>

11 Fabian Nicieza et al., "Following the Line Along the Middle," *New Warriors*, Mar 1, 1991a, p10.

12 "Amazon Rainforest Sees Biggest Spike in Deforestation in Over A Decade," last modified November 18, accessed Sep 24, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/18/780408594/amazon-rainforest-sees-biggest-spike-in-deforesta->





The Amazon Rainforest, and particularly in Brazil, has been under similar threat since colonial powers came to the continent, but has accelerated since the early 1970's when a third controversial highway was completed, the Trans-Amazon Highway. Access to the interior of the rainforest combined with forms of agriculture and illegal logging driven by unequal wealth distribution and international market pressures provide the major causes to rainforest deforestation. The impacts are extensive, (less rain, less carbon storage, biodiversity loss, carbon release, dispossession and violence towards indigenous people), and the actions deadly violent; an estimated 1000 activists and union leaders of rural groups opposing deforestation and land claim disputes were murdered between 1980 and 1990.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the 1980's Chico Mendes, a rubber tapper from Xapuri province (check), would rally support for the preservation of the rainforest and against the profit driven destruction of agricultural giants by developing extractive reserves. He would help create the National Council for Rubber Tappers which, backed by international environmental groups, developed into a movement focused on the people of the forest. The reserves would allow the people who lived in them to maintain sustainable subsistence practices like rubber tapping, gathering nuts, and small agriculture, giving them a stake in protecting and maintaining the land for future generations.

On December 22, 1988, Chico Mendes was shot dead at his home.

Fig. 4.10—This scene twists the history of Chico Mendes' murder and the attention the Amazon rainforest movement received because of it.

[tion-in-over-a-decade.](#)

<sup>13</sup> David Cayley, *The Age of Ecology: The Environment on CBC Radio's Ideas* (Toronto, Canada: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1991) p99.

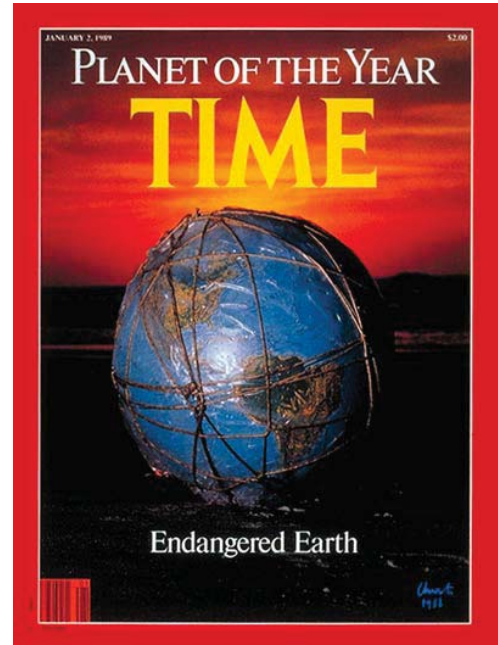


Fig. 4.11—Brazilian activist Chico Mendes at his home 1988.

Fig. 4.12—Time Magazine, Jan 2 1989

The perpetrator was the son of a cattle rancher who had recently tried to purchase the land on which Mendes lived but was thwarted as it was turned into the first designated extractive reserve. The gunman and his father were arrested and served 19 years in prison. His death was mourned internationally and the visibility garnered even more support for his movement and the fight to save the Amazon. In January of 1989 Time Magazine devotes an entire issue to climate and environmental issues, featuring the conflict in the Amazon. In the comic the impact of Mendes' death is played out in reverse, the character Omar Barrenos is attempting to generate public support by killing an innocent person and blaming it on the land developers.<sup>14</sup>

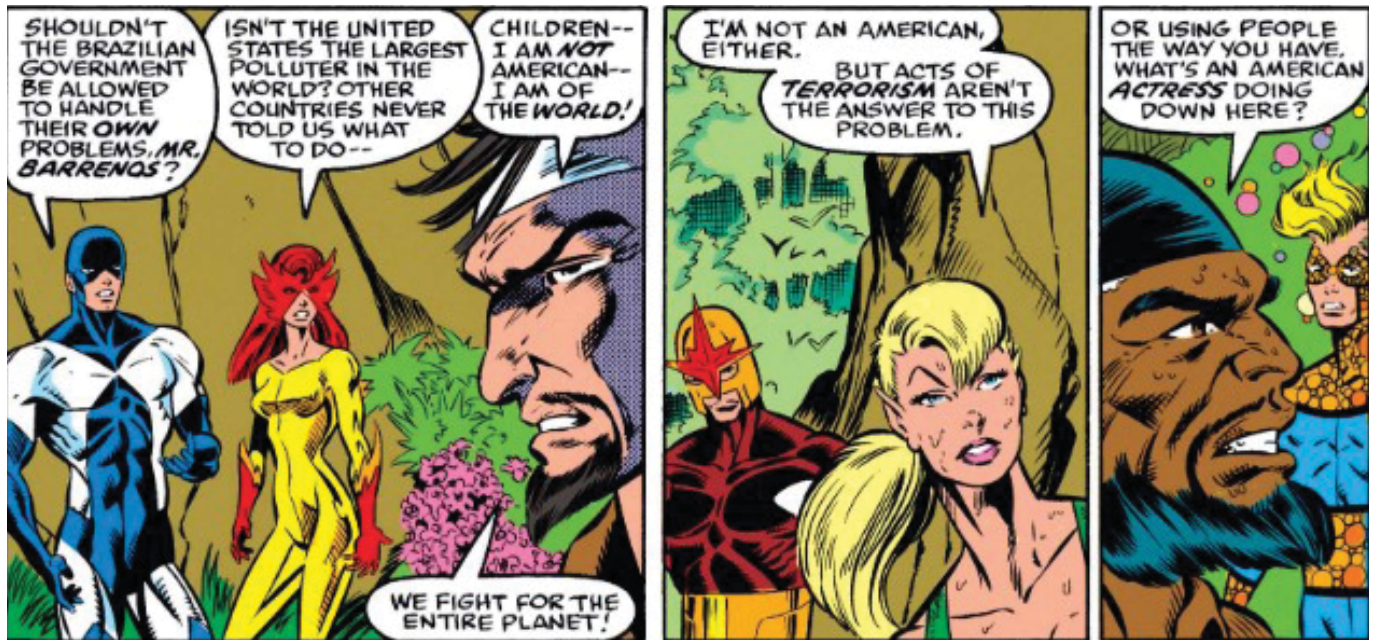
#### *The New Warriors' Position*

The position of the New Warriors is developed much like Namor is in relation to FORCE. They are given a supposedly moderate and neutral position, yet their assertions of freedom and truth obscure any real sense of justice.

As the team travels through the jungle in search of Speedball's mom, Namorita gives a monologue that attempts to give them, and the reader, some context around conflict in the Amazon. She says "The Amazon region's been a **battleground** between man and nature for over four **hundred** years...On one side you have the **developers** and **farmers** who are pushing deeper into the jungle in order to make a **living**. Then you have the **rubber tappers**, the Indian **Tribe's** and the

<sup>14</sup> I find this borrowing of real events and twisting the facts to create an image of reckless and violent activists, when the exact opposite is true of Chico Mendes and the Rubber Tappers, to be incredibly disrespectful and damaging.





*Conservation Groups* fighting to stop them. And stuck in the middle is the Brazilian government, saddled with a \$100 **billion** foreign debt – And the Amazon may be their **only** hope for economic expansion to pay it off and survive into the next century.”<sup>15</sup>

Fig. 4.13—*The New Warriors* present a “moderate” position for addressing Climate Change.

What this explanation does is give equal weight to all sides to the conflict, and by positioning Brazil’s government in the centre removes any ties to the role it played in creating the situation. There is a false assumption that cattle ranchers, developers and international investments, have the same claim to the land as the Indigenous people. Yet with this argument we are made to believe that the ranchers, farmers and international investment interests have the right to increase profits at the expense of the forest and its people, even though Namorita’s explanation also reveals that by requiring continual expansion into the Amazon it is unequal class structures driven by capitalism which is the major cause of deforestation.

When confronted with the reality that activists like *Project:Earth* might use methods that aren’t considered truthful Marvel Boy exclaims, “so your way of saving the planet is through **deceit, manipulation** and **violence?**”<sup>16</sup> Here the New Warriors are taking the stance that one cannot do good unless the methods are ethical. The means justify the ends. Considering how closely *Projet:Earth* is in name to the real-life *Earth First!* it seems reasonable to imagine this is a direct critique of radical activism. This position of the New Warriors

15 Nicieza, "Hard Choices Part 2: Devils at the Doorstep," p7

16 Fabian Nicieza et al., "Hard Choices Part 2: Devils at the Doorstep," *New Warriors*, Feb 1, 1991b, p20.

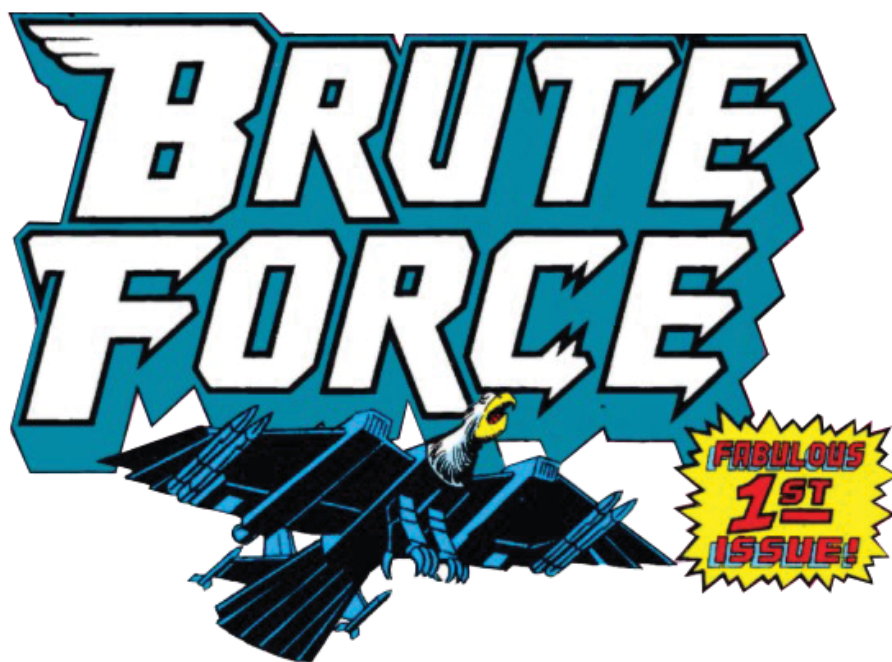


seeks to position the methods and values of groups like *Earth First!* as untrustworthy, disingenuous, and therefore invalid in the change they seek to make happen.

### *Synthesis*

The New Warriors, like Namor, attempt to present a more reasonable position for thinking about how to address issues of ecological degradation. In doing so the comic builds an image of radical environmentalism as manipulative and deceitful. Echoing the fears propagated by Ron Arnold in 1983 and some senators in 1988, the comic suggests that the message and intentions of the radical environmental movement is not to be trusted. *Project:Earth* is very close in name to the well-known *EarthFirst!*, who would have been in the news at this time labelled as “eco-terrorists” after the FBI’s operation THERMCON in 1989 and the bombing of Judi Bari in 1990. Additionally in a seemingly intentional act of ideological misinformation the comic depicts the *Brazilian* leader of *Project:Earth* attempting to kill an innocent person to gain public support for his movement.





### **Brute Force, Issues 1-4 1990**

#### *Keywords:*

Amazon jungle in Brazil, Deforestation, Oil Spill, Piracy, Industrial pollution, Nuclear meltdown, Eco-Villain

#### *Plot Synopsis*

The main conflict of the series is between Adam Frost, head of “the USA’s biggest and most powerful corporation”<sup>17</sup> called Multicorp, and Dr. Randall Pierce a scientist who worked for Multicorp building armour and neuro enhancing devices to make a team of super animals that would defend the earth called *Brute Force*. Frost’s real plans are to use the animal team to oppose anything in his way of gaining power and wealth. He eventually steals Pierce’s technology to create an opposing team of “evil” animals called *Heavy Metal* that attack corporate opponents and in the process try to discredit *Brute Force* as a team of radical terrorists. The four-part series takes these super animals to many different sites of ecological destruction.

