CHAPTER IV

AFTERMATHS OF ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE AND PURSUIT OF ENVIRONMENTALIST IN HELLO AMERICA AND RUSHING TO PARADISE

The works of the eco-conscious authors contributing to the British Literary tradition reveal that they are not only forming a rich tradition of green literature but are also active participating in the socio-cultural movement of the environment. Their literary motif is not just to create enchanting fantastical world to ensure the entertainment value of their works, but they are also transmitting a very important message pertaining to the environmental decay. Therefore, these authors can be considered as environmentalists and their work as their pursuit of conservation the endangered natural habitation and harmonious co-existence of man and nature. J. G. Ballard is one of the most significant contributors of the green literature, who throughout his literary career dealt with the environmental issues. The alternate universe created by Ballard is in fact a futuristic mirror image of the contemporary world. These novels are the most probable answers to the question that what are the changes that will occur in the natural cycles in the distinct future. This answer is always negative as the environmental problems were exaggerated and the world is either in the eye of storm or facing a trauma of post-apocalypse.

4.1. Hello America:

In Hello America Ballard goes a step ahead in exploring environmental degradation that eventually turns a green continent into a radio-hazardous west land. This transformation has several socio-cultural contexts which is clearly reflected in author’s note in the beginning of the novel. He writes –
The United States has given birth to most of our century’s dreams, and to a good many of its nightmares. . . . Skyscrapers and freeways, Buicks and blue jeans, film stars and gangsters, Disneyland and Las Vegas have together stamped the image of America onto the maps of our imagination.

The motif of the post-apocalyptic novel is not to explore the bright side of America but to focus the dark shades of her glittering. As he further adds that –

Cadillacs, Coca-Cola and cocaine, presidents and psychopaths, Norman Rockwell and the mafia . . . the dream of America endlessly unravels its codes, like the helix of some ideological DNA. But what would happen if we took the United States at its face value and constructed an alternative America from all these images? The simuclarum might well reveal something of the secret agenda that lies beneath the enticing surface of the American Dream.

The author’s note clearly depicts that Ballard is in attempt to bring forth the hidden agendas of today’s infrastructural, social, cultural, economic and political development of America that left an ample room to take a stand against the glittering world and mirror its dark image in the distinct future. Lawrence Buell and et.al in their article ‘Literature and Environment’ argues in the similar line of thought in connection to literary motif of the eco-conscious authors –

. . . creative depictions of environmental harm are unlikely to free societies from lifestyles that depend on radically
transforming ecosystems. But reflecting on works of imagination may prompt intensified concern about the consequences of such choices and possible alternatives to them. (2)

The action of the novel is set in post-apocalyptic North America that helps the novelist to bring together so many explorers in a long-abandoned and unliveable land. So many generations of American population before the year 2114 AD have been migrated to Asia, Europe and Africa because of ecological collapse. After a long period, a crew of explorers took an expedition of the American west land, in order to find out the reasons of ecological degradation and the source of increasing radioactive fallout.

Ballard systematically develops the characters in the novel, who, at the outset, come together to know the reasons behind environmental degradation; but they have also secret motives – through which Ballard exposes their psychological cravings either for glory or for devastation. The protagonist of the novel Wayne, who is brought up in the ghettos of America in Dublin, feels that he is attracted towards his former native but now abandoned land; and therefore, joins the European steamship SS Apollo, where he meets so many expatriates descended from America. All the expatriates including Wayne are fed up with endless rationing and subsistence living in Europe, where there is no opportunity of happy life and feel that American dream is a purest dream of all and heart of everything.

In the present novel Ballard has drawn an apocalyptic picture of north America which is abandoned by the people several generations ago. The American land has been made uninhabitable because of change
in the patterns of global weather due to the construction of dam in the
decade of 1990. The regular weather pattern has been reversed clock-wise
which causes to create radiation leading in creation of strange problems
like draught or freezing of the land.

