

## **I. Discourse on Industrial Progress and Environmental Protection**

Nadine Gordimer's novel, *Get A Life*, exposes the environmental destruction of South African native landscape because of rapid industrial development in particular, and the danger of the collapse of the planet in general. It also expresses that as humankind we are for the first time in history on the verge of the possible annihilation of the entire species as well as the planet, not only because of the nuclear weapons we have developed, but because of our gradual destruction of the environment. So as to rouse awareness about the protection of environment, Gordimer uses Paul, the ecologist, as the main character and his co-workers resisting the disastrous projects proposed in the African indigenous landscapes. The focus point of this research is that different programs launched in the name of progress and development of native landscape turns out to be self-destructive. While dealing with this issue, the researcher applies environmentalism introduced by Val Plumwood, John Hannigan, Laurence Buell, Barry Commoner, Cheryll Glotfelty and many others as theoretical modality.

Gordimer as a political activist in South Africa writes mostly about the political issues as well as the moral and psychological tensions of her racially divided country. Virtually most of Gordimer's works deal with the theme of love and politics, particularly concerning race in South Africa. Always questioning power relations and truths, Gordimer tells stories of ordinary people revealing moral ambiguities and choices. In her work, there is affection for her homeland, its people, indigenous landscapes and potent past. She examines the juxtaposition of the devastated psychological effects of apartheid on the lives of South African people. Like her compatriots Alan Paton and J.M. Coetzee, Gordimer dramatizes the history of her country. Like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, she is adept at delineating the

relationship between personal and political or personal and public. Gordimer's *Get A Life* is about the fragility of different types of environment. Here, she juxtaposes the cancerous attack on Bannerman's body with the rabid exploitation of the South African ecosystem. Gordimer has written fourteen novels, many short stories and essays which are widely known all over the world. Her recurring theme in her novels is apartheid system. But in this novel, she shifts her focus from the human-centrism to the environmental issues. As she raises the issue of ecology, she presents herself as a global writer. Being a literary person, she has travelled across the world for her lecture tours and is honored with degrees from the various European and American universities.

The present novel *Get A Life* by Gordimer written in 2005 after the death of her longtime spouse Reinhold Cassirer, is the story of a man undergoing treatment for a life threatening disease. While clearly drawn from recent personal life experiences, the novel also deals with Gordimer's exploration of environmental themes. The protagonist, Paul Bannerman, is an ecologist, battling against the installation of a planned nuclear plant. But he is at the same time undergoing radiation therapy for his cancer causing him personal grief and ironically rendering him a nuclear health hazard in his own home. His sense of environmental protection becomes strong after he is reduced in the quarantine where he visits his childhood garden meditating over his state of life in the endangered world because of nuclear power. It makes him radical against the development of nuclear reactor.

As this study figures out the industrial progress and its impact on environment, it raises awareness about the anti-anthropocentric and environmental attitudes. Through the analysis of eco-conscious characters and natural landscapes, this study aims at unveiling the serious environmental concerns rooted in the familial discourse

thereby figuring out the importance of conserving nature for the longevity of the planet. The present research presumes that the novel vitalizes the relation between human, environment as well as industrial progress thereby exhibiting the proposed noxious programs in the different landscapes. It questions the long established anthropocentrism carefully invented in the European legacy whereas the landscape flashes on the environmental concerns of Gordimer.

Thinking through environmentalism's significance in the present historical moment is surely what Gordimer's *Get A Life* engages in. Set in South Africa, but referring continually to the realities of transnational commerce, the novel marks Gordimer's return to considering the value of nature conservation, but this time in post apartheid South Africa. At the surface, *Get A Life* may appear to be about its comfortably situated characters surviving threats to middle-class life, inwardly it reflects critically on environmentalism's place in a globalized world considering how the insights developed through its fictional form might feed the rich theorizing these times require of anyone caring about people and planet.

The problems created out of the global warming and climate change that challenge the existence of the planet makes the issues like environmentalism and ecocriticism grow as contemporary issues. Environment is the physical and biological system, and the surroundings in which the living beings find themselves. In this sense, environmental literature links literary texts with the environment or physical world. Environmental literature as an academic discipline is intricately related to the world around us. It makes the natural world with its living and non living existence, a point of reference. As environment is the sum total of living as well as the things that affect them, it is also the essential element of the sustainability of the living beings. Thus, environmentalism is both a critique of industrial modernity and another product of it,

and is a distinctively modern movement in which an indispensable role is played by science.

The high population growth rate, technological development and the maximum utilization of natural resources is promoting environmental destruction day by day. The natural environment is being devastated in the name of development like the establishment of nuclear reactor plants, highways and dams. Due to this, we are facing the problems like ozone layer depletion, extinction of species, global warming, and nuclear disaster and so on. So, the valuable worth of the nature as our existential part, and its importance is needed to be understood. Along with the environmental destruction, there are many organizations working for the preservation of nature is emerging.

Anthropocentric culture endorses a view of the human as outside of and apart from a plastic, passive and 'dead' nature which is conceived in mechanical terms as completely lacking in qualities such as mind and agency that are seen as exclusive to the human. In other words, human superiority is claimed on the basis of their active mind and their role as an agency. Anthropocentrism regards nature and animals as inferior to human or stereotyped as alike in their lack of reason, mind and consciousness. Moreover, nature is represented as inessential and unconsidered background of technological development. It is taken as the market-place for the experimentation of human-benefited technologies. The human dependency on nature is denied as it is neglected in crucial scientific development that destructs environment. The crucial biospheric and other services provided by nature and the limits they might impose on human projects are not considered in accounting or decision making. The anthropocentric culture only pays attention on how to progress in technology that could help human but not any regression to the disaster it could

bring in nature. Anthropocentric culture treats nature merely a refractory foil to the human (Plumwood 107-09).

In anthropocentric culture, nature's agency and independence of ends are denied. It regards human as having greater intrinsic value than any other earthly species. So, any species that have more potentiality are exploited by humans for their benefit. Several industrial products that are beneficial to human are disastrous regarding environment but the nature is always othered. The long-established binary opposition between nature and culture is still on the mind of the people. The human mind never acknowledges the diversity of nature because of its hierarchic category as Val Plumwood argues:

Anthropocentric culture and science conceive nature and animals as inferiors stereotyped as alike in their lack of reason, mind and consciousness which is withheld from the non-human sphere through the enforcement of a hyper-separated 'rational' vocabulary. Once they are viewed as machines or automata, minds are closed to the range and diversity of their individual and collective mind like qualities. (108)

The possibility that non-human are superior to human is suppressed or denied. The innate quality of resourcefulness of nature is denied so as to exploit the nature. The marvelous diversity of nature is promoted only if it contributes to the human interest. The pure natural entities are commodified in accordance with anthropocentric value. The scientists have used their genetically engineering replacement of natural species to serve their interests and to contribute to the industrialism. The best example is the hybridity which may cause the extinction of some species.

The biocentrists believe on the interdependency of everything on the earth with one another for their existence. In other words, bio-centric values range from a

vague feeling of oneness between humanity and nature to the idea that nature has rights and deserves justice. It takes the earth or the nature as a mother figure that protects each species existing in the earth. Human as the gift of nature, should not interfere in the natural evolution of other species. Biocentrism insists that if there is the extinction of any species that should happen naturally. Regarding human as an intimate part of the natural environment, the bio-centric view has been established as a scientific theory. Society as an eco-system is accompanied by the living and non-living things to make it run smoothly. So, every natural entity has an equal share of the nature. Each natural thing is interdependent for its existence. Human beings because of the deep-rooted anthropocentric belief do not acknowledge their own existence as the other creatures in the nature to which the healthy biosphere is a necessity for survival as Val

Plumwood posits:

People under their influence, such as those from the western cultural traditions in which anthropocentrism is deeply rooted, develop conceptions of themselves as belonging to a superior sphere apart, a rational sphere of exclusively human ethics, technology and culture dissociated from nature and ecology. This self-enclosed outlook has helped us to lose touch with ourselves as creatures that are not only cultural beings but also natural beings just as dependent on a healthy biosphere as other forms of life. (99)

As aforementioned, the western culture as well as religion, Christianity, assumes the natural resources as the property of human beings. Moreover, though no human existence is possible without nature, human beings are eager to challenge the nature through technology.