#### *Take-Away*

This series is about a team of heavily armoured animals as they fight to save the world’s environment from destructive corporate negligence and malice. It promotes to a young audience the concept of taking responsibility for one’s actions, the importance of teamwork, and an understanding that actions have sometimes far reaching con-

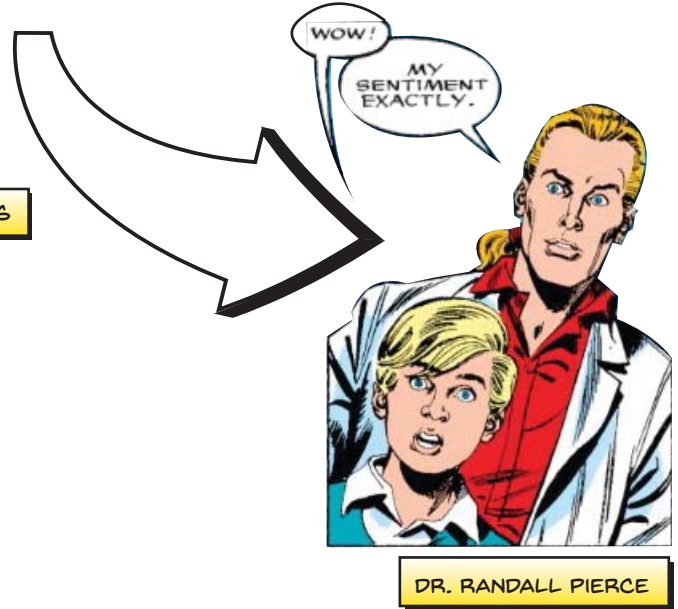
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17 Simon Furman et al., "Fast Feud," *Brute Force*, Aug 1, 1990c, p6.

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT...



WHO WERE GIVEN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION BY THIS MAN



DR. PIERCE AND BRUTE FORCE MUST STOP MR. FROST AND HIS OWN TEAM OF SUPER-ANIMALS...

...FROM DESTROYING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR A PROFIT!!





sequences. Central to this study it reveals a deft understanding by the authors of the types of imagery and rhetoric used to de-value radical environmentalism and build the public's perception of "eco-terrorism" as violent, erratic, and a major threat to Americans in general. We also get an interesting discussion around corporate responsibility and the effects of their business practices on the environment. I see this critique of the capitalist establishment in the comic as a description of "eco-villains" those who would willingly damage the earth for profit and power.

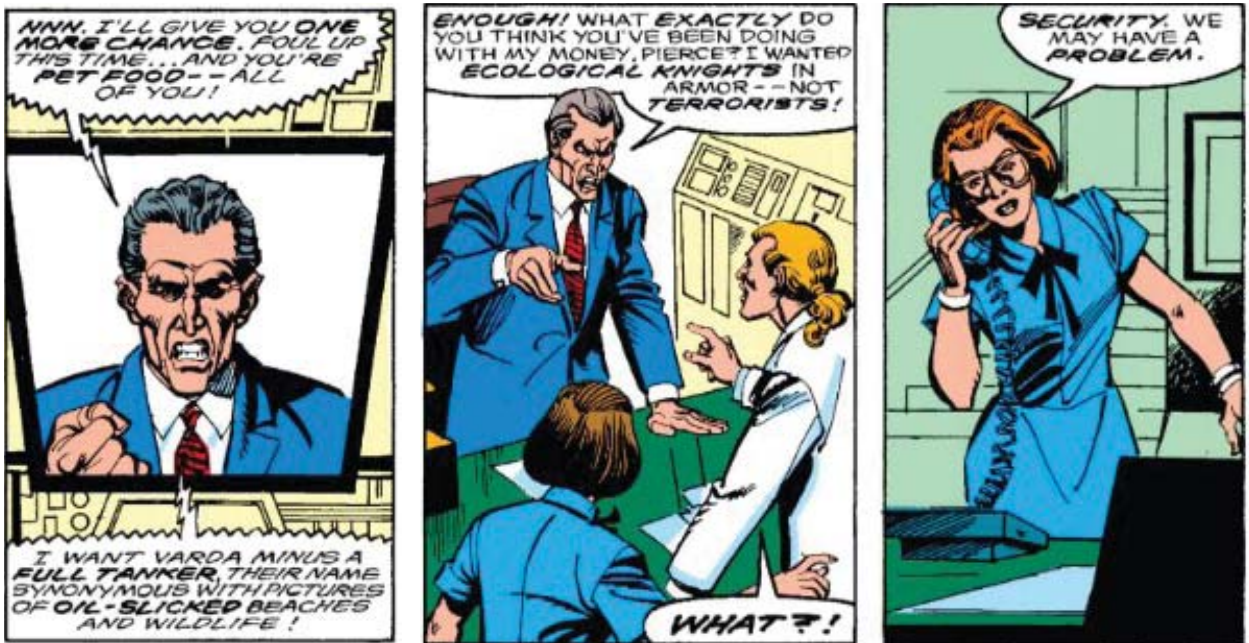
#### *Author, Biases, Character Background*

Brute Force is a series that is extremely memorable, and also extremely contradictory. The four part miniseries promoting heroic environmental action was also a calling card to entice toy manufacturers into licencing the characters from Marvel. This model had been successful in the reverse, toy manufacturers produced action figures like, the Transformers and G.I Joe, and Marvel turned those characters into fully realised storylines. These comics were even paired with Saturday morning cartoons. However Marvel only made money on comic sales not licensing royalties like the toy companies. So part of the reason for the creation of this series was to make a comic that could be easily turned into action figures. Designer Charles Viola came to Marvel with some concepts for animal characters sporting armour, and Simon Furman, the series writer, and Bob Budiansky, the editor, both had previous success working on the Transformers comic for Marvel.<sup>18</sup> However Simon Furman felt that their idea came at the wrong time for a number of reasons. Even with Marvel expanding its line of comics, along with others during the boom of the early 1990's, the trend of successful toy and comic pairings prevalent throughout the 1980's was dying down. In addition he felt that the story and subject matter of questioning corporate environmental responsibility was too complex for the age group that the comic was targeting, which was the younger group who would buy toys.<sup>19</sup> The series would ultimately be overshadowed by the TV cartoon *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* which aired simultaneously. The following year Marvel would adapt Captain Planet into a comic.

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18 "Marvel's BRUTE FORCE Returns (with a Connection to Wolverine)," last modified Feb 1, accessed Dec 3, 2020, <https://screenrant.com/marvel-brute-force-comic-wolverine/>.

19 80 page giant, Jul 10, 2012, <http://80pagegiant.blogspot.com/2012/07/it-came-from-dollar-bin-brute-force.html>.



## Analysis

### *The “Eco-terrorist” Discourse*

This particular comic provides an interesting analysis because the plot is double-coded. Not only are there images of “eco-terrorism” to deconstruct but the motivations of Mr. Frost who is an “eco-villain.” Frost’s intentions for Brute Force, and subsequently Heavy Metal, are to disrupt the operations of his corporate rivals in order to increase his profit margins.<sup>20</sup> Frost is also fully aware of how the public imagines and reacts to radical activism, and deploys these images to further his own agenda.

In issue 2 Frost’s attempt at sinking a rival oil tanker, and making that company’s name “synonymous with pictures of *oil-slicked* beaches and wildlife,” is thwarted by Brute Force. When he is confronted by Dr. Pierce, who had figured out what the plan was, Frost turns the tables and condemns Pierce with the accusation, “What *exactly* do you think you’ve been doing with my money, Pierce? I wanted *Ecological Knights* in armour - - Not *terrorists!*”<sup>21</sup> Frost works with the FBI who eventually arrest Dr. Pierce, and the image of armoured animals posing a terrorist risk is out in the public, in an effort to discredit any deeds *Brute Force* tries to accomplish.

In issue 4 we get the most self-aware example of equating radical environmentalism with “eco-terrorism.” Opening with a full page of a man in combat boots, camo pants, ski mask, brandishing an AK-

Fig. 4.14—Frost unwittingly reveals his plans, and turns the tables around on Dr. Pierce.

20 Simon Furman et al., “Black Gold!” *Brute Force*, Sep 1, 1990a, p14.

21 Simon Furman et al., “Black Gold!” *Brute Force*, Sep 1, 1990a, p15.



# CHAIN REACTION!

THE RALEIGH 6  
NUCLEAR POWER  
STATION, NORTH  
CAROLINA...

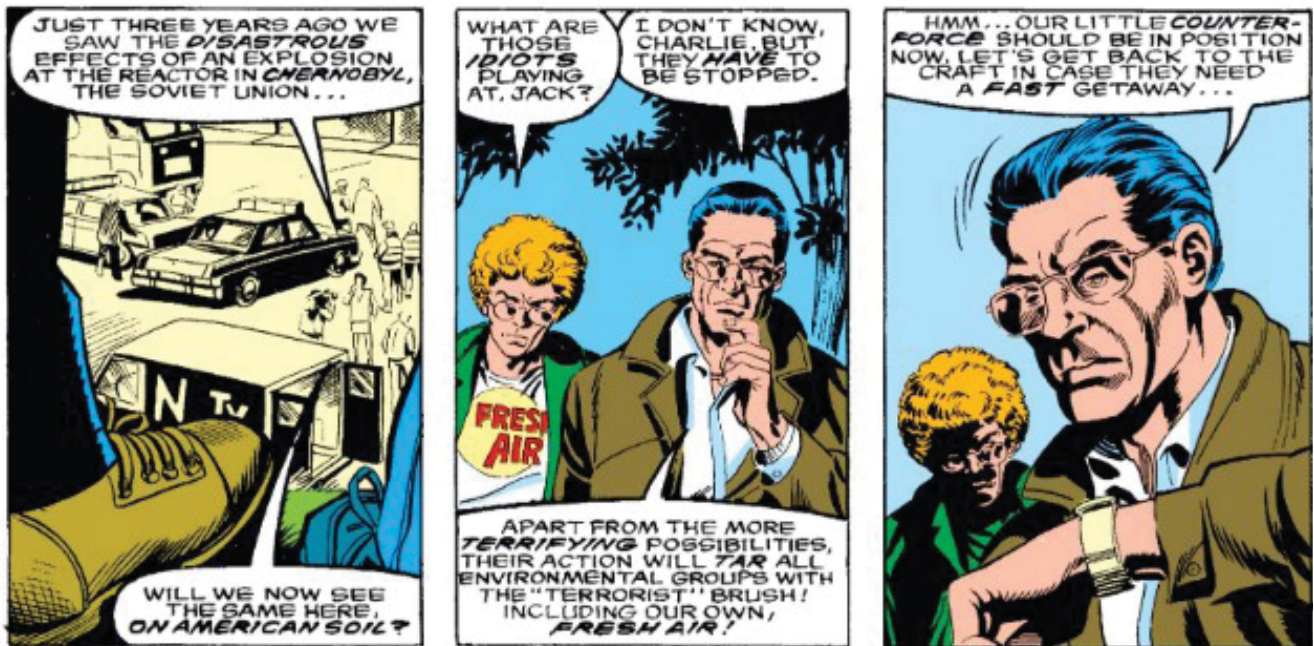
YOU HEAR ME, PIGS? TRY AND STORM THIS PLACE AND WE'LL BLOW IT SKY-HIGH! YOU'VE SEEN THE EXPLOSIVES... YOU KNOW WE'RE SERIOUS.

WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO DIE-- NOT IF IT FINALLY DEMONSTRATES TO A BLIND WORLD THE EFFECT OF AN ACCIDENT AT ONE OF THESE PLACES!

KEEP OUT  
  
RADIATION

DANGER  
  
RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS!





47 and shouting “You’re *hear* me, pigs? Try and storm this place and we’ll blow it *sky-high*! You’ve seen the explosives...you know we’re serious. We’re *not* afraid to die - - Not if it finally demonstrates to a *blind* world the effect of *an accident* at one of these places!” What at first appears to be a terrorist turns out to be an environmental activist, his shirt reading “MELTDOWN, STOP THE NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE.” Similar to Gloria Morgan of *FORCE* in the Namor comic, this vision of radical environmentalism is represented as being prepared to inflict mass death in the name of their cause.<sup>22</sup>

Reporters at the scene make comments about “commies,” “middle eastern terrorists,” and the devastation of the Chernobyl accident in 1986. Most striking, however, is a conversation between two environmental activists making the connection that the extreme actions and image of *Meltdown* “will *tar* all environmental groups with the ‘terrorist’ brush!”<sup>23</sup> Later after Brute Force sneaks in to apprehend the activists it turns out that they were actors hired by Frost to discredit *Meltdown* as violent terrorists, when they planned to release a report of the nuclear plant’s compromised safety features, which Frost himself owned.<sup>24</sup> This shows that the writers of this series have a deft understanding of public perception towards radical environmentalism. Not only do activist characters in the story recognize and believe those kinds of images would negatively affect them but the villains equally recognize and are able to prey on public reaction to these images to further their agenda.

Fig. 4.15—(Opposite) A “member” of MELTDOWN threatens to inflict mass casualties to prove a point.

Fig. 4.16—(Above) With a reference to Chernobyl, two “main-stream” activists worry about their public image.

22 Simon Furman et al., "Chain Reaction!" *Brute Force*, Nov 1, 1990b, p2.

23 Simon Furman et al., "Chain Reaction!" *Brute Force*, Nov 1, 1990b, p3.

24 Simon Furman et al., "Chain Reaction!" *Brute Force*, Nov 1, 1990b, p12.





Fig. 4.17—Reporters rush to the scene immediately invoking the names of groups who might threaten America.