In the present novel, ecological collapse has been used to parody
American cultural heritage which promises the triumph of liberalism at
the time of Cold War. Ballard distorts the promising face of America by
delineating the character of President Jerry Brown as a last President of
America, who at the time of ecological collapses, plans to create a
gigantic youth centre; but then left the plan for certain selfish purposes.
The Apollo crew members meet to various American aboriginals
including the survivors of the previous expedition who were on their
mission thirty years before. Gradually, the novel unfolds deeper
psychological elements of human psyche who try to establish their own
history without any traces of the past. In the end of the novel, Ballard
points out the crucial role that science plays in the life of human beings,
as it is used for the construction of new world in the form of nuclear
energy which assures a bright future and also sustains age old horror of
annihilation.

In the introduction to the novel, Ben Marcus rightly points out the
way Ballard has exposed ecological destruction as:

*Hello America* might as well be called *Goodbye America.*
Goodbye and so long, you monstrous, resource-sucking
nation, who raped the land and air, imposed your
hypocritical policies and cartoonish values every which
where, debased entertainment. Good riddance, and now let’s
tour the corpse. (ix)
In the novel, Ballard picturizes the devastated American land which is the consequences of the human greed to bring the better future to the human world. In their attempts, humans forgot that they have crossed their limits and their plans are merely hypocritical policies which are self-distractive. The results of human being’s rape on the nature are consequently seen in the form of corpse everywhere.

Set nearly 130 years in the future; Ballard projects the abandoned land in the midst of gold dust. As soon as the explorers reach to the place, the captain of the ship McNair wakes up the protagonist Wayne for whom “it’s everything we’ve dreamed of! Look at it just once, even if it blinds you” (7). The gold dust seems to be very real for McNair; in fact, it is a dream that is promised to them long ago when the land habited by the American people. McNair anchors the ship half a mile from the Brooklyn shore so that the scientists of the expedition including Professor Summers could get time to test the atmosphere of the land. When the scientist discovers suitable atmosphere, the ship moves further to their last destination at New York harbour. However, the promising land of everyone’s dream has been deserted long ago. The ecological collapse of America as well as American dream has been well expressed in the words of Wayne as:

An immense golden sheen lay over the Brooklyn shoreline, reflected from the silent quays and warehouses. The afternoon sun hung above the deserted Manhattan streets, adding its light to the glittering field below . . .

Behind the Apollo was the massive span of the Verrazano Narrows suspension bridge, long familiar to Wayne from the ancient slides in the Geographical Society
library in Dublin. . . . Many of the vertical cables had snapped, and the huge, copper-hued structure, covered with rust and verdigris, resembled a recumbent harp that had played its last song to the indifferent sea. (8)

Wayne feels as if the land has been waiting only for him with its rarest treasures. But precious treasure is merely the remains of desert covered with dust. Everywhere there are the abandoned buildings like Old Empire State Building, the twin columns of the World Trade Centre, the 200-storey OPEC Tower, etc.

Wayne is aware that everyone in the ship has a secret agenda besides finding out the reasons of ecological collapse. Some of them wish to trace their land of origin, some desires to discover the scientific experiments and space centres, some dreams of American promise, etc. Captain Steiner is one of these persons, who intends to discover the space centre of America. He reveals his secret yearning to Wayne as:

. . . Steiner opened the safe and quietly unwrapped the Time and Look magazines. He turned the faded pages, showing Wayne the illustrations of the Cape Kennedy Space Centre, the Space Shuttle landing at Edwards Air Force Base after a test flight, and the recovery of an Apollo capsule from the Pacific. There was a special bicentennial supplement celebrating every aspect of American life in the long-ago 1970s – the crowded streets of Washington on Carter’s Inauguration Day, long queues of holiday jets on the runways of Kennedy Airport, happy vacationers lying by the swimming pools of Miami, raking the ski-slopes of Aspen . . . (11)
Through the illustrations in the magazines, Ballard shows the role of science and technology in the development of human life. Science has an ability to go beyond in unfolding the secrets of the universe. Steiner points out the happy life of American people at the time of 1970s. The current uninhabited American land was once very happy where people enjoyed nature in the midst of scientific developments.

