



Eco-Terrorism: Re-examining and Re-presenting the Issue in *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* and *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*

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Abstract

In an era dominated by several terrorist organizations, global terrorism has become one of the biggest international challenges. With the increasing number of terrorist attacks all over the world, the word “terrorism” has extended its meaning and new forms of terrorism, such as narco-terrorism, argo-terrorism, bio-terrorism and eco-terrorism have emerged. The focus of this paper will be on “eco-terrorism”. This paper deals with two documentary films— Peter Jay Brown’s *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* and Marshall Curry and Sam Cullman’s *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*— related to the issue of “eco-terrorism”. The paper is composed of two parts. The first part examines what “eco-terrorism” is and how it is different from other forms of terrorism. Theorizing briefly both “environmental terrorism” and “eco-terrorism”, this section has tried to highlight the differences between the two, thereby eradicating further scopes of confusion, which sometimes tend to arise in general discussions. In the second part, the representational strategies employed by the filmmakers in the two afore-mentioned documentaries are analysed, and thereby, the validity of the term “eco-terrorism” is re-examined.

Keywords

eco-terrorism, environmental radicalism, representational strategy, environmental superhero

In an era dominated by terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, global terrorism has become one of the biggest international challenges. With the increasing number of terrorist attacks all over the world, the word “terrorism” has extended its meaning and new forms of terrorism, such as narco-terrorism, argo-terrorism, bio-terrorism and eco-terrorism have emerged. The focus of this paper will be on “eco-terrorism”. This paper deals with two documentary films— Peter Jay Brown’s *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* and Marshall Curry and Sam Cullman’s *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*— related to the issue of “eco-terrorism”. The paper is composed of two parts. The first part examines what “eco-terrorism” is. In the second part, the representational strategies employed by the filmmakers in the two aforementioned documentaries are analysed, and thereby, the validity of the term “eco-terrorism” is re-examined.

I

Eco-terrorism is defined by Vanderheiden as “an association between terrorism and radical environmentalism” (qtd. in Berkowicz 19). To understand what eco-terrorism is we need to have a clear concept of the term “terrorism”. Though “terrorism” is not new in human history, it is quite hard to define it. The word “terror” comes from the Latin *terrere* meaning “to frighten”. Therefore, the original idea of a terrorist act was to frighten rather than to annihilate or to destroy. According to Berkowicz, in the 1970s, the terms ‘terror’ or “terrorism” were “used to describe violence and repression carried out by the Jacobin party in the French Revolution, ironically with a goal to support justice, democracy and equality.” But over the years the meaning has evolved, and now, the word “terrorism” has come to mean “. . . life-threatening actions perpetrated by politically motivated self-appointed sub-state groups” (*Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*).

During the second half of the twentieth century a new form of terror was introduced, which came to be known as eco-terrorism. Berkowicz suggests that the roots of eco-terrorism go back to 1811-1812 when skilled English textile workers destroyed automated looms, which were making them jobless¹. However, C.J. Beck defines eco-terrorism as “The clandestine use of force or threat of force outside the normal routines of political action intended to influence targets for an environmental cause” (qtd. in Berkowicz 19). Ron Arnold coined the term eco-terrorism. In a magazine named *Reason*, he first used the term in February 1983. Arnold defines eco-terrorism as “crime committed to save nature”. However eco-terrorism, in general, means sabotage in the name of environmental causes. It involves acts of violence or destruction intended to curb human alteration to the nature and its biodiversity. It is a form of radical environmentalism. Like deep ecologists, eco-terrorists also subscribe to the idea of biocentrism— a belief that human beings are in no way superior to the other members of a biological community and should have equal rights and be protected. Federal Bureau of Investigation defines Eco-terrorism in the following terms:

¹ The textile workers being referred to are the Luddites who worked in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire. When they saw their trade being threatened by machines imposed by the aggressive new class of manufacturers, during the Industrial Revolution, they started refusing their masters and smashing the machines in nocturnal raids.