*Real world references: Amazon, Chernobyl, Valdez, Oh My!*

Brute Force incorporates a number of references to past and ongoing environmental crises. We can see the effect of the Exxon Valdez disaster of 1989 as an oil tanker in the comic is owned by *Varda* and Mr. Frost wants that companies' reputation marred by "images of *oil-slicked* beaches and wildlife,"<sup>25</sup> which is quite literally what happened to Exxon Mobil. In issue 3 a factory polluting excessively in "Northern Canada" could be a reference for the smelters in Sudbury or the mills in Hamilton, though the drawing of the factory might suggest the latter since it includes spherical gas storage tanks which are common along Hamilton's waterfront.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Frost makes a joke to some FBI agents about "Bush making you boys go green", when (then) President George Bush Sr. ran his campaign as the "Green President."<sup>27</sup> The first issue takes the heroes to the Amazon Rainforest, and accurately critiques the role that the industrial beef industry was playing in its destruction and the dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands.<sup>28</sup>

Finally there are references to the Chernobyl Nuclear disaster as well as the Three Mile Island incident in New York. Though this particular scene in issue 4 calls out the events of Chernobyl only a few short years previous in 1986, it is another panel that I will first discuss, which bears striking resemblance to a photograph taken of President Jimmy Carter and his wife arriving at the Three Mile Island

25 Furman, "Black Gold!" p14

26 Simon Furman et al., "Wild Wildlife," *Brute Force*, Oct 1, 1990d, p11.

27 Furman, "Black Gold!"

28 Furman, "Fast Feud," p9



Fig. 4.18—President Jimmy Carter leaving Three Mile Island for Middletown, Pennsylvania. April 1, 1979

nuclear power plant, Pennsylvania, 1979 in the middle of the plant's meltdown crisis. What began as a mechanical pump failure in part of reactor 2 quickly became a state of emergency as the reactor core overheated, threatening a total meltdown of the plant situated on an island in the Susquehanna River. This event began on an early Thursday morning and by the following Tuesday the crisis would be averted, but in between residents of the nearby town and those as far out as 10 miles away in the state capitol were deciding whether to stay, or pack up their lives and leave home with the possibility of never returning.<sup>29</sup>

But seven years later the world watched as the worst case scenario of Three Mile Island played out at Chernobyl. There are facts and there are conspiracies about what happened. What is clear though is that these two nuclear incidents, Chernobyl and TMI, are the product of human error, not radical activism. By including a nuclear meltdown scenario in relation to representations of "eco-terrorism" the comic reinforces the fear that radical environmentalists are capable and willing to wield weapons of mass destruction.<sup>30</sup>

### *Brute Force's position*

Throughout the series we learn that Mr. Frost's intentions for the

29 Scott Blanchard, *I Remember TMI: An Oral History of the 1979 Three Mile Island Accident as Told by People Who Lived Nearby*, Vol. Interview (Pennsylvania: StateImpact Pennsylvania, 2019).

30 Bron Taylor, "Threat Assessments and Radical Environmentalism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 4 (Oct 1, 2003), 173-182. doi:10.1080/09546550390449962. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546550390449962>.





Fig. 4.19—Dr. Pierce outfits the members of Brute Force with their gadgets for the first time.

*Brute Force* project may not have been entirely genuine, but Dr. Peirce takes their goal of defending nature to heart and in a twist throughout the series the heroes find themselves under threat of surveillance and arrest as they are believed to be “eco-terrorists.”

Something that is glossed over in the series is the fact that Dr. Peirce is essentially taking animals and experimenting on them to make “ecological knights”, to carry out the interests of humans.<sup>31</sup> Additionally to become “effective” they need to be given “human level intelligence,” armour and weaponry. I think we can appreciate the intention of the creators to try and make a team that isn’t solely from a human perspective, and to relate to a sense of global unity in environmental action that was present at the beginning of the 1990’s. There is also of course the challenge of making relatable characters in a relatively limited series. But for myself though the question remains, should animals be made to align with the interests of humans in order to ensure their survival? There is something smugly satisfying about a team of animals dismantling a massive corporation, yet they still relied on the western science and technology of a human to achieve their goals. The members of *Brute Force* even enjoy their new levels of intelligence, and this in effect, is a “modernization” of the animals. Given the means to “bring themselves up” to the level of humans, they can no longer go back, and are perceived as better off for it.

31 Gone & forgotten, Wednesday, April 22, 2015, <http://gone-and-forgotten.blogspot.com/2015/04/brute-force.html>.



### *Synthesis*

In a very self-aware moment *Brute Force* reveals that the concept of “eco-terrorism,” and the stereotypes associated with it, are very real. Both the Mr. Frost, as a villain, and members of the environmental group *Fresh Air* are able to recognize the impact images of “eco-terrorism” will have on the public. The realization that an extremist group’s actions could reflect poorly on other environmental activists suggests support for *mainstream environmentalism* and a discrediting of other methods.

References to Chernobyl in 1986 and scenes reminiscent of Three Mile Island in 1979, in relation to the violent representations of the “eco-terrorist” creates a counter-truth that targets and harms radical environmental activists. Like the other two comic series, the representation of “eco-terrorism” suggests blind adherence to “the cause” like Gloria Morgan in *Namor*, and deceitful intentions like Omar Barrenos in *New Warriors*, when the “eco-terrorists” in *Brute Force* are revealed as a hoax perpetrated by Mr. Frost. All of these stories share a common thread of unrestrained violence to innocent humans and non-humans by the “eco-terrorists.” This further separates radical environmentalism from acceptability, lowering the bar for law enforcement and governments in the late 1990s to take action towards suppressing the movement.

# 5

## Conclusion

What constitutes an appropriate or acceptable level of environmental action has been a flashpoint between activists and extraction industries decades. By deploying a propaganda-like image of the “eco-terrorist” opponents to environmental values were able to generate wide public support. This image became a powerful tool in the hands of comic book creators. Popular superheroes, and educational comics, promoted Conservative forms of environmentalism by condemning activists as villains alongside construed facts of historical events and contrasting this with the successful heroics of more “moderate” and acceptable superhero actions. This simultaneously helped define a public’s view of environmentalism that would be more amenable to extraction industries and aided the repression of Radical Environmentalism by dissuading people from taking on that worldview.

Limiting the study to superhero stories published by Marvel and DC between 1970 and 1990 created some interesting outcomes. Although other genres continued to be published, superheroes remained as the dominant type published with high volume of titles and high sales numbers. Marvel and DC make up almost the entirety of the comics industry during this time period. This allows the study to examine how corporate entities are tackling a changing environmental ideology. The persistence of the superhero genre lends itself to this comparative study as well. Not only can we read changes within how the genre operates but many of the comics in the study feature the same superhero decades apart. Characters like Namor, Superman, Batman, Poison Ivy and Green Lantern all have long publishing histories which allows us to study how they change and respond to the times.

Although this study doesn't analyse comics that were published during the years after 2001 known as the Green Scare, it supports research that identifies the changing attitudes towards radical environmentalism including the fear of "eco-terrorism" as beginning many years prior, perhaps as far back as 1977, but is clearly visible in early 1990s superhero comics. By comparing these comics to ones published in 1970 the study identifies a generational evolution of environmental ideology. This helps cement the assertion that comics, as cultural artefacts, are intrinsically tied to their time and influenced by politics, culture, and world events.

The study and analysis draws on the idea of propaganda and political messaging as laid out in comic historian Christopher Murray's book *Champions of the Oppressed: Superhero Comics, Popular Culture, and Propaganda in America during World War II*.<sup>1</sup> I found this concept was supported by the analysis of other scholars such as: over-population themes in early 1970s comics by Adam Veitch and Laszlo Kulcsar, white-washed liberalism in *Captain Planet* by Donna Lee King and also in Noel Sturgeon's work, and the use of the educational comic *Captain Enviro* to promote conservative forms of environmentalism studied by Mark J. McLaughlin. My own research fits within this body of political comic analysis. It contrasts these works by relying on more extensive historical research to understand the context of a changing environmental movement. It also uses the comics as evidence to support the assertions made by other academics and activists (including Rebecca K. Smith, Michael Loadenthal, Bron Taylor, Steve Vanderheiden, David Naguib Pellow, Alleen Brown, and Judi Bari) that radical environmental activism was targeted (vilified) and criminalized by extraction industries and government officials.

Of course the analysis of the comics from 1990 also revealed a subtle twisting of facts to create new narratives which implicate radical environmentalists in some major historical catastrophes, like the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the Chernobyl Nuclear Reactor meltdown. The allegations are false, but the narrative practice highlights a key concept not often discussed in similar comic studies: misinformation and disinformation. Where misinformation is merely false, disinformation is intentionally deceptive – an active tool of suppression – and appears again and again in relation to environmental concerns.

In the last few years it became apparent that oil companies like Exxon, and other extraction industries, knew the effects of excessive carbon dioxide in the atmosphere decades before NASA scientists made the same assertion in 1988. In order to maintain their position these

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Murray, *Champions of the Oppressed: Superhero Comics, Popular Culture, and Propaganda in America during World War II* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2011).



companies fund climate deniers and undermine scientists. This is an ongoing controversy, which Exxon denies,<sup>2</sup> but unsurprisingly this event is not unique. Even more recently the fallacy of plastic recycling came to light, as journalists revealed that the wave of messages about recycling that appeared in the early 1990s were part of a marketing campaign designed keep the flagging plastic industry afloat. The industry was aware in the 1970s that recycling plastic would never be an economically feasible way to recover material, but in the 1990s people would be more likely to buy plastic items if they thought they could recycle them.<sup>3</sup> These types of events, and the comics, bring up the question of what responsible public discourse looks like.<sup>4</sup> How do entities engage the public in ways that won't cause harm? When does creative or poetic license go too far and become propaganda? An important message this thesis clarified for myself was that no information is without bias. It is crucial for everyone, in this era of information abundance, to question what is being said, by whom, and for what purpose.

#### *Other Directions of Research*

These ideas of political messaging, repression, of creating un-truths, have revealed themselves in remarkable ways through American superhero comics. We saw a little bit of how this manifested in Canada with *Captain Enviro*, but it would be interesting to survey more Canadian comics -even if the industry is much smaller compared to the American comic industry. The genre of comic could also be expanded to try to understand a wider perspective of the ways comics engage with the topic.

The research also focuses largely on radical environmental activisms happening in America, and in particular those visible groups like *Earth First!* whose rhetoric may be "radical" but doesn't always include other perspectives, and whose demographics were largely white males throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For me this creates an opportunity to look at how *The Green Scare* affected environmental activism in Canada, in the same time period and in the present, and Indigenous groups who have been fighting for Land Sovereignty before the movement even formed. Canada, like America, depends heavily on the profits generated by extraction industries and a power

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2 "Understanding the #ExxonKnew Controversy," last modified Jan 9, accessed Jan 29, 2021, <https://corporate.exxonmobil.com:443/Sustainability/Environmental-protection/Climate-change/Understanding-the-ExxonKnew-controversy>.

3 "How Big Oil Misled the Public into Believing Plastic would be Recycled," last modified Sept 11, accessed Jan 29, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/11/897692090/how-big-oil-misled-the-public-into-believing-plastic-would-be-recycled>.

4 I think even now as former president Donald Trump exits the White House for the last time, this is a question that will continue to be discussed.

dynamic skewed in support of State interests and Capitalist investment over citizen well-being.

These ideas could also apply more directly to the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) industry. How do construction considerations like location, program, material sourcing, for buildings and landscapes validate or suppress (even villainize) diverse voices in our communities? The study frames this question by recognizing that AEC is intimately tied to many extraction industries, for materials as well as energy, and through this impacts the land and the people engaging in activism for those places. I think it also raises the question when architecture tackles climate issues, what is the best course of action to take? In the comics the superheroes are imagined and depicted as having the most correct opinions and actions to any given situation. Similarly we might imagine, and question, what tools are promoted in the profession for tackling the climate crisis? What ideas become codified in regulations and standards? Do they always benefit the good of all people or, as with the industry friendly environmentalism of *Captain Enviro*, do they benefit certain businesses or sectors of the population? When lifestyle change is promoted as the only way to combat climate change we let the largest culprits, the ones with the most power, off the hook. Is the individual nature of current sustainability frameworks in architecture, like LEED, Green Globes, and PassivHaus, doing the same thing? Finally these questions are framed by the study as it asks us to consider what is behind the message being put out and who or what benefits from it.