Because of the over population and industrial development, our dwelling place, the earth, is threatened to collapse. The green writers and environmentalists are worried about the future of our planet. Our wanton and thoughtless misuse of natural resources like land, use of poisonous pesticides in agriculture, overuse of toxic gases, pollution on water and air, and our willingness to destroy whole landscape in the name of 'construction' and 'progress' are the causes behind environmental destruction. Our anthropocentric mind is leading ourselves to the destruction. The production of nuclear weapons, toll road projects, mining schemes and the large dam projects all over the world are the major causes of environmental degradation. Whatever is going on in the name of technology is always in opposition to nature. Even more, the scientists are trying to replace nature with artificiality using the technologies like greenhouse effect and genetic engineering. So, the environmentalists nowadays have risen the questions like do we really hate the world? Can we live in artificiality? Have we really ignored the nature? are really genuine. Such kind of consciousness among the people throughout the world is needed for the longevity of the planet.

The rapid industrial or scientific development in the present world is taken as the benefit of human beings whereas their effect on the environment is ignored. Nowadays, human beings have lost sight on the fact that they are undercutting the very source of life by contaminating the water they drink, poisoning the land they cultivate, sparing the food and polluting the air they breathe. Knowingly or unknowingly, people are undermining their own existence as species. Regarding oneself as the conqueror of the world, people are inviting the collapse of the very planet where they dwell. Human beings have forgotten the inter-connectedness of plants and animals, living and non-living beings and all of them with human. They are

unaware of their state as microcosm in macrocosm; the whole ecosystem. If the existence of the ecosystem collapse, then the human existence is not possible.

Around the end of nineteenth century, Europe and America became increasingly urbanized because of which the attitude towards nature began to undergo transformation. The then wilderness of nature taken as threat to human settlement began to be celebrated. The nature; the untamed natural landscapes at that time was taken as opposite to civilization. So, by the end of nineteenth century, natural wilderness was taken as precious resource. It is because of the continual disappearing of natural landscapes in Europe and America. The so-called civilization or urban expansion in turn, seemed to produce pollution, overcrowd and various social and environmental problems. Because of which the movement of 'back to nature' flourished in the United States. Gradually this nature loving sentiment played significant role in the foundation of national parks (Hannigan 40). Thus, the wilderness of nature was once a hindrance to our civilization; now, regarded as the great enhancement for social progress.

Due emphasis on environmentalism brought a debate among scientists that it causes the downfall of scientific development. Scientists began to be separated in parts regarding this issue. Later, the rising concern about radioactive fallout, pesticide poisoning, over population, urban smog became the inclusive factor for the scientific theory and environmental problems. The writers and thinkers like Rachel Carson, Barry Commoner, Paul Ehrlich, Garrett Hardin functioned as scientific populisers. Aldo Leopold's '*Land Ethic*' was featured prominently for the fusion of ecology and ethics. The book expresses the view that human interference in biotic communities not only affects it but is a wrong thing to do (Hannigan 45).



The industrial culture has caused the environmental rape. The runaway technology, whose only law is profit has, for years, poisoned our air, ravaged our soil, stripped our forest bare and corrupted our water resources. The capitalists claim that they are solving human difficulties by means of the invention of new technologies. But they are unaware of the fact that such technologies have fatal consequences regarding environment. Concerning such ecological crisis, Barry Commoner explains the fatal consequences led by human activities as he sees a great threat for survival on earth. As he describes, the human society with the whole eco-sphere is stepping towards the collapse. He states:

If we are to survive, we must understand why this collapse now threatens. Here, the issues become far more complex than even the ecosphere. Our assaults on the ecosystem are so powerful, so numerous, so finely interconnected that although the damage they do is clear, it is very difficult to discover how it was done. By which weapon? In whose hand? Are we driving the ecosphere to destruction simply by our growing number? By our greedy accumulation of wealth? Or are the machines' which we have built to gain this wealth the magnificent technology that now feeds us out of neat packages, that clothes is in manmade fibers, that surrounds us with new chemical creations –at faults ? (12)

Ecological cycles are hard to fit into human experience in this age of technology where machines play significant role. So, they have broken out of the circle of life converting its endless cycle into man-made linear events. The blind assault of modern technology and greedy accumulation of wealth by human has corrupted the earth's

limited resources. They are accustomed to feed them out of neat packages, clothes them in manmade fibers that surrounds them with new chemical creations.

The earth's living organism that is forced to sustain a random change in its organization is almost certain to be damaged rather than improve. Modern technology wants to improve on nature to fulfill human needs which are superior to those available to man by nature. But the means produced by modern technology are faulty because they can do nothing good to earth's ecology except bringing it to the collapse. In this sense, they have been turned into cruelest and most ruthless of all species. Their innate self centeredness and aggressiveness is the main cause of environmental crisis.

The fear of a poisoned world is increasingly pressed, debated in the recent years. The discussion about toxicity came into fore because of the anxieties of late industrial culture which can be "defined as expressed anxiety arising from perceived threat of environmental hazard due to chemical modification by human agency"(Buell 30). Though the toxic concern dates back to antiquity, it is greatly intensified in recent years along with the incidents like Chernobyl accident and atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which ensured the environmental apocalypse in the history of post industrialism. Such anxiety has also made people engaged in green activism and to follow the anti-toxic campaign which has changed the face of environmental advocacy. The people involved on such activism were middle class white elites who identify themselves as mainstream preservationists. Regarding the toxic penetration throughout the world, Rachel Carson insists, "for the first time in the history of the world, every human being is now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals from the moment of conception until death" (Carson 15). It means to say that the toxicity is being so universal that no human being can escape from it. The environmental justice

activists have invoked that the population groups, communities and the whole earth is contaminated by occult toxic networks. Carson's campaign to restrict the use of chemical pesticides was supported by the then President of US, John F. Kennedy, who warned the United Nations that "every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable" (Buell 39). Carson even takes the pesticide industry as 'a child of the Second World War' which will bring the consequences like killing, victimize, corpses, and massacre. '*Refuge*' (1991) by Terry Williams is another work of nature writing produced under pressure of toxic anxiety which unfolds a double plot of a Utah wildlife sanctuary endangered by a rise in the Great Salt Lake and of the women in Williams' family maimed by cancer that might have been caused by downwind fallout from a decade of aboveground nuclear tests at Yucca Flats, Nevada (Buell 46). It shows that environment becomes much more important to the understanding of life that it previously used to be.

The life on earth is in danger because of the over use of nuclear power, chemicals, toxic gases that produce chlorofluorocarbon thereby causing ozone-layer deflection. But the scientists, neglecting the endangered life on the earth, are curiously trying to explore life in other planets which is compared to the ancient Romans' dual existence as Buell quotes from Roger Payne's book *Among Whales*, where Payne argues:

We were the generation that searched Mars for the most tenuous evidence of life but could not rouse enough moral outrage to stop the destruction of the grandest manifestations of life here on earth. We will be like the Romans whose works of art, architecture and engineering we find awesome but whose gladiators and traffic in slaves are mystifying and loathsome to us. (196)

Thus, the so-called scientific invention neglects the life here on earth which is in danger rather it tries to escape from this planet to the next. So, arising environmental consciousness among human beings is the first and foremost thing to do for the longevity of the planet.

The world of living and non-living things can jointly be presented through literature that can urge the necessity of preservation of nature. Through literature, the vision of apocalypse can be exposed to everyone about what kind of nature their present activities will bring. The ecosystem used to be balanced by itself in ancient time until people conquer over it. Different kinds of natural processes like flood, starvation, plague used to balance the ecosystem then. But the rapid technological and industrial development of present era is becoming unbearable to nature. Nature cannot bear the present scenario of pollution that can be recovered with. Modern world invites the apocalypse through their normal activities, lack of reverence towards nature and overuse of artificial products that are harmful to nature. For example, the maximum reproduction of carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbon, ultraviolet rays, radioactive rays and toxic acids and pesticides are the major causes of environmental pollution. Therefore, if we do not care the environment, an unimaginable disaster could fall upon us. The catastrophic event may cause a great damage not only on the species but even on the planet and its existence. So, literature can be a wise medium to evoke human for environmental conservation giving-up their anthropocentric culture.