The use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against people 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. (Jarboe)

The eco-terrorists tend to target deforestation projects, hydroelectric operations, animal-research laboratories and genetic engineering farms. Though it is true that the environmental extremists, termed as eco-terrorists, inflict damage upon properties, yet they are not in favour of destroying human lives. On the contrary, these so-called eco-terrorists are in favour of saving lives – be it of plants or other living beings – from destruction.

In this context, it needs to be mentioned that the terms “Eco terrorism” and “environmental terrorism” are often used interchangeably, even though their intended targets are different. Though the two terms sound similar, yet there are some subtle differences between these two concepts. As E. L. Chalecki has pointed out “Environmental terrorism . . . can be defined as an unlawful action or set of actions leading to short or long term harm/ destruction of environmental resources and property to deprive others of its use” (qtd. in Berkowicz 16). Therefore, it could be said, that in environmental terrorism, nature is used as a weapon to achieve political or ideological goals. Eco-terrorism, on the other hand, stands for severe damage or destruction caused to property for environmental causes. As Berkowicz points out, “Eco-terrorism is an amalgam of civil disobedience, political activism and sabotage, resulting in what can be termed radical environmentalism” (16).

There are several organizations, which have been labeled as eco-terrorist organizations. Earth First!, The Earth Liberation Front, the Animal Liberation Front, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society etc. are some such groups. Perhaps the best known of the truly radical environmental groups to emerge in the late twentieth century is Earth First! . Founded in 1979, this environmental group has caused thousands of dollars of property damage in the name of protecting the ‘earth’. The aspiration of this environmental group was to take an uncompromising militant stand in defence of the environment and to engage in direct action ranging from civil disobedience to terrorist acts. As Liddick in *Eco-Terrorism: Radical Environmental and Animal Liberation Movements* states, “the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) is an international underground movement that originated in the United Kingdom in 1992 and became active in North America in 1996” (4). ELF has been held responsible for over \$100 million of property damage since 1997. The infamous deeds of ELF range from setting ablaze ski resorts, burning down the lumber factory, arsons at different university labs which conduct genetic engineering to setting fire to wild horse slaughter houses. The Animal Liberation Front (ALF), founded in 1976 in Great Britain, aggressively exercises economic sabotage by victimizing a wide array of animal-exploiting enterprises causing millions of pounds in damages. However, though there are several environmental groups throughout the world now, perhaps the first group to engage in direct action of environmental preservation was Greenpeace. But discontent with the non-violent policies adopted by Greenpeace, several members of Greenpeace left the organization and created the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Paul Watson founded the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in 1977. The SSCS

bought ships and set about harassing commercial drift-net fishing, whaling or seal-hunting operations. Advocating the use of methods of destruction to inform the public of oceanic environmental issues, the SSCS has engaged in several serious acts of eco-terrorism. The SSCS is credited with sinking nine fishing or whaling vessels and ramming at least a dozen other illegal fishing ships.

However, though the activities of these radical environmental organizations are termed as “eco-terrorism”, there are some basic differences between the activities of these organizations, and what we commonly understand as “terrorism”. Terrorism is directed towards causing harm to human lives in order to fulfil some narrow personal interest of a select-group of people. On the other hand, what we label as “eco-terrorism” does not intend to cause harm to any individual. It is rather directed towards property damage. The so-called eco-terrorists destroy only those properties, which are hazardous to the wellbeing of our environment. By taking credit for these acts, eco-terrorists acquire public attention and use that to spread their extreme environmental ideologies that demand the minimization of human alteration to the natural environment.

Though the ideologies surrounding the radical environmental movements are diverse, the central core embodies the ideas of deep ecology. As Arne Naess has pointed out, deep ecology is a philosophy that promotes the idea of biocentrism as opposed to anthropocentrism (*The Ecology of Wisdom* 240). It focuses on the wellbeing of both the human and non-human lives on earth. The deep ecologists believe that human beings have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of nature. Therefore, in the principles of deep ecology there is an implicit call for a radical change of the anthropocentric values that dominate the whole world. The environmental activists termed as “eco-terrorists” seem to have responded to this call and have set about bringing this change through their destructive acts. However, in this context, it needs to be mentioned that though “eco-terrorism” is founded on the ideas of deep ecology, it does not subscribe to the misanthropic ideas of population control promoted by some of the deep ecologists such as Christopher Manes and Dave Foreman. Unlike these deep ecologists who argued for the destruction of human population for the sake of the preservation of nature and its biodiversity, these so-called “eco-terrorists” are in favour of spreading their ideologies of environmental extremism and terminating, preventing or minimizing group, business or institutional alteration to the natural environment and its biodiversity.