Wayne hides his secret desire from everyone else. When Steiner asks him his purpose in the land of his ancestors, Wayne tells him that he wanted to see the hardware shop of his grandfather. Here Ballard succeeds in depicting the effects of ecological collapse on the families of America through the family history of Wayne. Wayne craves to know his real ancestors. The only source to know his family background is his mother who is unable to reveal their family history as after the death of her husband, she spends her life as a psychiatric outpatient. His cravings to know his roots is well expressed when he wonders as:

I don’t know where I came from, who my father was, let alone my grandparents. My mother died five years ago, after spending half her life as a psychiatric outpatient and the rest as a barely competent secretary at the American University in Dublin. All she left me were years of rambling fantasy and a blank space on my birth certificate. (13)

A blank space mentioned on the birth certificate of Wayne indicates the sense of rootlessness and so he spends the years of fantasy in dreaming about the uninhabited land of his ancestors. The feeling of rootlessness is further coupled with the less or no opportunities that are available to them in France. These feelings force him to leave urgently for that post-apocalyptic land of his forefathers. However, he knows that he cannot go
to the exact place of his birth; and he can also not share his secret agenda or feelings to anyone with him.

Wayne’s quest of identity leads him to wander endlessly. He remembers one of those moments of lucidity when his mother was recovered from an overdose of Seconal. She told him that his father’s name is Dr. William Fleming, who was Professor of Computer Science at the American University at that time. According to her memories, Dr. Fleming was disappeared during an expedition to the US twenty years earlier. However, this confession of his mother was only an odd moment for him, because she becomes psychic person after the disappearance of Dr. Fleming; and during the same period, she was pregnant. Therefore, Wayne is obsessed with the identity of his real father which is expressed as:

Was his obsession with America, which his unknown ancestors had abandoned a century earlier, was his determination to return to this lost continent merely an attempt to find his true father? Or had he invented the quest for his father in order to give his obsession some kind of romantic meaning? (14)

Thus, his obsession takes him to the abandoned land of his ancestors; and ecological collapse plays a major role in his attempts of finding a real father as well as a meaning to his life. Thus, Tiiu Speek while analysing the relationship between man and his environment, writes –

While literature can reduce nature to a specific ideological or humanistic agenda, it can also represent an alternative kind of human-nature relationship facilitating green
consciousness and place bonding. Which side gets stressed depends on the writer but also on the reader. Thus, our reported contacts with our surroundings are always culturally mediated, interlocally and intertextually constructed; but they are also responses to nature, and environment is one of the variables that influences culture, text, and personality. (3)

The effects of ecological collapse are so horrible on the American people at the time that it had destroyed everything except the painful memories of the American continent and American dream. It has even not given a sufficient time to the people to move to another place. As the ship passes, Wayne describes the abandoned structures as: “Dozens of the rusty hulks sat in the bay around the lower tip of Manhattan, masts and superstructures above the water, relics of the panic a century earlier when America had finally abandoned itself” (16). Those structures have now become absolute skeletons serving as the relics and reminding the American explorers the panic century when they have to leave their native place. With the migration of the people, the geographical boundaries between Cunard, Holland-America, P& O have also forgotten. Wayne could imagine the picture of deserting America which is presented here as:

Even the SS United States was there, lying on its side below the Battery, called out of its retirement at Coney Island to ferry tens of thousands of fleeing Americans as the cities emptied and the deserts crept eastwards across the continent. The mouth of the East River was blocked by a boom of sunken freighters, the last of a mournful fleet of vessels chattered from the world’s ports and then abandoned here when there was no fuel left to bunker them for the Atlantic
voyage. New York harbour then had been a place of fear, exhaustion and despair. (17)

The influences of radioactive fallout after the ecological collapse can be seen on the continent which has emptied the cities and deserted the land. Even the rivers have been blocked or frozen making them hollow to pass a vessel; furthermore, the lack of fuel paralyzed the voyage of Atlantic. The entire landscape of New York harbour has then created a scene of fear, exhaustion and despair.