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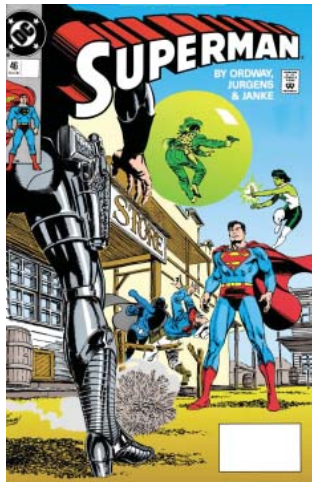
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# **Appendix A**

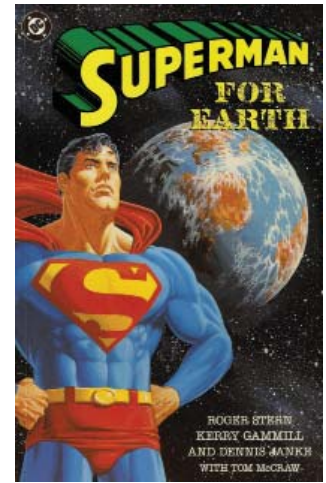
## **Gallery Of Comic Covers**



1.1 Superman, *The World of Tomorrow*, #46 Aug 1990



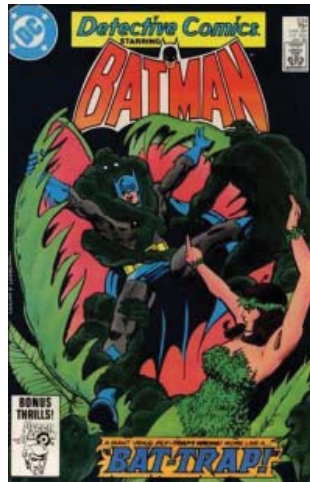
1.2 Superman, *The name, Partners, is Terraman!*, #52 Feb 1991



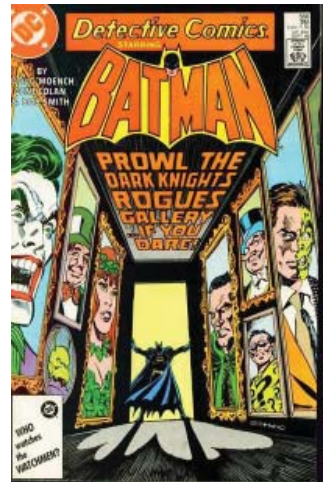
1.3 Superman, *Superman For Earth*, May 1991



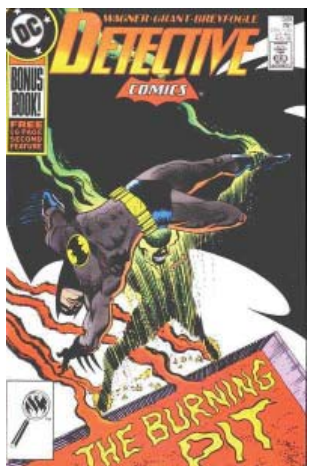
1.4 Superman, *Grounded Part 5*, #707 Mar 2011



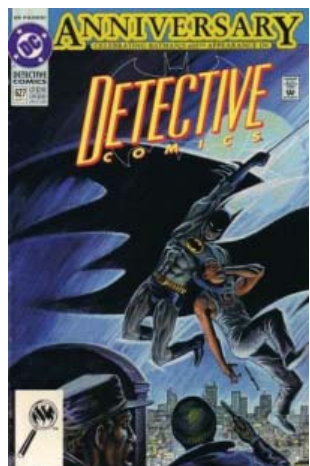
2.1 Detective Comics, *Brambles*, #534 Jan 1984



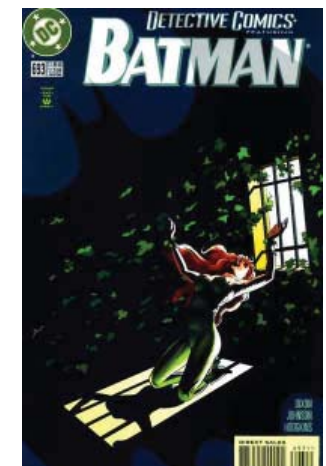
2.2 Detective Comics, *Know Your Foes*, #566 Sept 1986



2.3 Detective Comics, *For the love of Ivy*, #589 Aug 1988

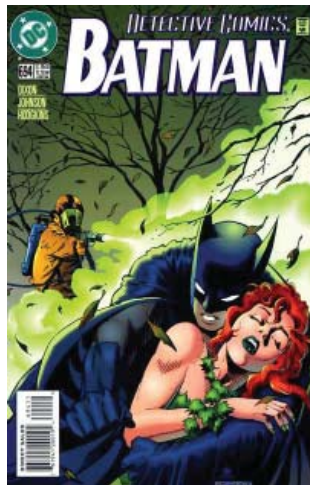


2.4 Detective Comics, *Batman's 600th* #627 Mar 1991

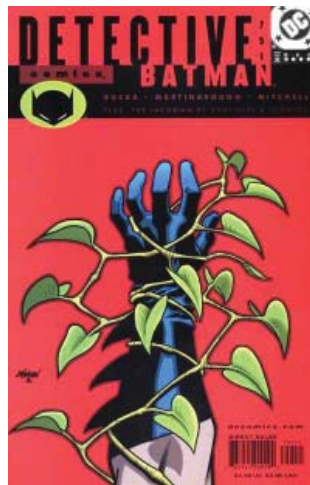


2.5 Detective Comics, *Systemic Shock*, #693 Jan 1996

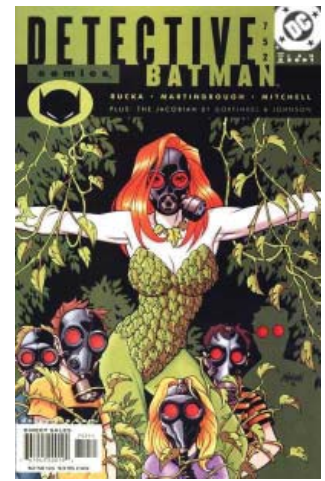




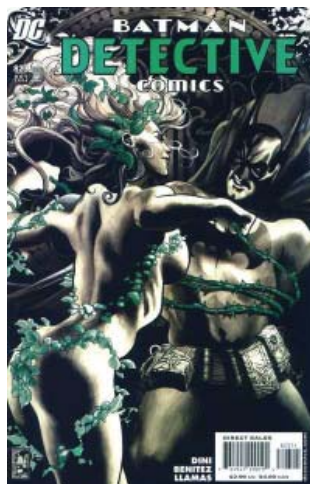
2.6 Detective Comics, *Violent Reactions*, #694 Feb 1996



2.7 Detective Comics, *A Walk in the Park: Part 1*, #751 Dec 2000



2.8 Detective Comics, *A Walk in the Park: Part 2*, #752 Jan 2001



2.9 Detective Comics, *Stalked*, #823 Nov 2006



3.1 Sub-Mariner, *A World My Enemy!*, #25 May 1970



3.2 Sub-Mariner, *Youthquake!*, #28 Aug 1970



3.3 Namor: the Sub-Mariner, *Purpose!*, #1 Apr 1990

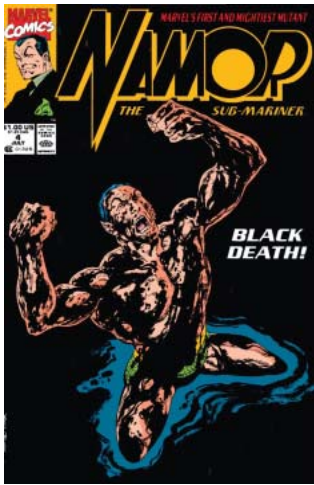


3.4 Namor: the Sub-Mariner, *Eagle's Wing and Lion's Claw*, #2 May 1990



3.5 Namor: the Sub-Mariner, *Meeting of the Board!*, #3 Jun 1990





3.6 Namor: the Sub-Mariner, *Black Water*, #4 Jul 1990



3.7 Namor: the Sub-Mariner, *All the Rivers Burning*, #5 Aug 1990



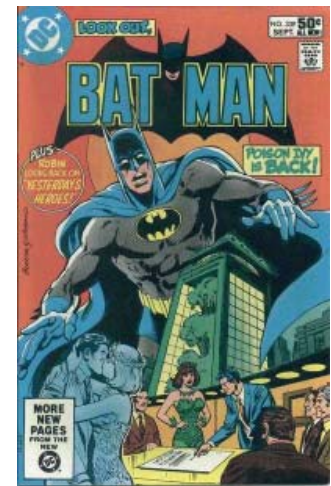
4.1 Batman, *Beware of Poison Ivy!*, #181 Jun 1966



4.2 Batman, *A Touch of Poison Ivy*, #183 Aug 1966



4.3 Batman, *Important Women in his Life*, #208 Feb 1969



4.4 Batman, *A Kiss of Sweet Poison*, #339 Sept 1981



4.5 Batman, *Man-Bat is Back!*, #342 Dec 1981



4.6 Batman, *A Dagger so Deadly*, #343 Jan 1982



4.7 Batman, *Monster My Sweet*, #344 Feb 1982





4.8 Batman, *Green Ghosts of Gotham*, #367 Jan 1984



4.9 Batman, *Strange Deaths* #495 Jun 1993



4.10 Batman, *Noman's Land: Fruit of the Earth* #568 Aug 1999



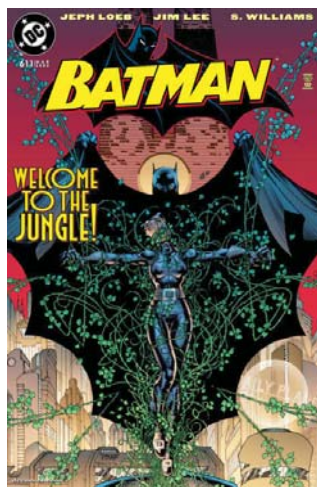
4.11 Batman, *Hush: Part 1* #608 Dec 2002



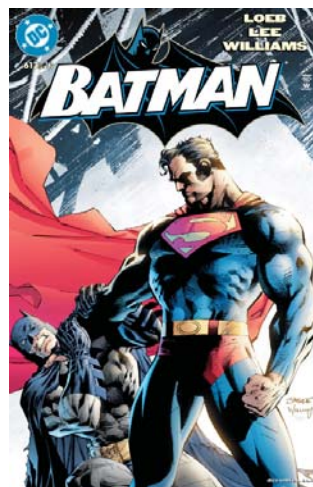
4.12 Batman, *Hush: Part 2* #609 Jan 2003



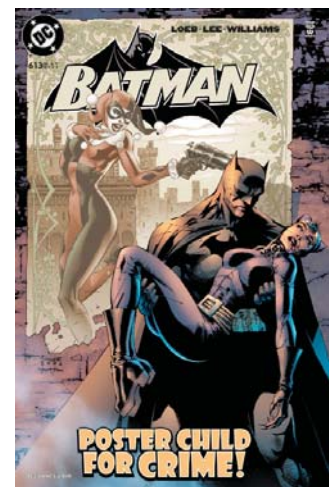
4.13 Batman, *Hush: Part 3* #610 Feb 2003



4.14 Batman, *Hush: Part 4* #611 Mar 2003



4.15 Batman, *Hush: Part 5* #612 Apr 2003

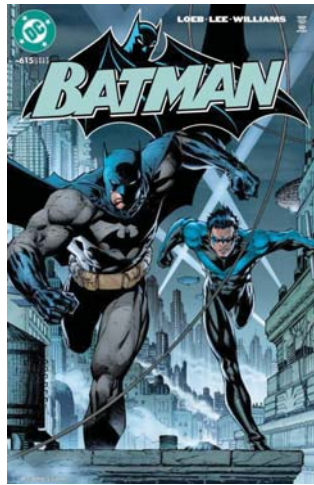


4.16 Batman, *Hush: Part 6* #613 May 2003





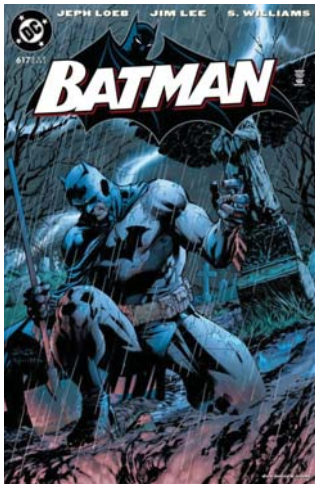
4.17 Batman, *Hush: Part 7*  
#614 Jun 2003



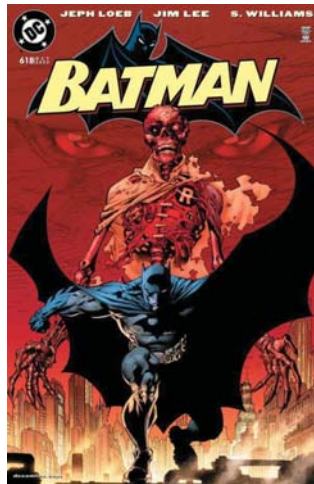
4.18 Batman, *Hush: Part 8*  
#615 Jul 2003