II

Peter Brown’s *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* is an excellent documentary examining all these aspects of eco-terrorism. Though *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* deals with the activities of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, it particularly focuses on the activities of one individual— Paul Watson — the head of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, who is accused of being an “eco-terrorist” throughout the world, by different governmental authorities. Peter Brown— himself a member of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, and therefore, himself being labelled as an eco-terrorist— in his documentary, presents Watson as someone larger than life. As a fellow member of Watson’s group, Brown seems to be somewhat biased in the presentation of Watson in his

documentary. Watson's on-screen projection gives us the impression of his being an "environmental superhero".

Although Peter Brown focuses mainly on Paul Watson in his documentary, no information about Watson's personal life is given to the viewers save those which would help us understand Watson's zeal for the protection of nature and its biodiversity. For example, through a scene, somewhat similar to a flashback, Paul Watson along with Bob Hunter is shown standing in front of a Canadian ice-breaker to prevent illegal harp-seal slaughter. This incident, as Brown informs us, marks the beginning of Watson's career as an environmental superhero.

There are several instances throughout the documentary, which make us feel that Watson is someone with divine powers. Brown, in one instance, himself says that Watson is "a mystical holy man, guided and protected by an army of angels" (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). In the documentary, Brown even uses a funny animated image of Watson, guarded by a group of angels, in support of what he says. Though Brown does not take Watson's being a divine agent seriously, he is quite sure of the fact that Watson has an "uncanny good luck" (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). Like the other superheroes as Tarzan or Captain Planet, Watson is presented as remaining unaffected or almost untouched by the troubles which other common people has to deal with.

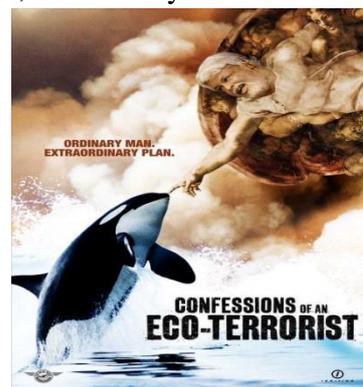


Figure 1: Animated image of Watson guarded by angels (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*)

Moreover, like a fictional superhero, Watson is projected as a threat for the "environmental bad guys" (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*), throughout the documentary. He is a "man on mission from God" (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). Though Peter Brown, the director, is not blind to the destruction which Watson and his crew wreck upon the illegal hunters or poachers, it seems that he tries to justify all these destructive acts through the superhero image of Watson. Though Brown says that the intention behind his making this documentary is to "manufacture awareness" (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*), his actual intention behind the projection of Paul Watson as an environmental superhero seems to be the gathering of public support for such criminal acts. Throughout the documentary, though there is no such scene in which we find any individual being injured, and though Brown himself, towards the end of the film, says, "No one has been killed or even seriously injured on either side", the question remains— does not the breaking of laws and causing millions of dollars of property damage constitute criminal acts? But even after realizing that what these activists do under the guidance of Watson is neither morally nor legally right, one is never seriously angry with these men. The secret behind such reaction on the part of the audience lies in Brown's way of presenting the activities of these environmental extremists. Although Peter Brown does not hide from us the damages that these activists wreck upon, his presentation of these activities in a ludicrous manner, instead of enraging the audience, makes them laugh. Further, the superhero image of Watson, which Brown creates in his documentary, leads the viewers to support Watson's activities.