The scientific inventions of human beings can never be fruitful or useful in the adverse ecological conditions. Ballard deliberately presents these limitations of scientific inventions and technology in the extreme environmental conditions in order to highlight everlasting effects of ecological collapse. The ship begins to struggle when it is only a few hundred yards away from the harbour. The sailors begin to become panic and runs across the deck. With the sudden trouble, some explorers try to find safety uselessly. The whole scenario is described as:

The *Apollo* had lost momentum, its speed cut by half. The sails slackened, and in the silence, Wayne heard only the smoke pounding from the hot funnel behind him. Then there was a low, jarring noise, as if an iron blade was scraping the hull. The ship gave a small shudder, leaning on its starboard side like an injured whale. Almost motionless in the water, it swung slowly in the wind as the propeller screwed a torrent of boiling foam around the stern. (19)

The explorers have purposefully chosen steamship for their voyage, but suddenly it is startled only a half mile away from the shore. The sailors
note damage to the ship which will sink anytime in the water. The ship begins to swing clockwise in the water; however, Captain Steiner, as Wayne observes, is unmoved with the damage. Wayne feels as if it is a desire of Captain Steiner so that he could plunder the treasures of this long-awaiting abandoned land after the death of his crew members. Hitherto, the sinking of ship leads them to their first discovery. Their ship is struck to ‘The Statue of Liberty,’ which is one of the extraordinary visions for them. Wayne decides to keep a diary for such visions that he is going to see in the next months.

As the members of expedition step on the land, they see the dunes that filled the floors of these deserted canyons. Wayne feels it as if a magical carpet, a metallised dream from the fairy tales of his childhood. They come across gold more than enough for them all. McNair begins to think of gold and feels that gold is a lucky bonus for him, a signal back to his obsession or secret desire. However, all the natural resources of America have been run out including fossil fuels, coal, gas and oil; and more than that “the principal mission of the Apollo expedition was to investigate the small but significant increase in atmospheric radioactivity which had been detected over the American continent in recent years” (25). McNair is also suspicious that the old nuclear power stations have begun to leak dangerously. More than that, there may be some forgotten weapons which can be in the critical conditions.

Orlowski, a Russian, is another member of expedition, who is one of the staff members of Moscow headquarters of the Energy Resource Ministry. Initially, he does not intend to join the expedition as he knows that it will last long for at least six months. He is also aware that in the last fifty years no expedition has reported valuable about the abandoned land. He remembers one of these expeditions as: “the Fleming expedition
twenty years earlier had ended in disaster, its members perishing of thirsts in the great salt wastes of Tennessee after inexplicably leaving their planned itinerary” (26). The impacts of ecological collapse are seen once again on this expedition, where all its members die because of thirst water. The environmental degradation has destroyed the sources of drinking water; and therefore, the members were unable to survive. Later on, when the rescue team reaches to the place of camp, they found an abandoned camp outside Memphis and a trail of skeletons chewed by lizards and gophers.

However, Orlowski discovers that his antecedent originally belongs to America and his original surname is Orwell, which then is transferred as Orlowski when his forefathers settled in Russia. Therefore he decides to join the expedition; and it has been a similar case with everyone who are participated in the expedition, which Orlowski presents as:

However, it soon becomes clear that their reasons for joining the expedition had little to do with its scientific mission, and that the real contraband was their collective fantasy of America. The discovery of the young stowaway, Wayne, had acted as the catalyst – all these private escapes had soon come out into the open, united by their shared dream of ‘freedom’ (the last great illusion of the twentieth century), the same conviction that they would make a new life and fulfil themselves that must have been felt by their distant forbears when they were herded through the immigration pens of Ellis Island. (27)
The secret desire of all these explorers of American land is to escape to their private world which will give them freedom. They believe that American land will only show them a new way of life and fulfil all their dreams – the dream in which their forbears believe in. But they have forgotten, it is the same American land they have abandoned because of ecological collapse for which their forefathers are responsible.