4.19 Batman, *Hush: Part 9*  
#616 Aug 2003



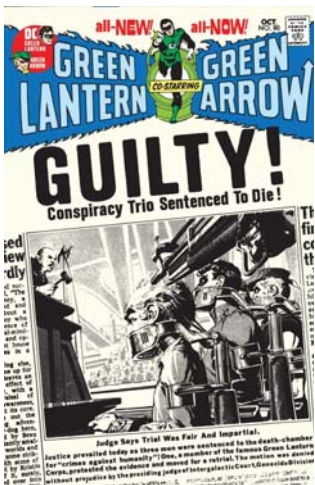
4.20 Batman, *Hush: Part 10*  
#617 Sep 2003



4.21 Batman, *Hush: Part 11*  
#618 Oct 2003



4.22 Batman, *Hush: Part 12*  
#619 Nov 2003



5.1 Green Lantern, *Even an Immortal Can Die* #80 Oct 1970



5.2 Green Lantern, *Death Be My Destiny* #81 Dec 1970



6.1 Justice League of America, *The Coming of The Doomsters!* #78 Feb 1970

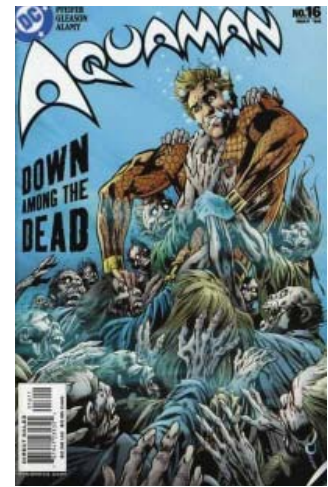




6.2 Justice League of America, *Death Come Slowly, Come Slyly!* #79 Mar 1970



7.1 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 1* #15 Apr 2004



7.2 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 2* #16 May 2004



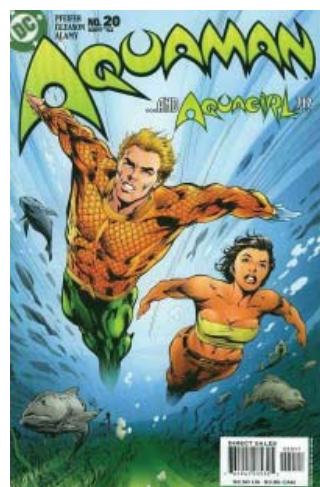
7.3 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 3* #17 Jun 2004



7.4 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 4* #18 Jul 2004



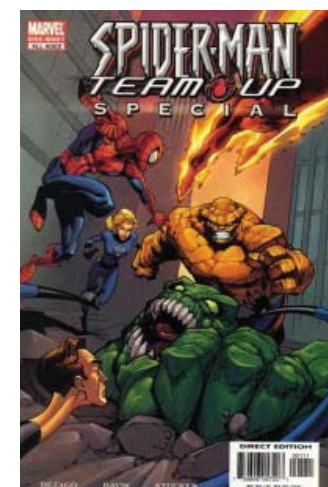
7.5 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 5* #19 Aug 2004



7.6 Aquaman, *American Tidal Part 6* #20 Sep 2004



8.1 The Amazing Spider-Man, *Doc Ock Lives!* #89 Oct 1970



8.2 Spider-Man Team Up Special, *Mole Man* #1 May 2005

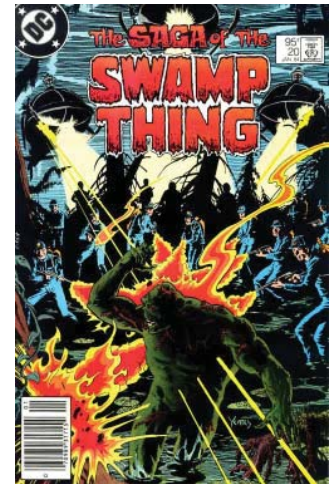




9.1 Iron man, *This Doomed Land--This Dying Sea!* #25  
May 1970



9.2 Iron man, *The Fury of Firebrand* #27 Jul 1970



10.1 Swampthing, *Loose Ends* #20 Jan 1984



10.2 Swampthing, *The Anatomy Lesson* #21 Feb 1984



10.3 Swampthing, *Swamped* #22 Mar 1984



10.4 Swampthing, *Another Green World* #23 Apr 1984



10.5 Swampthing, *Roots* #24  
May 1984



11.0 Popeye, *Environmental Careers* #2 1972



12.1 Firestorm the Nuclear Man, #1 Mar 1978





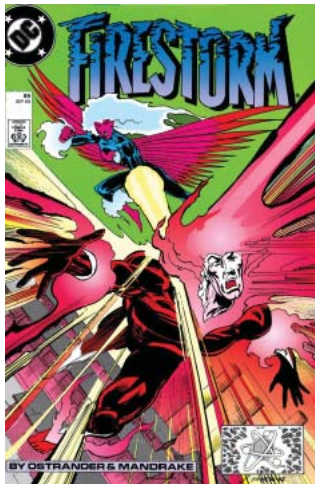
12.2 Firestorm, *Home Fires Burning* #86 Jun 1989



12.3 Firestorm, *Freak Storm* #87 Jul 1989



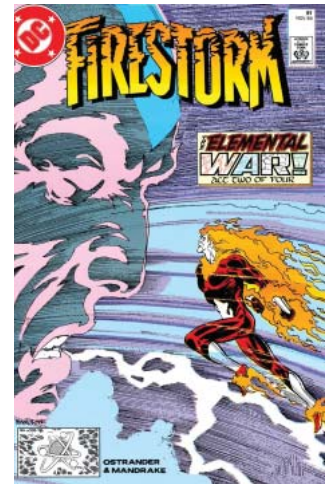
12.4 Firestorm, *Meltdown* #88 Aug 1989



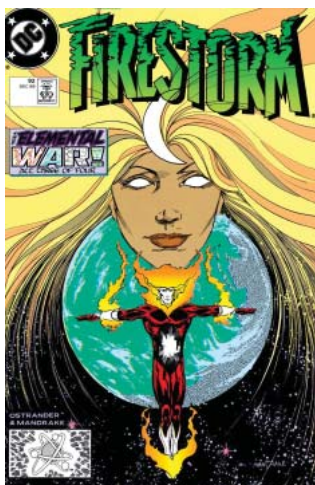
12.5 Firestorm, *Sundering* #89 Sep 1989



12.6 Firestorm, *Elemental War: Force of Nature* #90 Oct 1989



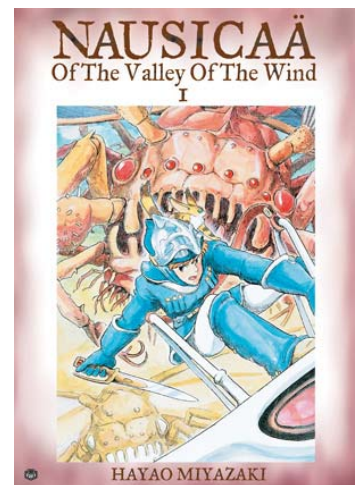
12.7 Firestorm, *Elemental War: Confrontation* #91 Nov 1989



12.8 Firestorm, *Elemental War: Vision* #92 Dec 1989

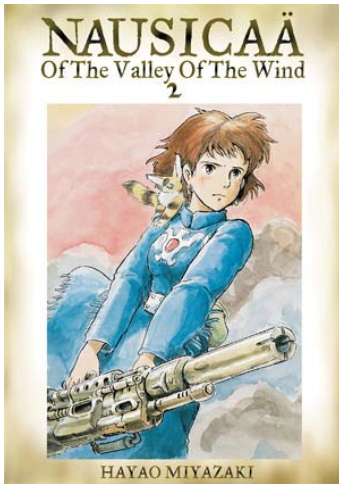


12.9 Firestorm, *Elemental War: Storm Front* #93 Jan 1990



13.1 Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, *Vol 1*, Sep 1982

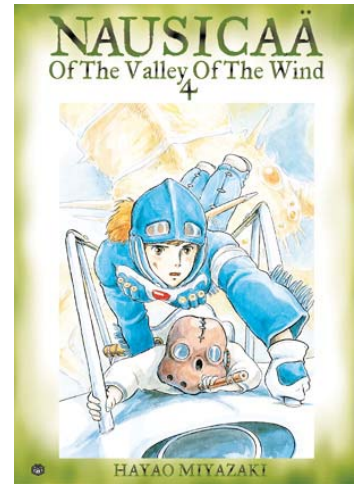




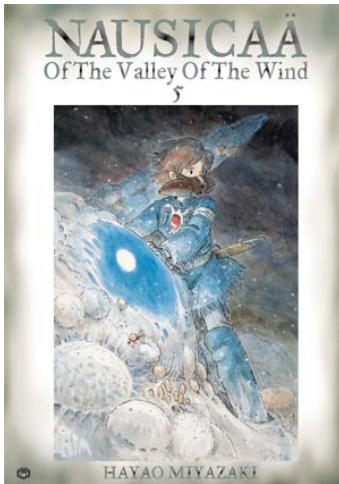
13.2 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 2**, Aug 1983



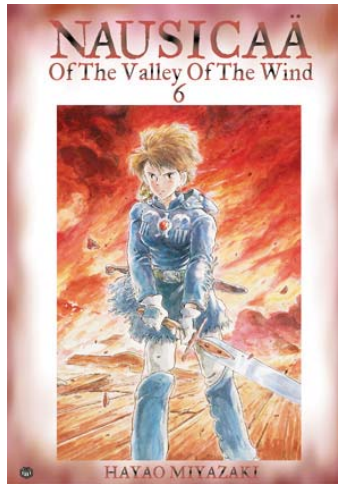
13.3 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 3**, Dec 1984



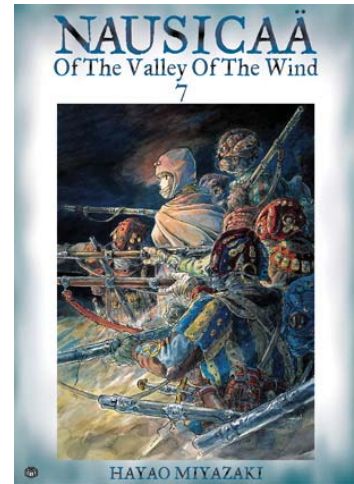
13.4 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 4**, Mar 1987



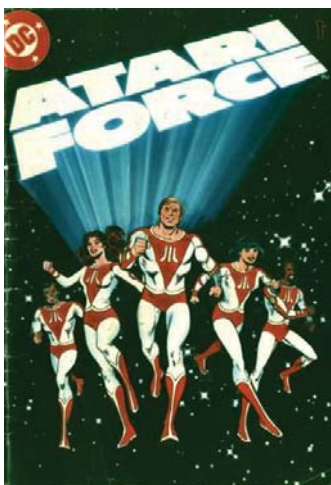
13.5 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 5**, May 1991



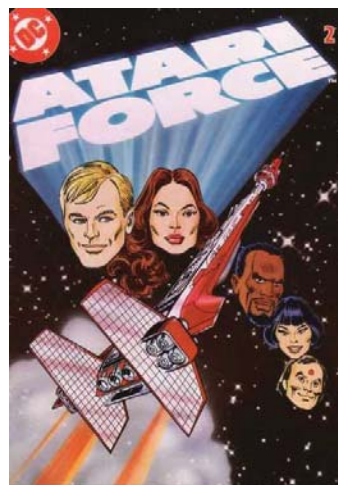
13.6 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 6**, Nov 1993



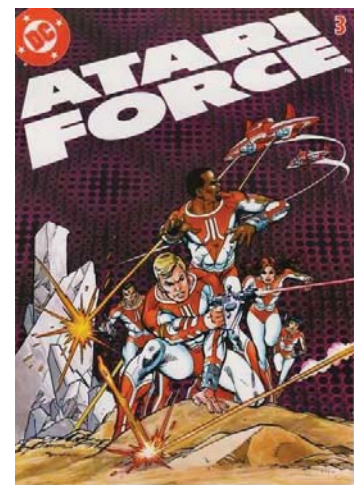
13.7 Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind, **Vol 7**, Dec 1994



14.1 Atari Force, **Intruder Alert!**, #1 1982



14.2 Atari Force, **Berserk**, #2 1982

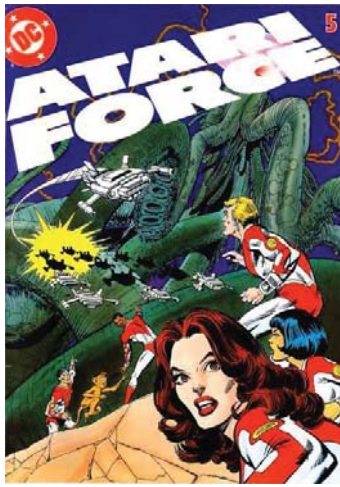


14.3 Atari Force, **Enter - The Dark Destroyer!**, #3 1982

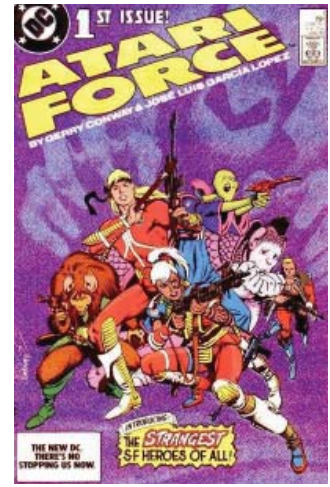




14.4 Atari Force, *Phoenix*, #4  
1982



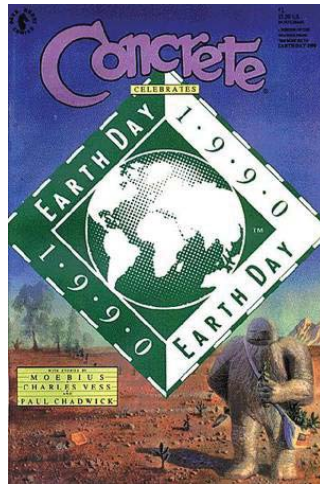
14.5 Atari Force, *Galaxian!*,  
#5 1982