Nadine Gordimer's *Get A Life* exposes the horror of the destruction that is being hastened in the name of science and progress by humanity. Though most of Gordimer's works has been shaped by the struggle against apartheid, *Get A Life*'s significance lies in the activists' thrust for conservation, and as the first truly green

novel published in post-apartheid Africa. The novel engages in some crucial contemporary debates in the South African public sphere and situates them in the context of the twenty-first century. The novel turns upside down the then South African reality. That is the battle for the survival of the wonderful natural landscape of the wild coast of South Africa, threatened by the proposed pebble bed nuclear-reactor project, toll highway in Pondoland and dams in the Okavango delta. In the name of industrial development, the government of South Africa permits the multinational companies to exploit the native landscape. For instance, the mines will be worked out in forty years, but by then the coastline and the villages will be gone forever. So, the environmental activists like Paul Bannerman, Derek and Thapelo opposes the projects that may cause the destruction of the South African landscape or nature.

The narrator of the novel says, "The direst of all threats in the world's collective fear beyond terrorism, suicide bombing, introduction of deadly viruses, fatal chemical substances in innocent packaging, Mad Cow Disease- is nuclear capability" (99). The optimum level of anthropocentrism can be seen in the novel that examines its effects not only on South Africa but even the existence of the planet, the earth. The competition of the production of nuclear weapons among the developed and developing countries turns out to be self-destructive. The misuse of natural entities not only imbalance the ecosystem but even threaten the existence of our living planet, the earth. Gordimer's notion of the rejection of industrialism for the sustainable environment is well-projected in the novel.

Her hero, an ecologist, suffering from thyroid cancer, allows her to explicate variety of strategies, above all, paralleling microcosm and macrocosm. Paul's body as a microcosm is threatened by aggressive group of cells, it can be mapped against the

threat to South Africa from exploitation of its natural beauty in the name construction and progress. Destruction of the environment for the fulfillment of human desires is rejected because no life is possible without the existence of the earth. Moreover, establishing a thyroid cancer in the body of a man who worries about the health of the planet allows Gordimer to focus on global politics.

The novelist even brings the garden image where the protagonist of the novel contemplates over several significant issues like his own existence, his family relationships, and the existence of the planet and so on. Paul's hours in the garden are also one of the turning points in the novel. He promises to become a conservationist in the same garden which also becomes his conversation partner in his loneliness. So, the garden is taken as his personal Eden where he realizes the importance of nature conservation for the longevity of human existence as well as the planet. Gordimer, in the novel, presents some natural processes of the divine creation such as the grandest ecosystem of the Okavango delta which renews itself for the continuation of life in the coastline. The survival system in one of the eagle species also exhibits the importance of nature conservation. The eagle family has to lose one for the survival of the other that is the older brother; Cain will always kills the younger one, Abel for its survival.

The present research aims at unveiling the fatal consequences regarding the natural environment that may result because of the industrial culture and scientific development. Though the industrial production eases human life but the same industrial wastes cause harmful effects upon not only the environment but even on the human existence. The novelist, bringing the South African environment in her novel, reflects her critique against anthropocentrism. In other words, Gordimer, discussing on the environmental significance, challenges the injustice done by the industrial culture regarding environment. The research even questions the logic of industrialism,

which sees hope in modern industrial progress, showing the catastrophic situation it may bring. The writer's advocacy for bio-centric unity through the environmental issues is well projected in the text. The main aim of this research is to project how the writer advocates for environmentalism rejecting the industrial culture.

This research is divided into three chapters. The first section is the introductory part of the research. This chapter portrays the problematic issues of the novel that the research tries to address. It also exposes how the environment is being destructed by means of the industrial development. In this section, the theoretical discussions of Val Plumwood, John Hannigan, Laurence Buell and many others are enhanced while elaborating the methodology. Likewise, the second section critiques the logic of industrialism. While doing so, the evidences from the text are analyzed. This chapter also crystallizes the bio-centric advocacy of the novel. And the remaining chapter concludes the whole research and asserts the preservation of the natural environment for the longevity of the human existence as well as the planet.

## II. Critiquing the Logic of Industrialism: Bio-centric Advocacy in *Get A Life*

Gordimer's *Get A Life* is a novel dealing with environmental issues regarding the situation of the post-apartheid South Africa. The main character in the novel, Paul Bannerman is an ecologist who along with his colleagues, fights against the noxious projects proposed to be launched in South African pristine landscape. Gordimer, a political activist, in her later writings gives prominence to environmental issues in her homeland. Her motive is to reject the so-called industrial progress that results in the environmental destruction. Throughout the novel, the three characters Paul, Derek and Thapelo protest the noxious programs thereby collaborating with the environmental institutions.

The novel shows how the industrial culture destructs the pristine environment and natural landscapes thereby evoking the development of the harmful programs, the development disaster. Gordimer manifests the unimaginable consequences that may come because of the rapid progress in science and industry thereby rejecting the environmental protection. The South African government is also giving permission to the Australian, European and American companies to run the noxious programs, which destruct the indigenous landscape. It means the government itself ignores the environmental degradation to achieve the so called progress in industrialism and economic status.

Paul, Derek and Thapelo, the activists think that the development of the pebble-bed nuclear reactor, Pondoland national toll highway, the dams in the Okavango Delta and mining scheme, have broad-based environmental and social consequences in the surrounding landscape. Their constant rejection of the launching of such programs in their native land exposes their environmental instinct. By looking at the work of the foreign companies and their investment in South Africa, Gordimer tries not to show how the support for economic success of her country, rather they are exploiting the natural resources.



In *Get A Life* the battle is for the survival of the wonderful indigenous landscape of the Wild Coast of South Africa, threatened by the pebble-bed nuclear reactor project, the dams and the toll highway. These programmes will run for a limited period, but the natural landscape, the villages, and coastline will be lost forever, and the reconstruction of the bygone is impossible. So, each of the human beings of the world have the responsibility to conserve the surrounding environment for the betterment of the self and the other and in this connection, the South African *Bill of Rights* (1996) states:

Every one has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well being; and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of the present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development. (*Bill of Rights*. Ch. 2, Sec. 24)

Gordimer's *Get A Life* addresses the state of affairs concerning to the violation of the rights in South Africa. The very government is violating the environmental rights thereby giving the promotion to the fatal programs which are the direct threat to the environment. The discussion of a pebble-bed nuclear reactor, "hugely adjunct to existing dangers of Koeberg" (113) is the prominent one. The ecological development in South Africa is disturbed by the experiment of such nuclear project which can become "slower means of development taking the form of destruction" (84). The so-called progress for humanity may result in destruction.

The second evidence of the violation of the environmental rights is the national toll highway planned in Pondoland, "the great botanical treasure" (84) which will displace the Amadiba people living on the wild coast; or an Australian company wanting to mine dunes and destroy the coastline of the same area. The coastline, the trans-world company claims

"has sixteen million tons of heavy minerals and eight million tons of ilmenite, one of the biggest mineral sand deposits in the world" (84) which can uplift the economic status of South Africa thereby attracting the foreign investment. But the activists, Paul, Derek, and Thapelo protest against the decision made by government claiming that the mines will be worked out in forty years, but by then the coastline and the villages will be gone forever (85). And this all happens while, Gordimer tells us, South Africa has signed and ratified the International Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan. One of the characters asks, "how's the Minister heading off to tell the World Convention we're going to allow a four-lane highway through one of the named hotspots of global diversity?" (185). In her review of the novel, Jacqueline Rose suggests that "it is one of the productive tensions of *Get A Life* that Gordimer looks to the earth, the political control of which has never ceased to be her topic" (20). Her point here is that Gordimer expresses the political intervention over the indigenous landscape.