Like the fictional superheroes, performing miraculous activities even in extremely unfavourable situations, Watson is projected as doing wonders in hostile, unsuitable circumstances. For instance, in a scene, Watson is shown as chasing away a band of poacher-ships with his own ship of which, one of the two engines has failed. He is called the “Mario Andretti² of ship driving” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*) by Brown. Projecting Watson as a superhero with angelic powers, Peter Brown expresses his belief that as long as Watson is with them, all the members of his group are safe. For instance, when the Sea Shepherd Crew, in Macau, tries to prevent the whale-hunters from butchering those innocent sea-animals, the local people get angry with the crew, as whale-hunting has been a part of their cultural tradition, and consequently start throwing stones towards the Sea Shepherd members. But Brown says that not a single stone hit any of the members of the crew as “under the protection of Watson’s angelic umbrella, nothing could hurt us” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). Thus, in this documentary, Paul Watson is projected as such a superhero who, not only is himself immune from any sort of harm, but also protects his followers from being harmed. Such a projection of Watson seems to be a strategic ploy on the part of the filmmaker not only to raise public support in favour of their activities, but also to invite people from all over the world to join them in their acts.

Though Watson is accused of being an eco-terrorist and is arrested several times by the cops, every time he gets released. Even legal charges against him prove ineffectual before his superhero popularity and his “uncanny good luck” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). Brown, in this documentary, clearly states, “to arrest Watson would be like arresting Santa Claus” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*). The documentary gives us an impression that even the governmental agents are unable to entrap Watson, until he himself lets them arrest him. Though there are laws to prevent illegal hunting and fishing, we get the impression that these are absolutely insubstantial and ineffectual until and unless Watson enforces those in his own way. Like a superhero, Watson is shown as having the “uncanny ability to sniff out bad guys” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*), without the help of any satellite or any aerial surveillance. To look for a particular ship of a group of poachers in the vast Pacific is almost an impossible task and, as Brown says, before Watson, many other groups of environmentalists had ventured to find out the drift-netters to prevent illegal drift netting, which caused deaths to hundreds of marine lives. But eventually, they all failed in their attempts most of the time. On the other hand, the Sea Shepherd Crew ventured three times and every time they succeeded in finding drift-netters because, as Brown says, “we had something better than GPS. We had Watson”. To find out “environmental bad guys” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*), in the vast Pacific Ocean without the help of any gadget, is really an uncanny ability, which only the superheroes can have. It is impossible for the viewers to verify how much of truth there is in Peter Brown’s words, but the way he presents Watson, obviously gives us an impression that he is not just a common human being but something more than that.

² The Name of Mario Gabriele Andretti, an Italian American former racing car driver, who has won numerous awards has, in American popular culture, become synonymous with speed and driving skill.

Thus, through all these instances, Brown creates a superhero image of Paul Watson in the mind viewers' mind. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that Brown is not a simple film-director, but is also an active member of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society— a so-called “eco-terrorist” organization. It is perhaps his affiliation with this group, which leads him to present the activities of these activists in a biased way. As a fellow member of the group, he himself does not find anything wrong in the militant actions of these activists and regards Watson as a hero. His affiliation gets reflected in his documentary through which he attempts to turn the viewers on the side of these activists. Like himself, he wishes his viewers also to regard Watson as a hero instead of accusing him as an “eco-terrorist”. Though their vandalistic acts are limited to property damage only and are nothing in comparison to the massive harm caused to nature and its biodiversity by the poachers, still the criminality of the acts of these activists cannot be absolutely ignored. Brown in *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* presents several horrible images of the destruction of nature by the illegal hunters— the brutal butchering of harp seals, the slaughtering of whales —which exasperate the viewers and turn their support to whatever Watson and his followers do to prevent the destruction of nature. Moreover, Peter Brown, in this documentary, not only does record the brutality of these poachers but also juxtaposes those with what he calls “aggressive non-violence” (*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*) of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and thereby tries to get full public support for their activities.



Figure 2: Butchered harp seals
(*Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*)

Therefore, it is quite clear that Brown uses such a title to attract attention by stirring up some controversy. Moreover, it remains an issue of disputation whether it is right to call one a “terrorist” (whether be it “eco-” or whatever), who destroys only properties, not of innocent people, but of illegal marine hunters, and one who instead of destroying lives, saves lives from being destroyed. But still, one cannot fully support and encourage what these activists do, as, though their intention is great, their means to achieve the goal is not always right. Peter Brown, by projecting Paul Watson as a larger than life character and by presenting the destructive activities of these activists in a risible manner, proves himself as not to be neutral but to be predisposed towards the Sea Shepherd crew.