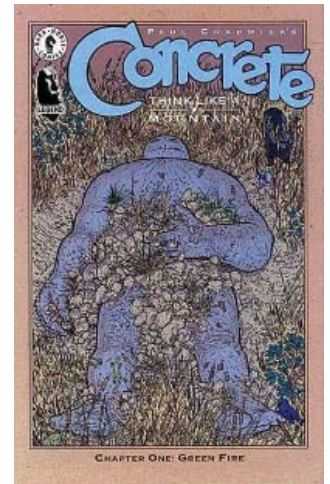
14.6 Atari Force, *Vol 2*, #1-20  
Jan 1984 - Aug 1985



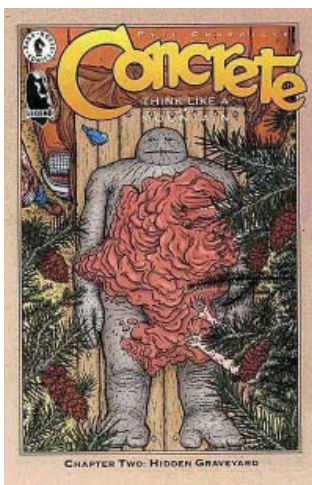
15 Teenage Mutant Ninja Tur-  
tles, *Vol 1-4*, 1984 - 2014



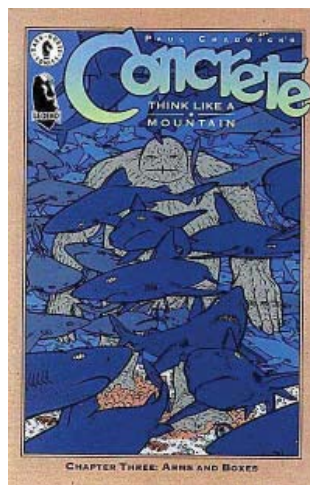
16.2 Concrete, *Concrete Cel-  
brates Earth Day*, Apr 1990



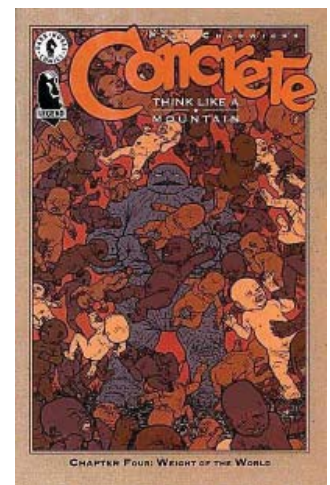
16.5 Concrete, *Think Like a  
Mountain*, #1 Mar 1996



16.6 Concrete, *Think Like a  
Mountain*, #2 Apr 1996



16.7 Concrete, *Think Like a  
Mountain*, #3 May 1996

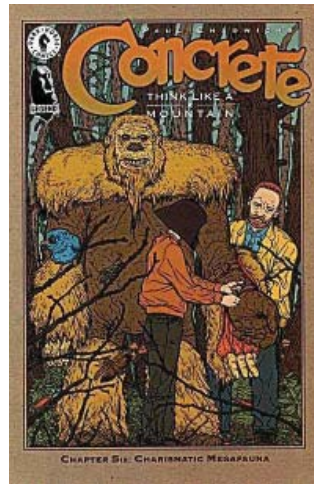


16.8 Concrete, *Think Like a  
Mountain*, #4 Jun 1996

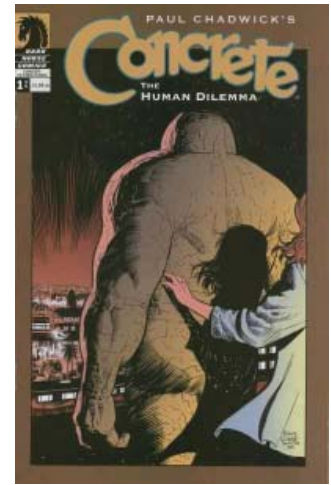




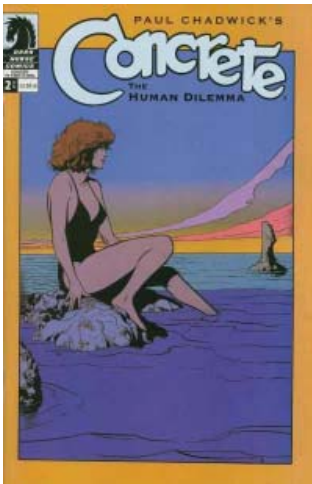
16.9 Concrete, *Think Like a Mountain*, #5 Jul 1996



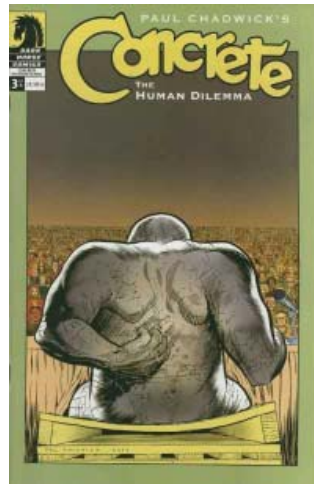
16.10 Concrete, *Think Like a Mountain*, #6 Aug 1996



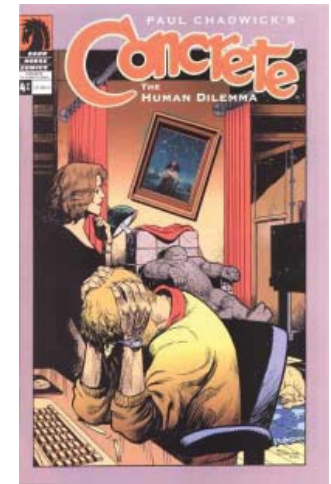
16.12 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #1 Dec 2004



16.13 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #2 Jan 2005



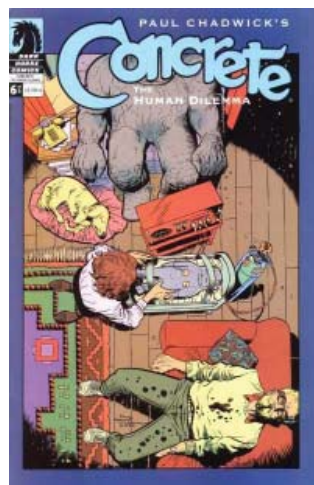
16.14 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #3 Feb 2005



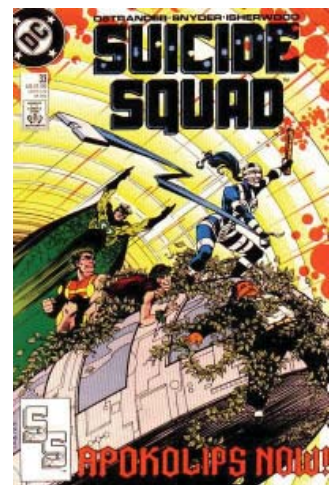
16.15 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #4 Mar 2005



16.16 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #5 Apr 2005



16.17 Concrete, *The Human Dilemma*, #6 May 2005



17.1 Suicide Squad, *Into the Angry Planet*, #33 Sep 1989

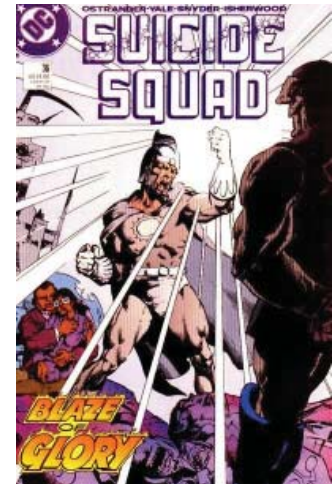




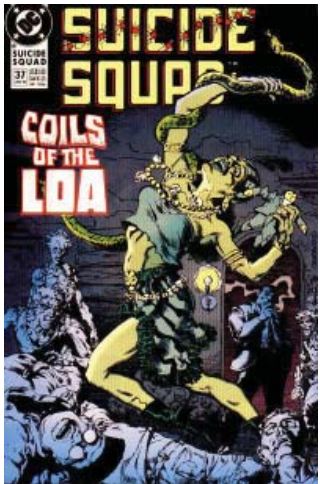
17.2 Suicide Squad, *Armageddo*, #34 Oct 1989



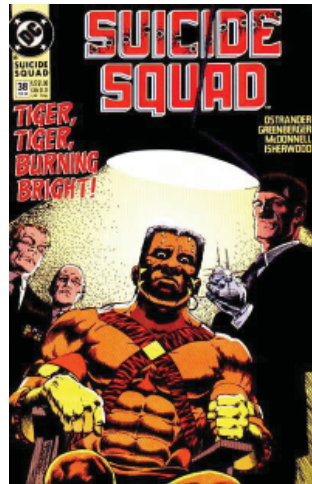
17.3 Suicide Squad, *That Hideous Strength*, #35 Nov 1989



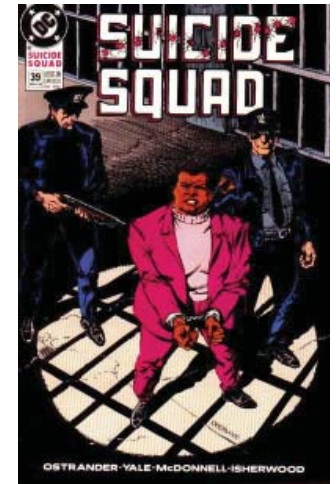
17.4 Suicide Squad, *In Final Battle*, #36 Dec 1989



17.5 Suicide Squad, *Threads*, #37 Jan 1990



17.6 Suicide Squad, *Caging the Tiger!*, #38 Feb 1990



17.7 Suicide Squad, *Dead Issue*, #39 Mar 1990



17.8 Suicide Squad, *Ashes*, #40 Apr 1990



17.9 Suicide Squad, *Embers*, #41 May 1990



17.10 Suicide Squad, *Firefight*, #42 Jun 1990





17.11 Suicide Squad, *Black Queen's Mate*, #43 Jul 1990



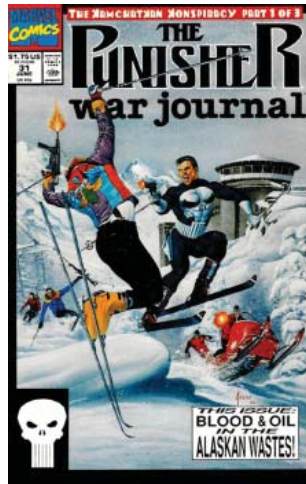
17.12 Suicide Squad, *Nasty As They Want To Be!*, #64 Apr 1992



17.13 Suicide Squad, *Run Through The Jungle!*, #65 May 1992



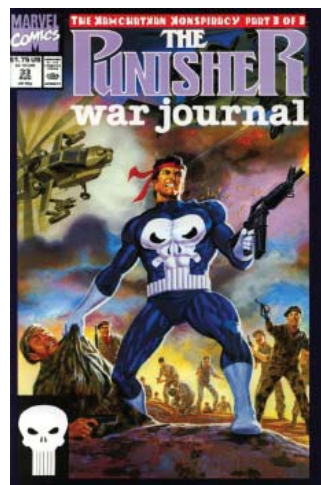
17.14 Suicide Squad, *And Be A Villain!*, #66 Jun 1992



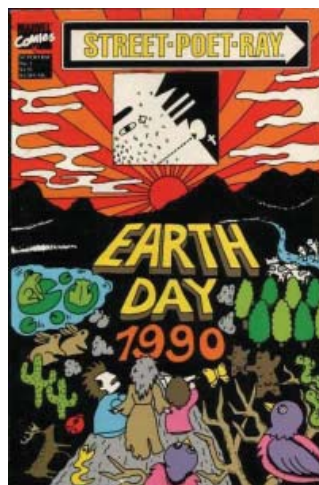
18.1 Punisher War Journal, *Pipeline*, #31 Jun 1991