The Okavango delta, primal feature of creation which can be seen from outer space, is the place where the government proposes to build ten dams claiming "the great dams are promised to gather water to slake the thirst of human populations and the industries which employ and feed them" (90). The Okavango project is taken as the grandeur project of hydroelectricity which can light vast area of darkness in Africa. But the disastrous consequence that may bring is ignored. Gordimer's vehement criticism on anthropocentrism can be illustrated as she expresses "the Okavango could never have been planned on a drawing-board by the human brain" (90). But in the name of industrial development, the South African government even permits the foreign companies to destroy the coastline which is one of the finest creation on the earth. That is to say, through the dams, which will not be visible from outer space, "all this beautifully managed balance will be wrecked" (92) and the natural beauty of the Okavango will be destroyed.

Gordimer in this novel challenges the logic of industrialism showing the downfalls of the industrial culture. The logic of industrialism is to achieve economic success with the maximum utilization of the natural resources. As industrialism refers to the massive transfer of labour from agriculture to the manufacturing sector, the agrarian culture begins to be transformed into the industrial culture. The industrial culture promotes the scientific and technological development thereby ignoring the environmental culture. The technological development comes in opposition to environmentalism. The only motto of the industrialism is to get economic success and to live the sophisticated lifestyle. The industrial products serve to the human life to maintain higher standard along with good income to the industrialists. It creates a economic gap among human beings in the society. Not only are those, the raw materials needed to the industry exploited from the natural resources. The large scale industries even pollute the land and air around where they are established. Even the scientific and technological development harms natural environment and biosphere.

The novelist critiques the logic of industrialism throughout the novel exposing the harmful effects done by it. The great scientific development even causes unbearable damage to human beings and the surrounding environment. While analyzing the disastrous consequences brought by the scientific development to human beings and environment, John Hannigan in his book *Environmental Sociology* states:

Risks attached to events such as chemical spills and radiation poisoning are more than the unfortunate byproducts of industrialism and capitalism. Rather, they are a testament to the failure of social institution, most notably science, to control new technologies. Such risks transcend both space and time, extending well beyond the geographic source, and temporally, beyond the present generation. The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Ukraine is a dramatic illustration of this. (23)

Hannigan's point here is to demonstrate the nuclear accident that causes vast disaster among the people around and the landscape as well. Gordimer, through her character, tries to alert the government about similar catastrophe. Her hero, Paul works against "development" in the form of highways and dams that would cut off or maim major ecological systems and rural life, which are also threatened by a new form of atomic energy plant. The narrator in the novel says; "The direst of all the threats in world's collective fear beyond terrorism, suicide bombings, introduction to deadly viruses, fatal chemical substances in innocent packaging, Mad Cow disease-is still nuclear capability" (99). Popular protest against nuclear energy is not something the industrialized world as a whole tends to support. The industrial culture tends to universalize its domain in one or the other way.

Gordimer believes that people are living in an insane era in which as Rose argues "there are wars going on over who possesses weapons that could destroy all trace of it" (20). The activists in the novel are urging the common people and those aware of environment to join hands to protest against the establishment of nuclear reactor centres. Their claim is that such kind of projects not only possess the natural resources, and mines but also test the nuclear weapons thereby inviting apocalypse. So, they call those nuclear weapons as the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" (100). While discussing about the direst situation the nuclear weapon may result and the global intervention of USA, Gordimer posits:

The proposed reactor based on the harmless pebble as small boy takes home from the beach is a component in the production of Weapons not likely to be overlooked by the inquiry into nuclear facilities that is becoming vigilant all over the world, far if not near, since the power with a foot on everyone's doorstep, the USA, is one that doesn't support the nuclear non-proliferation requirements of efforts towards nuclear disarmament, except when this suits USA ambitions. (100)

The nuclear projects, using the common resource of nature, produce the deadly weapons that can destroy the world. Likewise, despite the catastrophe of the Iraqi, Afghani adventure, the USA government has not quivered in its belief that the question of which countries or rulers has the right to destroy other country, and possibly the whole world is one it alone must decide. This does not mean that the USA is on the side of non-proliferation unless this suits its ambitions. All this kind of wars and cold wars are happening because of the possession of nuclear weapons. Gordimer, bringing the reference of the possession of nuclear weapons in Libya and Iran, tries to expose the deadly consequences caused by nuclear power.

Gordimer makes it clear that people live in the time of environmental threat which can endanger their survival as species in the planet. Derek while talking with his friends states "Do you know about the danger, what the babies breathe in from the day they are born?" (113). The babies are haunted by the fear of destruction right from their birth. But the government, ignoring this state of situation, grants license to the companies like Eskom, the government's Electricity Regulator to generate nuclear power. During the discussion, the three ecologists, Paul, Derek and Thapelo, point out to their friends that in their work they are facing "businessmen who have usually got other things on their calculators than extinction by nuclear leaks . . ." (114). Their friends do not believe the situation is so dire as it seems. Thapelo's response to her disbelief addresses the identification of the lack of consciousness about our place in a threatened environment. Thapelo says "That's the problem; we can't get people to believe. That's why Eskom's big bosses have been allowed by the government to spend one billion on developing the pebble-bed technologies" (114). Because of the economic benefit, the government ignores the environmental issues which may cause the end of the universe.

The threat of nuclear annihilation or environmental degradation exposed in the novel more or less challenges the industrial development. The environment conscious characters in the novel oppose the anti-environmental developments which may result in destruction. Gordimer, bringing the reference of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War Second, exposes the human potential of self-destruction of the entire species that is because of the industrial progress or scientific invention. The effects of the atom bomb in Japan last till now because of which still the disjunctive babies are born. Defining the backdrops of industrialization and its exploitative motive, the narrator in *Get A Life* expresses:

If you thrust a toll highway through the center of endemism, the great botanical marvel, and you gouge ten million tones of heavy minerals and eight million tons of ilmenite from sea sculpted landscape of sand dunes is not that the morality of survival. Is not that to industrialize? And is not industrialization, exploitation [. . .] ten dams for one delta seen from space. Civilization goes against nature.(168)

Gordimer here criticizes the industrial culture that only exploits and destructs environment in name of development. In other words, industrialization is self-destructive, disastrous and catastrophic. So, the environmental activists in the text vehemently oppose the development of nuclear reactor project.

The proposed construction of the toll highway by National Road Agency shows "the route of the highway plunges right through people's houses and fields" (85). This project demands the displacement of the Amadiba, a village of a natural beauty. Even the mining project also estimates the money that can be earned neglecting the destruction of the landscape forever. The only motive of the industrialization is to earn money in one or the other way. The government claims that after the completion of the highway and mining,

"tourism becomes our best income source" (85). The activists reduce the government scheme stating that nobody in the modern world will be amazed by the artificiality. The natural is universal and the dismantling of such environment brings catastrophe. Defining the consequences the toll road brings, Derek argues, "The government must open their eyes. See what is getting by in the name of development" (85). The so-called progress in science or industry causes the environmental devastation either directly or indirectly.

Gordimer, through her narrator, exposes the beauty of the complete ecosystem in the Okavango delta. The narrator states; "As a spider's web is the most fragile example of organization, and the delta is the grandest" (94), the formation of delta begins with the flow of rivers meeting and opposing thereby creating island out of the sand that the rivers carry; landscape within the waterscape. The rivers bring seeds which germinate to become dense forest. The rivers bring salt "six hundred and sixty ton a year" (91). The salt is sucked by the trees and pure water flows for the livelihood of fishes, predators of fish, the crocks, hippos, and fish eagles (92). It is how the Okavango delta renews itself as a complete ecosystem, as the solution of nature prevails in the end, "the entire organism named Okavango renews itself" (181). The backdrop of constructing dams in a river is illustrated by John Hannigan in his text *Environmental Sociology* where he, quoting Paul Ciccantel, claims:

Ciccantel illustrates the case study of Tucurui dam, built on the Tocantins River in the eastern Amazon in the 1980s as a joint venture between the Brazilian government and the Japanese International Co-operation Agency, [. . .] The Tucurui dam effectively cut off all river transport, forced the relocation of thirty thousand people, and transformed local ecosystems thereby causing threats to human health, local climatic changes, the proliferation of new plant and animal species, and the decline of existing species. (55)

The negative consequence of the dam is estimated by Gordimer through her activist characters who are opposing the construction of dams on the Okavango. Her point here is that the above case of Amazon may repeat in the delta if the dams are constructed. So, the progress on technology or industrialism may collapse the existence of human being or the whole eco-system.