The other documentary which this paper deals with is *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*. Though this excellent documentary by Marshall Curry and Sam Cullman is a story of the rise of the environmental organization— the Earth Liberation Front, it basically focuses on the life of a particular individual, Daniel McGowan, an important member and an activist of the ELF. Contrary to Peter Brown, who has presented Paul Watson as almost an environmental superhero, Curry presents McGowan as a regular fellow with mild manners and slightly out of shape body. It is hard

to reconcile his character with his extreme actions. The documentary is not a one-sided depiction of environmental heroes going to extremes. Rather it even-handedly weighs both the sides and tries to present the events from a neutral perspective.

The documentary is not a mere cut and dried projection of McGowan's super heroic environmental activities. Rather he is presented as one of us, who has a loving and caring family, a fiancée and a past similar to many of us. In a flashback, Curry and Cullman shows us the past life of McGowan— his childhood, his academic life etc. However, though the documentary's main focus is Daniel McGowan, the directors do not deprive others of the right to express their views. There are extensive interviews with characters on all sides of the story— former ELF activists, the U.S. Attorneys, other radical environmentalists from Eugene, cops and victims. Thus, we come to know not only of Daniel's reaction on his being accused of being an eco-terrorist, but also what his family members— his sister, his father — feel about it. Further, like many of us, Daniel has a fiancée whose views and opinions are also captured in this documentary. Apart from the environmental activities of McGowan, the documentary thus focuses on his personal life and even captures the marriage ceremony of Daniel and Jenny.

The documentary traces the journey of Daniel McGowan from a regular guy to an environmental extremist. Daniel himself admits in the film that as a city-bred individual, though he cared for the environment, he was not aware of the deep crisis nature is going through. McGowan's radicalism drew significantly from an episode in 1997 in Eugene, when city officials, aiming to avoid debate at a hearing, fast-forwarded the cutting down of some old trees to make way for a parking lot. As a member of the ELF, McGowan initially participated in several non-violent protests against the exploitation of the environment. But gradually he and some other members of the ELF grew frustrated with the ineffectuality of the non-violent protests and turned towards violence.

If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front does not merely focus on the heroism of Daniel McGowan and his co-conspirators in the arsons, but also brings to the fore the suffering of the victims. Though the activists ever physically injure nobody, yet they cause a lot of psychological harm to many people. For instance, when McGowan and his partners set ablaze a lumber factory, it becomes a major blow to the psyche of its owners. The documentary captures their feelings and reactions too along with those of McGowan. Thus, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* is such a documentary, which is not partial in its presentation of the events. Rather it weighs both the sides even-handedly.

In an interview with Revkin, Marshall Curry, about his documentary, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, said:

Sam Cullman and I started the film with a lot of questions, and it was the process of meeting people, and listening to what they had to say informed that point of view. If Daniel had come across to us as a raving monster, the film would have reflected that, and if he had come across as a completely innocent saint, the film would have reflected that. But instead he — like almost everyone we met, and like most real life human beings— was shades of gray. So that's how we showed him and the issues. (Curry *The New York Times*)

The point is quite clear; in this documentary, Marshall Curry does not want to project the black and white distinction between the good and the evil. The way he presents McGowan, his deeds, and the responses to his deeds, does not lead us to consider him either as a saint or a devil. Rather, he is a complex human being with both virtues and follies like most of us. In another interview with Rachel Cernansky, Curry says:

If a Tree Falls . . . has a strong point of view, but it's a complex point of view that I think reflects the complexity of the story, and it's our hope that it will challenge simplistic thinking on all sides. (Curry *Treehugger*).

Thus, in his documentary, Marshall Curry tries to be quite neutral in his stance, providing absolute support neither to the activities of McGowan and the other ELF members, nor to the tactics of the government.

Towards the end of the documentary, Curry presents an interview in which the federal prosecutor expresses his views and opinions regarding the arrested ELF members. He says that during the investigation, he came to know the ELF members as human beings and began to understand their childhoods, experiences and motivations, which led them to commit these arsons. Though he believed that what they have done were serious crimes and they deserved to be put behind the bars, after getting to know them, he realized that these so-called eco-terrorists were not only names written on a piece of paper against whom several charges were brought, but were real human beings like all of us.