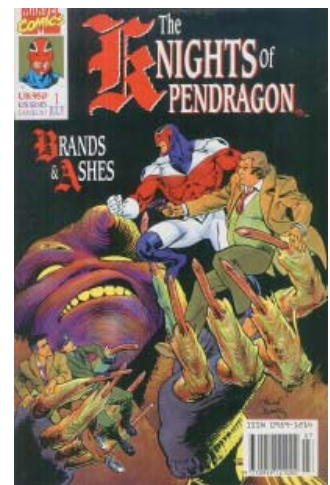
18.2 Punisher War Journal, *Blow Out*, #32 Jul 1991



18.3 Punisher War Journal, *Fire In The Hole*, #33 Aug 1991



19.0 Street Poet Ray, *Earth Day 1990*, #2 1990

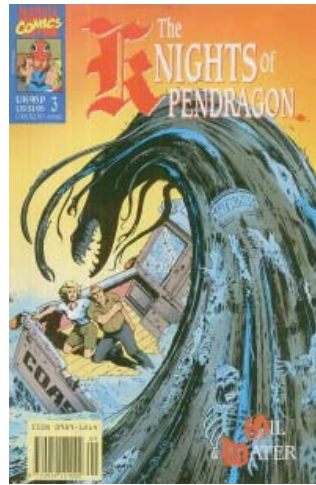


20.1 Knights of Pendragon, *Brands & Ashes*, #1 Jul 1990

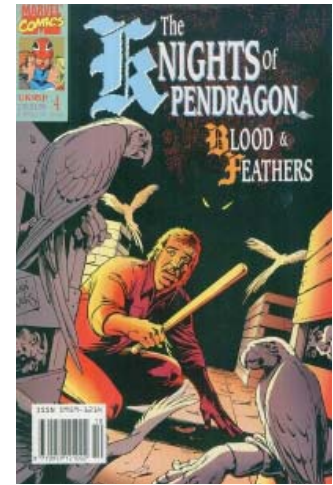




20.2 Knights of Pendragon, *Skin & Bone*, #2 Aug 1990



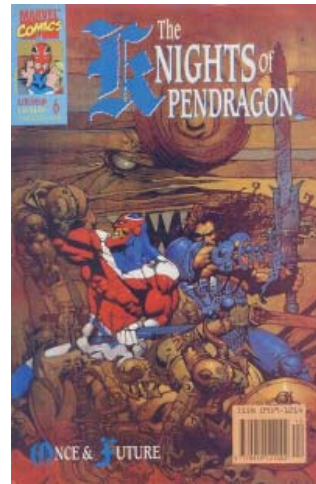
20.3 Knights of Pendragon, *Oil & Water*, #3 Sep 1990



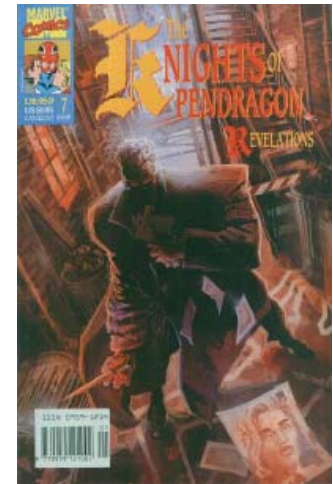
20.4 Knights of Pendragon, *Blood & Feathers*, #4 Oct 1990



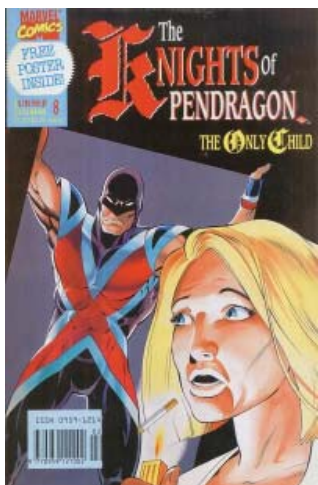
20.5 Knights of Pendragon, *Hope & Glory*, #5 Nov 1990



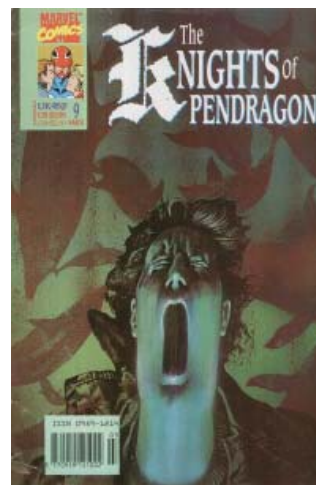
20.6 Knights of Pendragon, *Once & Future*, #6 Dec 1990



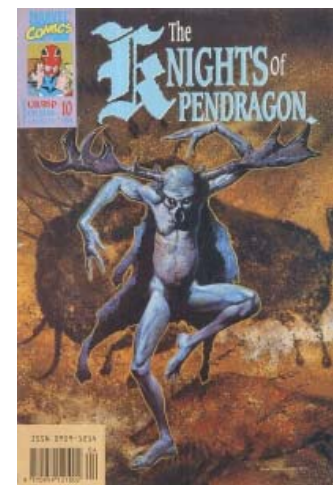
20.7 Knights of Pendragon, *Revelations*, #7 Jan 1991



20.8 Knights of Pendragon, *The Only Child*, #8 Feb 1991

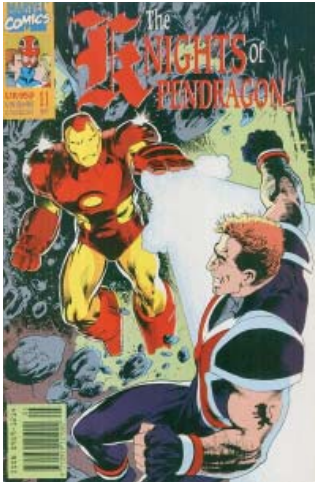


20.9 Knights of Pendragon, *Delicate Thunder*, #9 Mar 1991

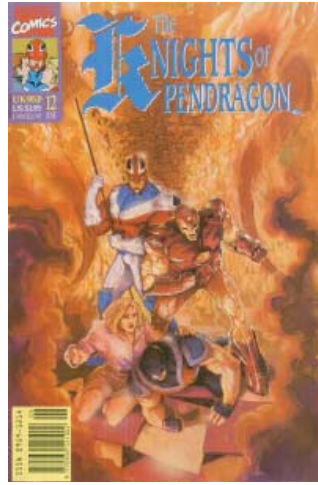


20.10 Knights of Pendragon, *Nightfall*, #10 Apr 1991

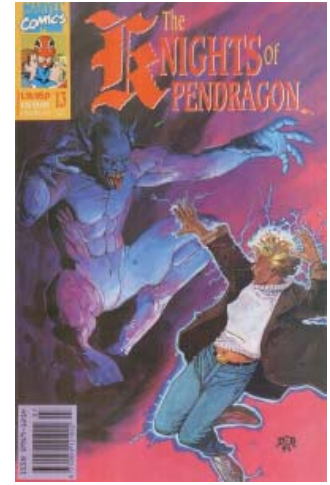




20.11 Knights of Pendragon, *Midwinter*, #11 May 1991



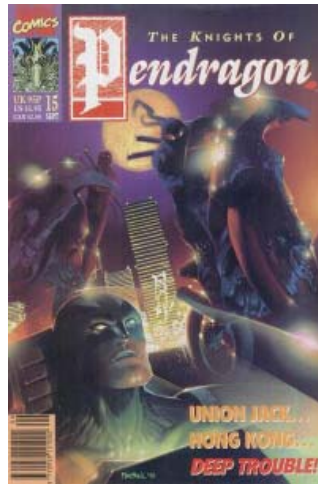
20.12 Knights of Pendragon, *Here Be Dragons*, #12 Jun 1991



20.13 Knights of Pendragon, *Prydwen's Anchor*, #13 Jul 1991



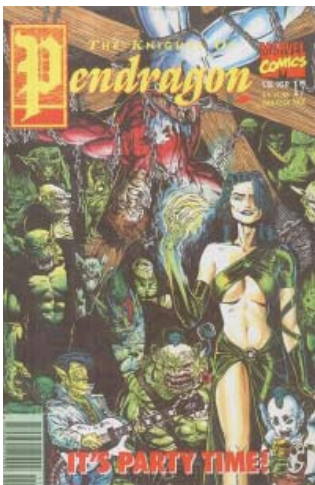
20.14 Knights of Pendragon, *Kiboko*, #14 Aug 1991



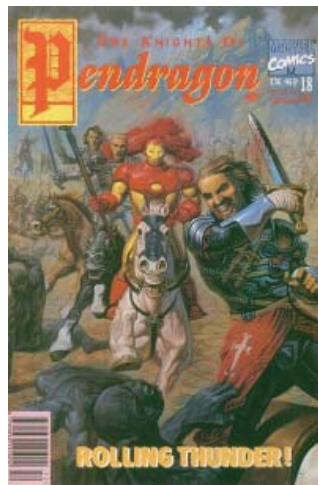
20.15 Knights of Pendragon, *Hidden Agendas*, #15 Sep 1991



20.16 Knights of Pendragon, *The Sleeping Lord*, #16 Oct 1991



20.17 Knights of Pendragon, *Into the Valley*, #17 Nov 1991



20.18 Knights of Pendragon, *The Last War*, #18 Dec 1991



21.1 New Warriors, *The Heart of The Hunter*, #7 Jan 1991





21.2 New Warriors, *Devil's At The Doorstep*, #8 Feb 1991



21.3 New Warriors, *Following The Line Along The Middle*, #9 Mar 1991



21.4 New Warriors, *This Land Must Change*, #29 Nov 1992



21.5 New Warriors, *This Land Must Burn*, #30 Dec 1992



22.1 Brute Force, *Fast Feud*, #1 Aug 1990



22.2 Brute Force, *Black Gold!*, #2 Sep 1990



22.3 Brute Force, *Wild Wildlife*, #3 Oct 1990



22.4 Brute Force, *Chain Reaction!*, #4 Nov 1990



23.1 Infinity Gauntlet, *God*, #1 Jul 1991

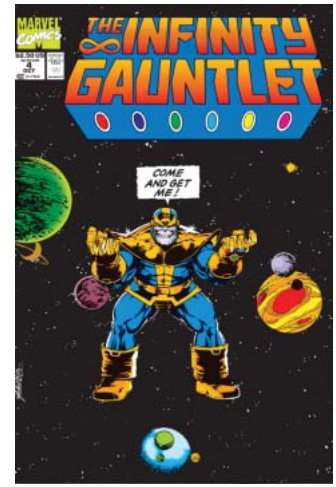




23.2 Infinity Gauntlet, *From Bad To Worse*, #2 Aug 1991



23.3 Infinity Gauntlet, *Preparations For War*, #3 Sep 1991



23.4 Infinity Gauntlet, *Cosmic Battle on The Edge of The Universe*, #4 Oct 1991



23.5 Infinity Gauntlet, *Astral Conflagration*, #5 Nov 1991



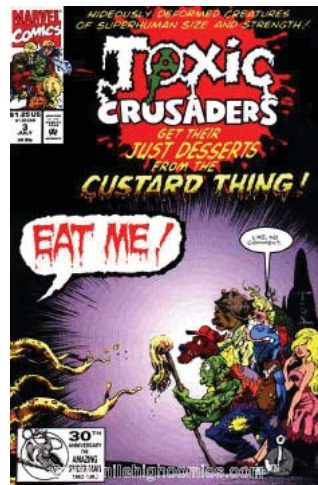
23.6 Infinity Gauntlet, *The Final Confrontation*, #6 Dec 1991



24.1 Toxic Crusaders, *The Making of Toxie*, #1 May 1992



24.2 Toxic Crusaders, *The Big Broadcast of 1992*, #2 Jun 1992



24.3 Toxic Crusaders, *Night of The Living Dessert*, #3 Jul 1992

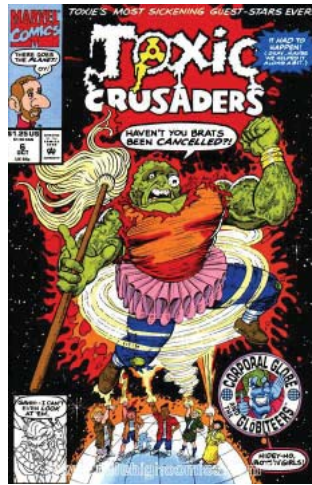


24.4 Toxic Crusaders, *Porcelain Paranoia*, #4 Aug 1992

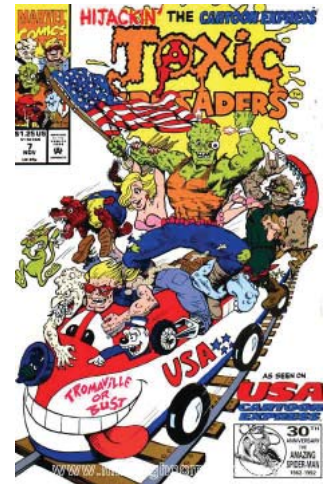




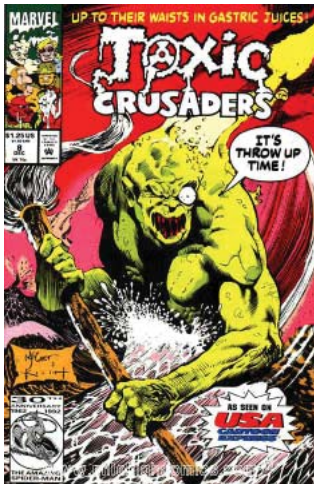
24.5 Toxic Crusaders, *Delivery System*, #5 Sep 1992