The environmentalists and ecologists are worried about the destruction of natural world in the name of civilization. Human beings are knowingly destroying the whole landscape in the course of what we call 'progress' and 'construction' in the earth. In order to build a road we destroy several thousand acres of farmland and natural beauty forever, all in perfect optimism, without regret, believing we have achieved a lot and lost nothing. In order to build a dam, we destroy the perfect human inhabitants and surrounding eco-system forever, believing we have achieved a great success to ease human life. In order to build nuclear station, we destroy and exploit natural resources and proudly announce it as a great scientific achievement that uplifts the industrial revolution. The only thing that moves human mind at that time is the immediate advantage and not the permanent benefit to universe. Above all the only purpose of the novelist is to show how the indigenous landscapes and natural creations are destroyed in the name of industrial development and scientific invention.

Gordimer, in the novel, addresses the issues of environmental protection by reflecting upon the lives of characters defined by their social situation. She focuses on a suburban middle-class white ecologist, Paul Bannerman, along with his colleagues Derek and Thapelo. Among them, Paul is an ecologist protecting the environment from diverse threats, a nuclear power station among them. Adrian, his father, is an archaeologist at heart and his mother, Lyndsay, is a lawyer. Berenice, Paul's wife, is a copywriter in an international advertising company. During the time, the entire family has to confront a private



catastrophe in the form of thyroid gland cancer which affects Paul which is "confrontation with an unimaginable state of self. [. . .] It is a state of existence outside the continuity of his life" (67). Paul, an ecologist working in African Foundation for Conservation and Environment, who is opposing the establishment of nuclear reactor project in ecologically sensitive area, himself needs the treatment with radioactive iodine. As a result, he becomes radioactive and has to live in quarantine for two weeks. The epigraph of the book, taken from W.H Aden's *The Sea and the Mirror* (1944), "O what authority gives/existence its surprise" may have illustrated the surprised existence given to Paul by the authority/god. Ironically, an ecologist fighting against nuclear power, he becomes his "own experimental pebble-bed nuclear reactor" (59). Here Paul realizes the entrapment of the industrial products in human life.

The relationships of the Bannermans are contextualized within the threatened environment. It means the connection between the instability of relationships and the instability of ecosystems re-enforce in the exploration of Paul's life. Paul's illness and cancer not only affects his wife, but also his parents, whose long-term relation turns out to be fragile. His mother confronts with her past when she had a love affair for four years. She also confronts with the gap she and her son had during that time, everyone of the family members encounter with the cracks beneath the surface of their lives. Even Adrian divorces with Lyndsay and marries with their Norwegian Guide in Mexico, Hilde. Paul's cancer even pushes his wife and son, Nikolas, away from his lives, though for some period. All this sparse state of the family member is analogically related with the scattered and destroyed environment by means of the industrial projects and programs. Moreover, Paul and Berenice who have the opposite direction in their work, there is the incompatibility between the advertising industry and environmental protection. Benni's clients want to build hotels on the very land Paul struggles passionately to keep pristine.

Gordimer, while making her hero an ecologist who suffers from thyroid cancer, has several strategies. In other words, Paul's state of existence can be compared as the microcosm in relation to the state of South Africa, a macrocosm, as Jane Stevenson in her review of *Get A Life* says: "The threat to Bannerman's body by a small, aggressive group of cell begins unobtrusively to map itself against the threat to South Africa from exploitation beyond which a dry, fragile ecosystem can support" (2). The reference of Paul's cancer has a parallel meaning to the cancerous state of South Africa because of the contamination of the landscape by those disastrous projects. Paul, when becomes radioactive, is forced into perception of the impact of radiation on the miniature ecosystem that is family. Likewise the noxious programs in the country may have effect upon the inhabitants of the land, and the ecosystem it covers.

Gordimer, while critiquing the industrial culture brings the issue of globalization and its impact on environment. The novel captures the atmosphere of globalization through the main character Paul's international education, his parents traveling overseas and his sisters scattered in various geography of the world. Even the frequent contact of the characters to the foreigners can be taken as blurring the boundaries between the local and the global. The European, American and Australian companies working in South Africa also shows the globalization which forms the capitalist society. Though capitalism somehow helps to uplift the economy; it rather exploits the poor people and the pastoral wilderness. The novelist even lends her pen to raise awareness about the thousands of HIV-positive orphans living in South Africa, as well as the exploitation of the natural environment in the country, a pressing issue of local and global politics in the 21st century.

References to the twenty-first century international events like September 11, 2001 attack on Twin Tower, the Iraq war, Gaddafi's decision to renounce Libya's possession of nuclear power or the contemporary events in South Africa like the "last election and

President's appointment of a woman as minister of Justice" (164) definitely bring the narrative into present-day context. Relating all these events, Gordimer tries to show the uncertain future of not only South Africa but also the whole planet. The possession of nuclear capability in various countries and the severe exploitation of natural entities thereby devastating the ecosystem may cause the self-destruction of human species and the planet. Gordimer raises the issue of environment for the existence of life on earth and to balance the natural resources and ecosystem. Her motive behind making her characters to travel different places like an advertising agency, a fashionable suburban Chinese restaurant and series of tourist destinations in Mexico and even the Norway is to expose the concept of global village. People and the government nowadays are connected with the whole globe through the global economy, culture and politics. This little bit helps in development but the intervention in politics and natural resources by the powerful nations cause the fatal consequences of war and destruction. The best example can be the USA's intervention in Iraq and Iran that is to possess the oil and gas resources of those countries. So, the concept of globalization presented in the novel as the European, American, and Australian companies in South Africa may cause the destruction not only of environment but also of the existence of human species, and the planet.

The novel is set in postcolonial Africa where the possession of land and environmental resources is a pressing issue. By writing nature in ecological term and then through elaboration of its historical moment, this novel can be thought of plausibly as a version of postcolonial eco criticism. The novel raises the issues of the political and economic intervention by the so-called powerful western nations in the name of multinational companies. The Australian mining company and the other European companies still try to control over South African citizens and the landscapes even after the end of the colonialism. They try to continue the colonial legacy in the African land so as to exploit its natural resources thereby claiming the growth of the economic success. Gordimer as a political

activist herself has fought against the colonial and apartheid system in Africa. As South African citizens become able to liberate themselves from colonialism, the colonialists in one or the other way, still try to intervene the previously colonized people and resources. So, Gordimer through the use of the literature is constantly opposing the colonizers in new guise. Because of the rampant exploitation by the colonizers, South Africa has become empty from inside. Later on, after the end of colonization, a few African elites rule over the citizens thereby continuing the colonial legacy. They work as foil to colonial rulers and that is what the novel here challenges. The exploitation of natural resources in the name of the development and progress is what the colonialists do in South Africa. So, the novel can be taken as the version of postcolonial eco-criticism as it rejects the devastation of natural entities by the multi-national companies from the colonial countries.

Paul, being a radioactive, has to live in quarantine for sixteen days because of the danger to others who come in contact with him. Paul's analysis of his present situation takes place in the Garden of his parent's home, the garden of his childhood the very place where he discovered his later vocation, "What do you do when you have no obligation, no everyday expectation of yourself and others?" (22). Paul, a thirty five years old man reduced to the status of the child helpless in his mother's care, rapidly finds himself gravitating to the garden where he spends most of his time. As an ecologist, it is obvious to be interested to nature. Since, it is the garden where he grew up; several critics opine it as his personal Eden (Gardam, Stevenson). It is the place of his lost innocence, of his first confrontation with sexuality and death. Thus, Paul remembers the garden as his own childhood wilderness where he and his friends played with crickets and experimented "mutual masturbation" (50), and fought each other. It is the place where he kills snail and even a dove which he buried in the garden. Now, he realized that "there is a ceiling at which compassion begins, lowly creatures are below it. That is the innocence that remains unchanged in a garden" (38, 39).