The expedition members get out to the shore and set off their way to the city. As soon as they reach into the city, Orlowski observes the silent streets and suspects that they might face radioactivity anytime there. He also thinks that the natives might obstruct their way. However, Professor Summers assures him that there are “no natives, and no traces of radioactivity within a hundred miles” (33). They spend next few hours in confusion into the empty city. It does not take too much time to them to realize that the gold dust, of which they were dreaming, is not real gold, but “the golden carpet that seemed to cover the city with a treasure beyond the dreams of the conquistadores had been a complete illusion” (34). Wayne soon realizes that they are surrounded by the wilderness of sand and, especially, a harsh bronze dust heated by sun which seems to be gold. He feels sorry for McNair who was very much excited for the gold and begins to search for the once glamorous world of America – in the form of gleaming cars that marked the world of speed in US – which is also an “archetypal villains of the energy crisis” (ibid). As noted earlier, American continent has lost all the energy resources; and therefore, it is responsible for the exploitation of the natural resources at its extreme stage. Hence, the energy crisis has become one of the reasons of ecological collapse in America.

The initial plan of the crew members has not been successful and therefore, they have to think about the new plan that can be implemented
in such a barren land. They are still trying to make a sense of the climatic upheavals that have been occurred in America – a once powerful nation which has a power to alter anything. Orlowski points out the way decline and fall of America begins since the middle years of twentieth century when the scientists and politicians warned about the world’s energy resources and, especially, oil, coal and natural gases. In addition to this, the emergence of vocal ecology, soft technology movements, and industrialization make the planet apace. The energy sources have run out by the end of 1970s, which result in increase of prices and then subsequently turning into an insoluble global energy crisis. The unsettling effects of it have been seen all over including incompletion of various industrial and irrigation projects. The decrease in industrial production soon becomes visible in allied fields as:

All over the world industrial production began to falter. Stock markets slumped, avalanching numerals in Wall Street, the Bourse and the City of London showed all the signs of an even greater recession than the 1929 Crash. By the mid-1990s the automotive giants of the United States, Europe and Japan had cut car production by a third. As armies of workers were laid off, hundreds of component manufacturers were forced into bankruptcy, factories closed, dole queues formed in once prosperous suburbs. For the first time in more than a century, demographers noticed a small but significant drift from town and city back to the countryside. (44)

The continuous decrease in industrial production causes to collapse the share market leading to the greater economic recession. More and more people begin to become jobless everyday as the factories and
manufacturing units were closed down, leading the people to go back to the countryside.

America was once supposed to be biggest supplier of crude oil that fuelled American economy, but now by the end of 1997s, it relies on the imported oil. In fact, the industrial nations have introduced strict fuel rationing. The governments of different nations have started to concentrate on finding new energy sources; and for that many agencies have “initiated crash programmes to develop feasible system of wave-generated power, plans were drawn up for tidal dams, windmills and solar generators of every conceivable kind. A belated attempt was made to revive nuclear power industry . . .” (45). However, the alternative sources discovered could satisfy only one tenth needs of the total. The prices of gasoline have reached to the height; the car manufacturing industries have declared themselves bankrupt and for “the first time in over a hundred years no motorcars were manufactured in the United States” (ibid). By the year 2000, the government announced that the operation of private gasoline-car would be illegal. The shortage in gasoline leads the public to live with strict electric power rationing, which is further triggered with failures in water supplies and food deliveries. The scenario has become more tormenting over the next ten years which is described here as:

Over the next ten years, life in the United States began to run down, with endless blackouts and rationing, electricity limited to an hour a day. Everywhere industries failed, production lines slowed to a halt. Cities emptied as people drifted back to the small towns, to the safety of rural communities far away from the violence and looting of the dying metropolis.
However, with almost no sources of energy available, existence soon became untenable except at a primitive agricultural level. The freezing winters and airless summers of American Midwest sapped the confidence of struggling farm communities, their subsistence cropping already overburdened by refugees from the cities. (46)