24.6 Toxic Crusaders, *Corporal Globe & The Globiteers*, #6 Oct 1992



24.7 Toxic Crusaders, *Girl Power*, #7 Nov 1992



24.8 Toxic Crusaders, *Toxzilla*, #8 Dec 1992



25.1 Captain Planet, *A Hero For Earth!*, #1 Oct 1991



25.2 Captain Planet, *Smog Gets in Your Eyes*, #2 Nov 1991



25.3 Captain Planet, *The Power of Heart*, #3 Dec 1991

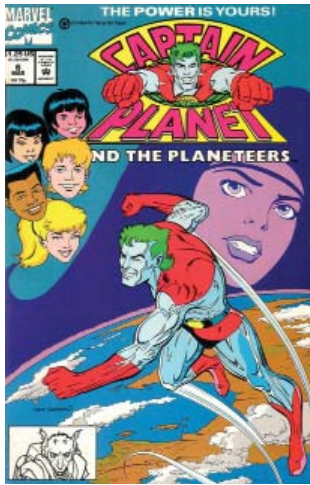


25.4 Captain Planet, *If You Can't Nuke 'em...Join 'em!*, #4 Jan 1992



25.5 Captain Planet, *Last Stand on Pollutionland*, #5 Feb 1992





25.6 Captain Planet, *Rat Trap!*, #6 Mar 1992



25.7 Captain Planet, *Hope Springs Eternal*, #7 Apr 1992



25.8 Captain Planet, *Show-down on Hope Island*, #8 May 1992



25.9 Captain Planet, *Dark Waters Part 1*, #9 Jun 1992



25.10 Captain Planet, *Dark Waters Part 2*, #10 Jul 1992



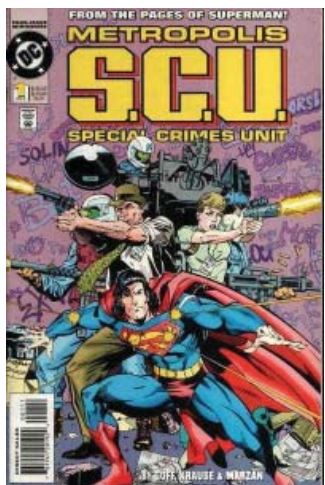
25.11 Captain Planet, *The Cutter Part 1*, #11 Aug 1992



25.12 Captain Planet, *The Cutter Part 2*, #12 Aug 1992

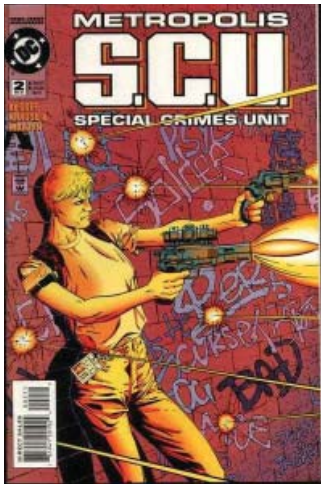


26 Ravage 2099, #1-33 Dec 1992 - Aug 1995



27.1 Metropolis S.C.U, *Sawyer's Blue's*, #1 Nov 1994





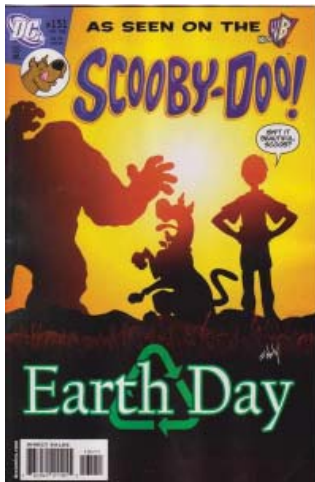
27.2 Metropolis S.C,U, **Cop Out**, #2 Dec 1994



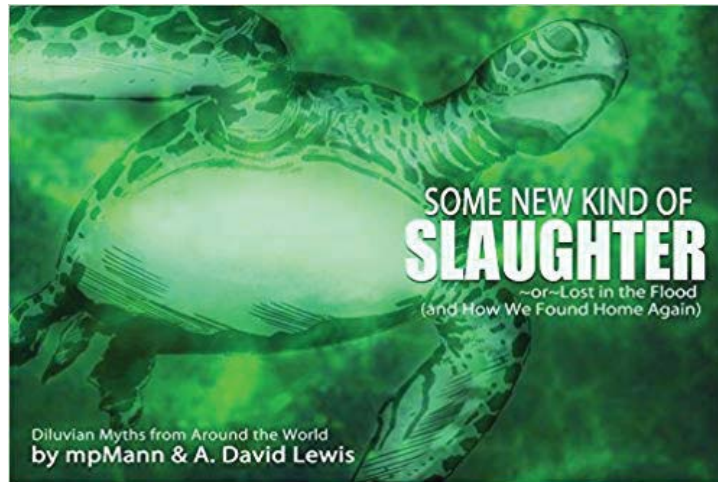
27.3 Metropolis S.C,U, **Ark Enemy**, #3 Jan 1995



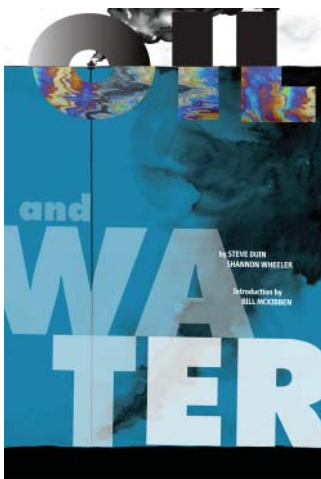
27.4 Metropolis S.C,U, **Black Plague**, #4 Feb 1995



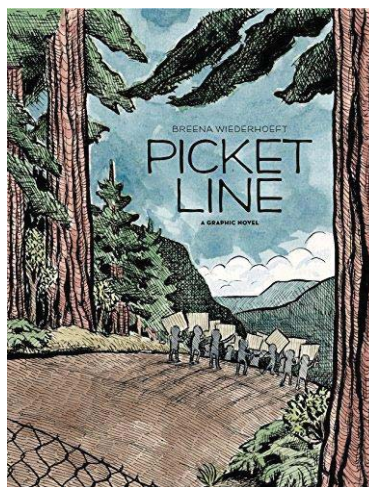
28 Scooby-Doo!, **Earth Day**, #131 Jun 2008



29 David Lewis, **Some New Kind of Slaughter**, Aug 2009



30 Shannon Wheeler & Steve Duin, **Oil And Water**, 2011

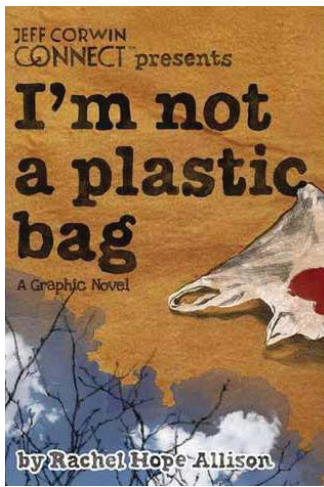


31 Breena Wiederhoeft, **Picket Line**, 2011

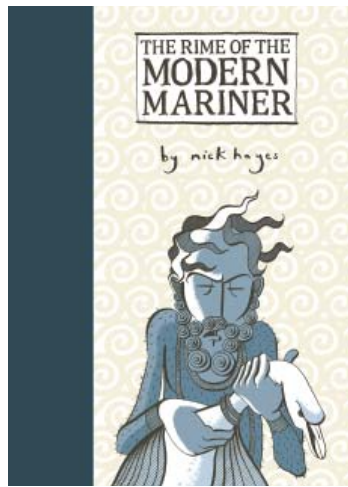


32 The Massive, **#1-30**, Jun 2012 - Dec 2014

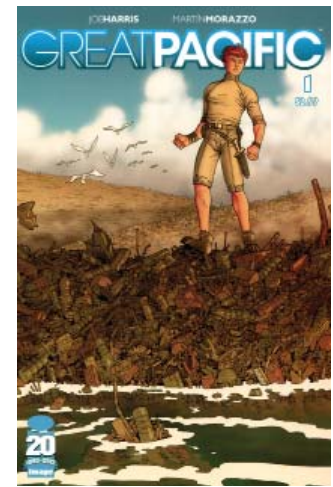




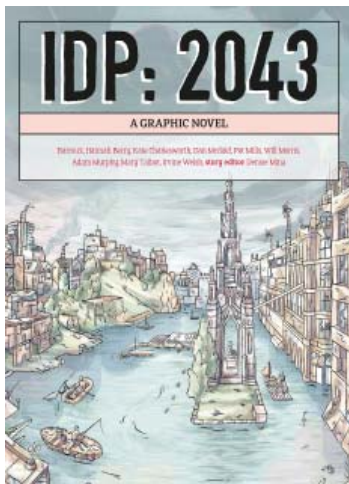
33 Rachel Hope Allison, *I'm not a plastic bag*, 2012



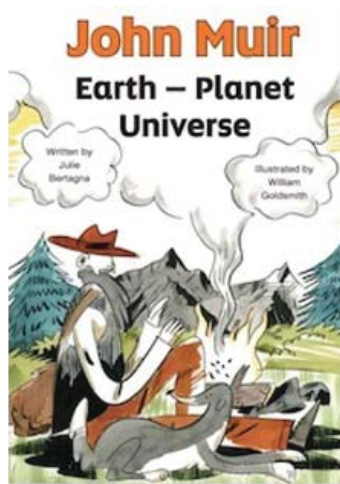
34 Nick Hayes, *The Rime of The Modern Mariner*, 2012



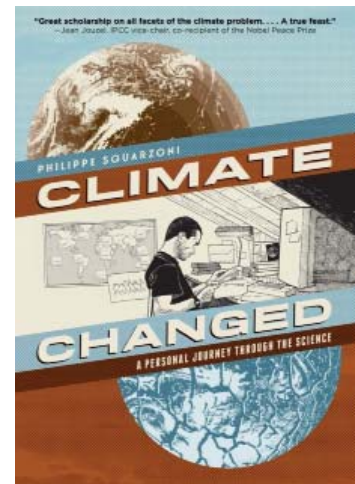
35 Great Pacific, #1-18, Nov 2012 - Dec 2014



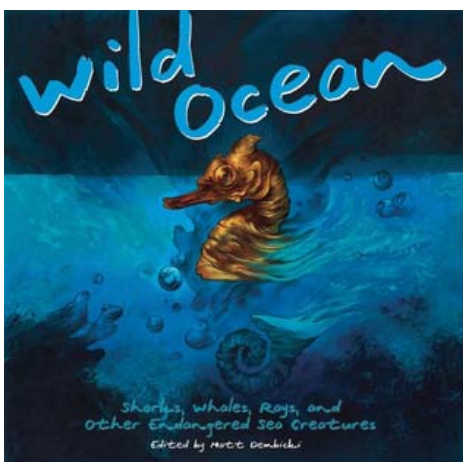
36 Denise Mina Ed., *IDP: 2043*, 2014



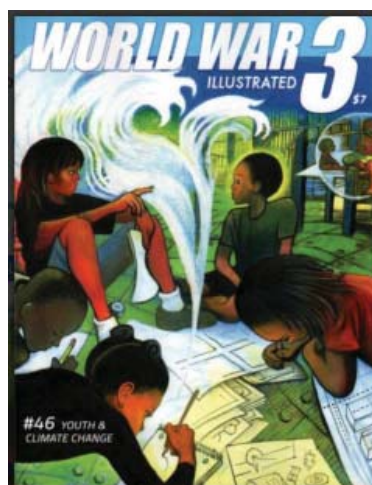
37 Julie Bertagna & William Goldsmith, *John Muir, Earth Planet Universe*, 2014



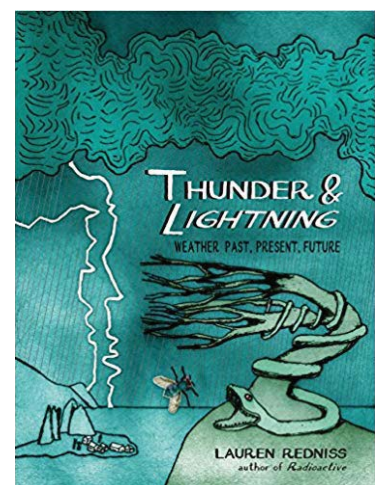
38 Philippe Squarzoni, *Climate Changed*, 2014



39 Matt Dembicki, *Wild Ocean*, 2014



40 World War Three Illustrated, *Youth & Climate Change*, 2015



41 Lauren Redniss, *Thunder & Lightning*, 2015