The above recollection of Paul's childhood garden exposes the human connectedness with nature. Paul gets companion by the garden when he feels lonely.

Nature does not discriminate rather incorporates everything within it, both good and bad. Paul's radioactive state caused by the industrialization is recovered by the wilderness of nature. Here, nature can be regarded as healer or it has healing capacity. Paul contemplates over several issues while remaining in the garden, even his confrontation with death. Nature energizes him to live and to fight against not only of his personal problem but even the threatened planet. What invigorates him is his witty, irreverent black colleague Thapelo, a multi-linguist who visits regularly, scattering papers and news about Paul's abandoned work in the wilderness, paying no attention to cancer (Gardam 2). It is how Paul is collaborating with his colleagues in conserving African wilderness or environment.

As Paul spends his weeks in his childhood garden, he has time to think about whether the world will be destroyed slowly through disrupting natural formation and pattern of life or rapidly through nuclear holocaust. His thinking of the disrupted condition of his country because of the apartheid and colonial rule may slowly destroy not only his nation but even the world. But Paul's greater fear is the danger of nuclear power that may bring nuclear holocaust and destruct the whole world in a minute (Howe, 31). Though the garden is the place where this future conservationist was introduced to the moral choice that death imposes- the bird ought not to be killed but the snails squashed serve for protecting plants (50). It is his spontaneous attraction towards nature, then and now. Paul while remembering the thriving life in the garden, realizes, "Nothing outside doors and walls is ever really tamed" (50). Paul even remembers the wet-lands of St. Lucia he walked recently, "Only out there, the garden, could the wilderness be gained" (51). Paul's apprehension of nature throughout the narrative is presented as circling about the basic opposing between the social as category and nature as a relation of attractive freedom. So,

Paul's hours in the garden not only attracts him to nature and gives him relief from his stress, it even evokes him in the conservation of wilderness for the survival of human beings as well as the planet. Moreover, he realizes that the scientific invention always remains below nature because the nature is taken as the greatest scientist of all (20).

The vast natural beauty of South Africa is recently recognized by the world heritage cite as calling it "The Cradle of Mankind" (115). It is believed that the first human was survived in African land. Moreover the narrator of the novel discussing about evolution of human beings expresses, "Thirteen Dolomite limestone caves, fossils remains of plants, animals and hominids- they are early member of human family. [. . .]. You should go and get a sense of these places, the nearest is quite close to us in Johannesburg" (115). The narrator even more claims "an evolutionary adaptation that lasted in Africa for a million years" (115). So, the land of the Homosapiens is now threatened to be destroyed because of the industrial development achieved by the same generations of the first humans. The god gifted beauty of nature is now exploited in one or the other means by the human beings for the benefit of their everyday life. The places where the indigenous animals are living is conquered by the leisure industry thereby driving them away. Their motive behind it is the industrial and urban expansion, and to build resort/hotels where the environment will not survive in this kind of development. The group of business companies, the narrator states, "lobbying the government with assurance of exceptional tourist potential, economic uplift of the surrounding region", bring the "scheme such as to build a hotel, casino, yacht, marina as part of the vast drainage plan the government envisages" which is no other than "development disaster" (57). It is no other than the empowerment of industry neglecting the environment because the construction of marine in the nature causes the destruction of forest as the narrator suggests, "The irreplaceable forest felled to make way for the casino, the fish floating belly up in all that is left off water-course diverted to feed an Olympic- size

swimming pool" (57). The novelist here envisions the destruction of natural landscape and environment in the name of tourism industry.

Paul's hour in the garden can be linked with the legend of Adam as Stevenson in her review says, "though Paul's new perception can no more be unlearned that the knowledge of good and evil, so he is expelled from unthinking happiness" (2). His marriage survives the strain, while his parent's marriage never recovers from the cracks. Moreover, Lyndsay "finds herself recalling a four year affair ended fifteen years previously, and comes to realize that out of more desire for gratification, she lived a lie and deed irreparable damage" ( 2). Lyndsay realized that "The past cannot be undone like Eve, she has made a mistake and must live with her guilt" (Stevenson 2). The biblical reference shows the human follies which may affect throughout the life. And the pattern of life may sometimes lead to the positive works such as Paul's attraction to nature conservation and Lyndsay's adoption of HIV positive child.

The public awareness to do something about the environmental changes, threatening human existence as we know it on the planet has risen significantly after the numerous environmental disasters which have taken place around the world in the last decades. Along with this, the environment has become one of the most widely discussed issues in mass media at this time. Gordimer makes the same issue as the main focus point on her novel, *Get A Life*. Gordimer, in the novel, make the readers to arise consciousness to consider their place in a threatened natural world. Gordimer, after the end of apartheid in South Africa, shifts her focus from an anthropocentric to an eco-centric perception of the world which is a new field of inquiry for her. By centering the plot on the contradictions between popular protest against nuclear energy and politics of danger opposing opportunity for multinational expansion, Gordimer brings her writing in the present context.

After the invention of gun powder, compass and printing press in renaissance period, the world began to be industrialized. Even after the industrial revolution in Europe, especially in England, the world slowly headed to the urbanization and capitalization as well as industrialization. The rapid progress in industrial development was taken as granted but the fatal consequence it had brought was always neglected. The industrial wastes began to affect the natural environment gradually. Then the issue of environmental protection comes into existence because of the overuse of natural resources for industrial products. The development of nuclear reactor projects, toll highways and huge dams causes the destruction of the environment because of which the issue of environment become pressing issue as outlined by Cheryll Glotfelty in her seminal work on eco-criticism, *The Eco-criticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996); "The troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems" (XX). The human activities nowadays are becoming self-destructive that may endanger the species in the world as well as the existence of the planet.

Gordimer, in the novel, makes clear that we live in a time of environmental and other threats which can endanger the survival of different species. The nuclear threat still exists as the direst of all threats like terrorism suicide bombing, deadly viruses, fatal chemical substances and mad cow diseases. The nuclear capability, as Daniel Swift in the review of *Get A Life* states, "is the most haunting of all and this is precisely because of its ready availability as a metaphor as well as mechanism of destruction". Swift moreover reviewing the novel expresses, "The novel is about all of our fears of destruction but also of contamination, alienation and enforced solitude." And the novel raises awareness about disturbing environmental developments not only in South Africa, but globally. In other words, the rapid industrial development destructs the environment because of the production of noxious gases, chemicals, pesticides and the self destructive, "weapons of



mass destruction" (100). Gordimer through the novel manifests the self destructive nature of industrial and scientific progress thereby advocating for the threatened life of species as well as the planet.

Gordimer, through her eco-conscious characters, constantly opposes the self-destructive programs like the development of pebble-bed nuclear reactor, construction of toll highway, dams and mining in ecologically sensitive area. The main focus of the novel is to protest against the noxious programs brought by the multinational companies by showing the false statement of economic up-liftment and poverty eradication. The characters in the novel have the common opinion that such programs have more demerits than the merits. Although the development of pebble-bed reactor may employ few people and may light few villages, but the effect of radioactive rays that come out of it may harm the whole people around South Africa. Even the disposal of nuclear waste is another problem because such waste causes harmful effect to the environment and even causes the barrenness in land. So, Gordimer making her characters constantly revolting against the establishment of nuclear reactor does give prominence to environmentalism.

The disastrous plan the conservationists oppose is the construction of the Pondoland toll highway project that slices the Amadiba village into two and even destroys the rich botanical treasure. Derek while discussing with his colleagues in the garden confesses the reason to stop the plan and its catastrophic consequences as he posits:

There is a strong coalition campaigning to stop a new national highway from being sliced through the Pondoland Coast, incredibly rich botanically. Even been there? [. . .]. That toll highway must never be; for the plant life and the people life, the Amadiba live there. (115)

Thus, Gordimer through her characters advocates for the preservation of nature for a complete ecosystem and existence of the village and forest. Her point is that environment should not be destroyed in the name of development. The development is to be done both to the benefit of human and environment. The development of toll highway may remove the cost of the transportation and few people can maintain their life from the compensation or share given to them, but the village and the natural beauty loses forever. So, prominence must be given to environment while constructing the development works.