Thus, the American people begin to abandon the US and migrate to various parts of Europe and Asia. By the year 2030, America has been totally abandoned; the American government has been dissolved with the postponement of future elections for the indefinite time. To accommodate the increased population of Europe and Asia, the action of climatic control has been taken by the world government which results in reversing the natural order:

These impressive feasts of geo-engineering steadily transformed the landscape of the American continent. Chief among them was the damming of the swallow waters of the Bering Straits between Siberia and Alaska. By pumping the cold Arctic water south into the Pacific, so that warmer Atlantic currents would flow into the Arctic Circle through the Greenland Gap, the entire climates of northern Europe and Siberia were revitalised. For the first time, winter temperatures rose above freezing-point, permafrost melted, and millions of acres of wilderness were reclaimed for agriculture and coal-mining, summer wheat-crops were harvested well within the Arctic Circle. (47)

The construction of Bering Straits Dam has changed the natural order; the warmer Atlantic currents flows have changed the atmosphere – the
temperatures of the freezing-points have been risen resulting in turning the acres of wilderness for agriculture and coal-mining. However, its results have been calamitous for the United States as the climate of eastward seaboard has been totally altered. The coastlines have been overheated, and cloud-dusts have been seen at some places. By the middle of twentieth century, Japan has become frozen wilderness, archipelago of glaciers have turned the once fertile hillsides into terraced ice-rinks. Thus, the construction of Bering Dam has not only affected a natural climatic order, but it has reversed the total natural cycle.

The explorers wander to the various deserted places of America with the help of horses they brought with them. While moving, they come across the manhattans – the tribal people whose skins have been sun backed and who have been trying to survive in the extreme conditions, in search of food and shelter everywhere – and realize that there may be so many tribes scattered here and there in the desert of America. They visit various places of Washington including White House, but the clearest sign of the new direction come at the end of the first week in Washington. Steiner has gone away from the camp while Orlowski strolls in the Executive Building. Wayne, who is alone in the Camp, decides to visit Lincoln Memorial. After two hours, he notices Steiner, who was coming along the centre of Mall with two camels behind him. After some time, Wayne notices through the memorial a small party of nomads, who approach the camp base; and within a few moments, the male members of the group gathered around the black mare of Steiner. Before he could reach the camp, they take the mare with them. He is very much surprised with their act and reaches to the place of Steiner, who was also witnessing the whole incident. He asks Steiner the reason of it, who then replies to him that the nomads take the mare only to eat it. The explanations of
Steiner are very much revealing about the conditions of the people who wander in the deserted American land, and who do not care eating animals for their survival.

In the Oval Office of the White House, Orlowski asks Wayne to assume himself as a President of America for some time and then what will be his first step in the historic moment. As a campaign manager, Wayne explains the first step of the President as:

‘Destroy the Bering Straits Dam’ . . . We take out the dam, then reverse the flow of Arctic water into the Pacific, bring the Gulf Stream back from the African coast. The first heavy rain will turn this desert green again, America will run with rivers, Kansas and Iowa will be like your beloved steppes.

(78)

Wayne’s words show the hopes of the entire abandoned Americans to return to their native land; but it cannot be ignored that his dream of re-establishing the natural climatic order depends upon the destructive scientific inventions. He intends to take the help of nuclear weapons to destroy the dam which are presently deactivated and sealed into the concrete. Besides this, the Siberian ice-land of Moscow, which has been turned into the fertile land – which is up course an attempt of nature to balance the environment – will again turn into an ice-rink.