Curry, in his film, does not only capture the feelings of joy of these activists after their supposed success but also captures their mixed feelings of regret and confusion. There are instances in the film where McGowan is seen as feeling remorseful at his deeds, whether it be mistakenly burning down a farm on the suspicion that they manufactured genetically engineered crops or whether it be on seeing the picture of the owner of the lumber factory, which they had set ablaze, standing amidst the burnt down caricature of a factory. Therefore, McGowan, as presented in the documentary, is no superhero like Peter Brown's Watson. Rather, he is a character with the qualities and follies, which we all have in various proportions within us.

In his interview with Rachel Cernansky, Marshall Curry says that *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* “. . . will hopefully encourage activists to think carefully about the ethics and effectiveness of different kinds of actions. And we also hope it will encourage the rest of society to realize that the way that the government responds to activism can either radicalize people or can bring them into the democratic process” (Curry *Treehugger*). This should be the perspective of all of us. Neither should we resort to violence to save nature, nor should we turn to cavalier methods to control the protestors. Rather, a balance should be maintained between the two extremes.

Though the two documentaries — *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist* and *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* — have separate representational strategies, both converge at one point. In whatever way they might present the environmental activists and their activities, both the documentaries question the validity of the term “eco-terrorism”, each in their own distinct way. The issue I am trying to address is not that whether these two documentaries support eco-terrorism or not. But the question that both these documentaries raise before us is how far it is valid to use the term “eco-terrorism”.

Peter Brown, in his documentary, presents the environmental activist, Paul Watson, as an environmental superhero. The attitude of the director in this film is somewhat similar to the idea that one man's terrorist is another man's hero. Elevating Watson to a superhuman, almost to a divine level, Brown, justifies Watson's deeds and, at the same time, challenges the idea of labelling Watson and his followers as eco-terrorists. Time and again, in the documentary, Brown foregrounds the fact that the Sea Shepherd crew has never injured anyone, not even accidentally. Watson is projected here as the saviour of nature. The super hero image of Watson, his saviour image does not go with the image of a terrorist. Thus, in his documentary, *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*, Brown challenges the validity of the term "eco-terrorism".

On the other hand, Marshall Curry and Sam Cullman in *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* presents Daniel McGowan —one who is accused of being an eco-terrorist— as a regular fellow. With his personal history, his motivations, his sense of guilt and regret, Daniel becomes one among us. We do not see him as someone different from us. Thus the presentation of Daniel in such a way prevents the viewers from marginalizing him as a terrorist. The directors are not blind to McGowan's deeds and the documentary does not mislead its viewers to support what these activists do. But when we get to know Daniel McGowan as a human being through this documentary, we also cannot hate him as a terrorist. Rather the question that constantly keeps on coming to our mind is whether it is right to label one as an eco-terrorist who has never caused any physical harm to any individual. Thus, though the documentary does not exhibit any sort of support for the destructive acts of these environmental extremists, it makes us re-think the validity of the term "eco-terrorism".

The way in which both the documentaries represent the two environmental activists, makes it clear that though the perspectives of the two documentaries in viewing the activities of these activists might be unlike, both the documentaries are not in favour of using the term "eco-terrorist" to denote these them. The images of the environmental activists which we find in these two documentaries — whether it be that of an environmental superhero or that of one like many of us— do not match with the conventional image of a terrorist who resorts to the path of violence to wreck havoc in human lives. Both the documentaries, employing their own representational strategies, lead us to question ourselves whether it is right to label the environmentalists who take recourse to violence, not against human lives, but against lifeless properties of those who seek to destroy nature, as eco-terrorists; and thereby compel us to re-examine the validity of the term "eco-terrorism".

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Descriptive List of Images

- Figure 1: Animated image of Watson guarded by angels. Source: *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*. Dir. Peter Jay Brown. Blue Seals Marine Conservation. 2011. Film.
- Figure 2: Butchered harp seals. Source: *Confessions of an Eco-Terrorist*. Dir. Peter Jay Brown. Blue Seals Marine Conservation. 2011. Film.