The grandest organization of ecosystem, the Okavango delta, is under the verge of wreck because the government of South Africa is going to build ten huge dams to generate hydro-electricity. The Okavango, the beautifully managed ecosystem, has to be untouched to continue the life in surrounding region. The primal feature of natural creation which can be seen from the outer space is going to be destroyed in the name of progress and development. The villages near the delta are proposed to be transferred. The Eden treasure is threatened and the cosmic picture of the world seen from the outer space is going to be altered by the ten dams. The ecologists are fighting against the environmental destruction in collaboration with several environmental institutions. The people from the delta are resisting against it claiming. "No one will evict us from our ancestral lands. It is a gift from god, and our forefather's soil" (180). They do not want the delta to be wrecked in the name of development. They want to remain there for the sake of the natural beauty of the Okavango as well as to protect the land handed over by their forefathers.

The dams are referred to as 'total negations' of the elaborate natural ecosystem when the project to build ten dams in the Okavango is mentioned. Later, it is known that through the dams, which will not be visible from outer space, the beauty of the Okavango will be destroyed. Along with this there comes the awareness that the fragility of ecosystem loses its meaning within the framework of infinite time and renewal. The narrator mentions

"salt content" (95) that refers back to the complex ecosystem of the Okavango delta itself where it is told, large amount of salt which could lead to the destruction of the ecosystem, is being managed by the delta (92). While illustrating the renewable feature of the Okavango delta, Paul explains, "We do not know how the salt is managed" (92). Nature has solution which will prevail in the end; "The entire organism named Okavango renews itself" (181). And Paul knows that the delta will continue to renew itself, "as long as the earth is not ended by explosion of irreversible radiance. People do not live eternity; they live a finite now" (182). Through the exposition of the relation of people and the natural environment, Gordimer expands the notion of environmental world to include the entire eco-sphere, and its endangerment.

The constant fighting of the characters for the preservation of the pristine nature is worth enough because this earth is the only place where humans can exist. Despite the fact that Paul knows what he is doing to save the planet is "child's play, a fantasy, when you admit the pragmatism in nature" (169), the instinct to survive is there. The term "child's play", also the title of the first part of novel, refers to Paul's garden of his childhood where he discovered his vocation for conservationism. Paul feels that he must go on with his job after his father's death, even if in his almost insignificant capacity:

He had his sense of loss carried with him in the wilderness that still needed him and his team, Derek, Thapelo, always new threats to which there must be human solution (if your father dies do you now exist in his place, nature's solution). If there is a possibility for the dune mining project or the pebble-bed nuclear reactor to be outlawed that's proof that what is a vocation and avocation may be worth pursuing in the limited span of one individual's minuscule existence, not seen from space. (177)

As life is passed on from one generation to the next, human beings as part of the nature undergo the same process of renewal. Paul's vocation for nature conservation and the opposition of dune mining and nuclear project is worth taking though it seems insignificant as an individual. The great achievement is not what one scarifies but what one believes and behaves regarding environmental conservation in his mind. Paul as ecologists is constantly fighting for nature preservation though it seems insignificant as whole.

Gordimer brings the reference of the survival system in the nature. When the family celebrates holiday outing, Paul read a pamphlet about the breeding of eagles and the survival strategy of the chicks, he expresses:

Only two eggs, that's the entire clutch. It will happen next month, June. The first egg laid hatches and is followed about a week later by a second. The two chicks, known as Cain and Abel, the first born, Cain has already grown when Abel comes out of his shell. Cain and Abel fight and generally Abel is killed by Cain and thrown from the nest. The survivor is fed by both parents until around December when it is able to fly. . . Five years to reach the adulthood and black plumage . . . time for the eagle to find its own mate and territory. (167)

Gordimer, through the use of such reference, reflects on the morality of survival. The Cain throws Abel out of the nest to get the parents' feeding. The one who can struggle survives; it is the "way of keeping balance of nature" (167) because neither too many nor too few species need to survive. There must be balance between the natural entities and species.

Gordimer here opines that endangering the ecosystem for the development of industrialization is considered as morally viable when the economic advantage of the projects is used to uplift the poor. The story of Cain and Able can be compared in terms of conflict between nature and progress: industrialization and technological development may

destruct ecosystems, but it may also empower the economic status and uplift the poor. All in all, if industrialization and environmental protection go ahead keeping the balance, then it becomes beneficial for human kind, the earth, and other species.

Gordimer, while advocating for the superiority of nature over human development, brings some natural processes that purely exist. While Paul's family is going to visit a zoo, Paul focuses on a special kind of eagle found in Africa. He briefly discusses about physical structure, habitat, and reproduction system and family relationship of those eagles. He states:

The black eagle, *Aquila Verreauxii*, has been breeding at this cliff above waterfall since 1940. These highly territorial birds, with a weight of approximately five kilograms, a wingspan of 2.3 meters are one of the Africa's largest and most majestic eagles.[. . .]. The male performs spectacular courtship displays during the refurbishment. The pair mates for the life and take a new mate only if one should die. (160)

Through the natural life style of the majestic eagles, Gordimer tries to expose the existence and survival of each species in the earth. If human anthropocentrism goes on, the existence of such species come into danger. Likewise, Gordimer also brings reference of a desert plants and its nature of self-nourishment as Lyndsay knows "Leaves like buttocks; and elephantine lump of grey as a desert species from Namibia which stores water in its bulk for nourishment during the long dry years" (161). Such kind of plant is struggling for the survival and are preserving ecosystem in desert. Gordimer's intention here to bring such reference is each and everything; living or non-living, have their own existence and significance for the continuation of the ecosystem. No any species is superior to the other. So nature should be preserved and there must be egalitarian view over everything in the planet.

During the last part of the novel, most of the problems of the characters, in one or the other way, come to the resolution. The main character, Paul's effort to oppose noxious programs in the pristine environment is supported by various people and organizations. The initiation by the three ecologists later become a great party along with the institutions like Save the Earth, Earth Life, International River Network, the World Conservation Union, the Wild Life and Environmental Society who advocate for the conservation of natural landscape and discard the international companies and their intervention in South Africa. The three colleagues co-ordinate with all the green organizations and plan to perform programs for the longevity of the plant. Thapelo, while encouraging Paul to make him bold for the final objection of the mining project, toll road project and nuclear reactor project, suggests:

Get a life man!- Let's make up and bring a high-profile party of save-the-earthers to come as observers of what's at stake-not the low-voltage ones we have had-some pop stars who will compose songs for us, *Come rap for the planet*, prove they're good world citizens ... it's cool now for the famous to take up causes.(146)

The co-operation with green organizations and singers is to bring awareness among the people around the world. And opposition of the projects that destroy environment is to promote much larger project like the survival of the planet.

The novel ends hopefully as the cancer has been banished from Paul's body, the noxious project has been halted and the birth of the new baby who is unharmed by the radioactive father. The environmental activists have won the battle against the economic-oriented multi-national companies. Even the government of South Africa becomes compelled to renounce the projects that are harmful to the ecology and the citizens. Three activists celebrate as they hear the news of the halt of those projects which they were fighting for. The government Minister has set aside those projects hearing the voice of

activists and the local citizens. The news that "Minister of Environmental Affairs, Van Schalkwyk has set aside (abandoned? a for real no-no? may be) a decision made a year before this month of birth to construct the Pondoland Wild Coast toll road" (186) and the "Minister of Mineral and Energy has announced that the pebble-bed nuclear reactor is halted" (187) bring happiness among the activists as well as the local citizens. The activists urge that in the case of environment protection, the "Final license of destruction must never be admitted, granted, that's the creed. Work to be done" (187). The halt of program itself is a step towards success in the field of environment conservation as Gordmer says, "Success sometime may be defined as a disaster put on hold". The disastrous project has been put on hold and it should never be continued.

Like the environmentally fatal projects which are on hold, Paul's cancer is also halted. Paul's cancer can be compared to the South African cancer, caused by those environmentally fatal projects. As Paul is radioactive, the whole country is poisoned by the noxious programs. Paul's recovery from the cancer has something to do with South Africa because he realizes the environmental destruction caused in his country only after his meditation on his own life. So, he constantly fights against the fatal projects claiming "I am a conservationist, I am one of the new missionaries here not to save souls but to save the earth" (152). His commitment at last comes true as he along with his colleagues becomes success in halting those projects. As Paul's body is "All clear for the present; another scan may be, delayed for another decision" (187). The harmful projects are also set aside or delayed and they should not be granted the final license.

The newly-born baby in Paul's family also brings hope at the end of the novel. As the children are generally taken as the symbol of hope, Paul's younger son comes with the hope of bright future. The newly-born child "has emerged to take on the world with all necessary equipment, weapons two arms, two hands, ten prehensile fingers two legs, feet and toes

(Verify ten) " (186). He can handle all obstacles ahead of him while continuing his life on the earth. Likewise, Lyndsay's adoption of Klara, a black HIV positive child brings hope in the changing environment in South Africa. As Lyndsay adopts such child, the African society is becoming egalitarian and it arises hope in treating the environment as equally important for the existence of human being. Regarding the conservation of human existence and the environmental protection in the future, the forth-coming generation is there ready to battle against evil things. Revealing Gordimer's belief on future generation, Jane Gardam in his review of the novel argues, "Gordimer's unfaltering belief that there is always someone ready to do battle against evil (or idiot) notion and scientific coups, and to question easy solution" (Gardam 2). With all the critical projects which could endanger the environment on halt and the new baby's birth, the novel ends in hope.

To conclude, this novel advocates bio-centric laws which view all living and non-living creatures with equal eyes and sense of respect. The industrial culture and anthropocentric law gives prominence to human desire rather than the environmental stability which may result in the collapse of human existence as well as the planet. Indicating this fear, Gordimer advises all human beings to abandon the anthropocentric culture and adopt bio-centric world view for the continuity of life on the earth.

To save human existence, nature needs to be preserved because human beings are the evolutionary creatures of the nature. The nature or the environment is the greatest residence of all creatures. The so-called scientific and industrial development exploits the nature in one or the other way. That is why, to ensure one's existence, human beings need to conserve the nature rather than exploiting the natural resources. The nature- culture binary should be dismissed and human beings have to realize themselves as the minor creature of the nature. Only then the bio-centric world view can be established and the human beings and the planet can exist forever.



### III. Environmental Protection

As environmentalism is a concern for humanity's impact on the earth and its natural systems; the anthropocentric culture is exploiting the environmental resources.

The industrial culture has failed to know the significance of natural environment.

As a result, it is destroying the ecosystem in the name of progress and development.

While going through *Get A Life*, we come to know the extreme exploitation of the natural resources which pave the way for the need of conservation and protection of it. By analyzing the establishment of noxious projects in ecologically sensitive area like Amadiba and the Okavango delta, and the constant opposition of such projects by the eco-conscious characters and the environmental organizations, the present research advocates for biocentrism. Gordimer's *Get A Life* advocates for bio-centric and natural environment exposing the failure of industrial culture and its laws. The research discusses about the so-called industrial progress and its impact on the environment, and the natural wilderness. The rapid development in science and technology is taken for granted by the capitalist society whereas the fatal consequences it may bring on the existence of the environment as well as the existence of human life on the earth is ignored. In the novel, the South African government, in the name of economic development, invites the multinational companies to let them consume the natural resources of South African land. the focus point of this research is that the environment should be preferred while developing the industrial and economic status of the country.

Because of the blind superiority of human kind, the interconnectedness between human beings and environment is never realized. The intrinsic worth of nature and its contribution for the existence of human beings as well as all other living and non-living entities is always ignored in the industrial culture. The industrialists believe that the industrial development and economic upliftment is the only source of human happiness which can long-last human civilization. The anthropocentrists belief that the idea of the use of the earth as an economic resource which will eventually destroy both the earth and the human beings. The ecosystem which has its own renewal system is stunned by the industrial development which brings the tragic consequences in the earth cycle. The rapid industrial growth in the present has cut the very source of human life by contaminating the water they drink, poisoning the food, polluting the air they breathe. By exposing such human flaws, the novel *Get A Life* advocates for environmental culture or bio-centric world view. The writer exposes the noxious projects planned in South Africa such as nuclear reactor, toll roads, huge dams and mining scheme show the optimum level of anthropocentric culture. And showing the constant rejection of such projects by the characters like Paul, Derek and Thapelo, the novelist wants to raise awareness of the fact that people should conserve and respect nature. It also exposes the danger that if people ceaselessly destroy the

environment in the name of industrial progress, the natural world will collapse at the end.

The novelist advocates for nature and its significance for the continuity of life on earth. The garden image in the novel contributes for the gratification of nature which can heal human pain and avoid human loneliness as Paul gets solace from the garden in his crucial state of life and death. Likewise, Gordimer brings the issue of environmental laws and its violation by the very government instead of its effective implementation. The South African government itself permits to violate such rules thereby inviting the multinational companies. The government itself ignores the fact that it is one of the signatory of the International Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan

Firstly, this project foregrounds the issue of industrial development and its impact on the natural world. Secondly, it analyses and brings forth the effect of industrial culture and the significance of environmental protection. Thus by bringing forth the issue of environmental conservation, this study intends to deconstruct the human/nature dualism. Hence, the issue of environmental protection suggests that the natural world needs to be preserved for the existence of human beings as well as the planet. Although most of the events in the novel have been related to the industrialism, yet the significance of the preservation of nature is also presented.

To prove the environmental destruction by the industrial culture and the significance of environmental conservation, this study takes ideas from different scholars like Val Plumwood, John Hannigan, Laurence Buell and many others though they have different interpretations regarding environmentalism, they all have agreed on the issue of environmental protection for the longevity of the existence of human beings as well as the planet. These scholars opine that to save the planet and its natural piety, there must be the bio-centric vision/thinking. In the process of industrialization, no environment should be affected. The noxious programmes should be avoided and the environment friendly projects must be launched instead. The focus of the every government and people should be on renewable energy rather than the nuclear reactor projects which may destruct the whole world in a second.

To sum up, Nadine Gordimer's *Get A Life* is an example of depicting the downfalls of industrial culture and the need of environmental protection. Beside this, to make fewer demands on the planet's resources, we must reject naturalism and consumerism and accept low impact technology based on renewable energy. Therefore, to save the earth and the natural environment, bio-centric vision is the most essential aspect that human should develop; otherwise the existence of human beings as well as the world remains in danger.

## Works Cited

Bill of Rights. 1996. 5 May 2012.

<[http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96\\_cons/ htm#24](http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96_cons/htm#24)>

Buell, Laurence. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and Environment in the US and Beyond*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Cambridge: Houghton, 1962.

Commoner, Barry. *The Closing Circle*. New York: Bantam, 1972.

Gardam, Jane. "Nature's Cure" Rev. of *Get A Life*, Nadine Gordimer. *The Guardian* (2005) 2.

Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literacy Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" *The Eco-criticism Reader: Landmarks in Literacy Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty, and Harald Fromm. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Gordimer, Nadine. *Get A Life*. London: Bloomsburg. 2005.

Hannigan, John. *Environmental Sociology*, 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Howe, Florence. "Back to the Garden". Rev of *Get A Life*, by Nadine Gordimer. *The Women's Review of Books* 23.5 (2006) 30-31.

Payne, Roger. *Among Whales*. New York: Dell, 1995.

Plomwood, Vaul. "The Blindspots of Centrism and Human Self-enclosure". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Literary Ecology*. London: Georgia Press, 1996.

Rose, Jacqueline. "A Use for the Stones". Rev of *Get A Life*, by Nadine Gordimer. *London Review of Books* (2006) 20.

Stevenson, Jane. Rev. of *Get A Life*, by Nadine Gordimer. *The Observer* (2005) 2.

Swift, Daniel. "Quarantine is a Kind of Apartheid". Rev of *Get A Life*, by Nadine Gordimer. *The Telegraph* (2006) 4.