Wayne and Orlowski begin to argue with one another over the possession of Oval Office as both of them wanted to stay there. Meanwhile Professor Anne Summers enters with the news of earthquake and its major centre can be Boston, an area where McNair and another crew have gone and can be victim of it. She further informs that “there’s
been a huge release of radioactivity. The Geiger counters on the Pan Am Building are recording a vast burst of neutrons” (80). She is more afraid of radioactivity and supposes it as the cause of earthquake. Her fear is illustrative of the nature’s reaction over the human’s attempt of controlling the environment. Wayne, Orlowski and Anne decide to wait for the next update; and, hence, they move to the radio tent. After some time, they hear McNair’s voice coming in over the short wave. Anne asks to remain silent to the other members and begins to analyse the voice, which she soon recognizes as the tape-recording. Ballard here creates twist in presenting the scene. He focuses on the human faith that science and technology is a gift to the human community which has an ability to bring him out from his adverse situations. However, he also presents the fact that there is always a negative side of scientific inventions which will put him in trouble. In the present scene, Anne takes the help of radio-waves to remain in touch with McNair and other crew members. More than that, McNair sends the tape-recording at his determined time that is 7 o’clock which is possible only with the help of science and technology. Here science aids the crew to connect with one another. But at the same time, the adverse effects of science are also visible in the scene, which are revealed in the recordings of McNair as:

‘... it’s 4 o’clock here in New York, Professor Summers. In half an hour I’m riding out to Long Island with the reconnaissance party, so I’m putting this on tape for the 7 o’clock bulletin. To bring you up to date ... As I was putting a new battery into Dr. Ricci’s transmitter I felt a sudden tremor under my feet. The whole building shook, there must have been a huge ground-surge through the rocky mantle, almost a tectonic shift. You could see Manhattan
tremble. Looking out to the north-east I saw an extraordinary
glow over the desert. It lasted about the five seconds, then
faded into a luminous cloud. . . . The quake must have set off
an old munitions dump somewhere in Long Island, there’s a
cloud of debris about ten miles wide moving down the coast
to New York . . . (81-82)

The message of McNair and further assumptions of Anne reveal that the
cloud which he has seen consists of fall-out from an atomic explosion.
Anne thinks that the fall-out is perhaps released from a nuclear submarine
in one of the Boston dry-docks and McNair and another crew has become
victim of it. There is no chance of their survival from the radioactivity
released after the earthquake. It shows that McNair and others are not the
victim of natural earthquake; but they are the victim of man-made
disaster that is scientific invention.

The camp has become out of water after few days of stay at
Washington. The horses of the explorers are either taken away by nomads
or died. The camels, which Steiner has brought, are also died; and the
explorers are forced to walk in search of water. Steiner has already
abandoned the camp and decided to take his own way; Orlowski has been
died; Anne and Ricci are moving unwillingly with Wayne; and Ricci also
disappeared somewhere. Finally, Wayne decides to break away and
moves alone in search of water. He reaches to the entrance of the Boot
Hill cemetery, where at somewhere among the stage-coaches he
collapses. When he recovers, he notices their Captain Steiner, who was
also watching him. He intends to shoot Steiner and as he prepares himself
he sees his second mirage of the Great American Desert. He sees the
enormous figures of cowboys – the images of Henry Fonda, the film
actor, Gary Cooper, Mount Rushmore, etc. Wayne lay back against the
gravestone; he is sure that he is kept alive by his visions of these immense mythological figures. When he turned back his attention to Steiner, he notices that Steiner is moving among the tombstones following the great goads he has seen in the sky. He also scrutinizes the moisture-soaked shirt of Steiner which is the sign of drinking from the Jerrican.

After some time, Wayne hears a soaring sound of a machine which is similar to Apollo. Meanwhile, he watches an aircraft circling elegantly towards the Boot Hill cemetery; and to his surprise, he finds McNair waving hands from his Gossamer Albatross. Wayne is so weak that has no strength to shout back, therefore, McNair picks him from his place. He has also an idea about the group’s disband due to the running out of the living resources. Hence, he takes an initiative to reunite the group together. Wayne appreciates McNair’s attempt to keep in track the mission by uniting the group as:

After the prospect of total disaster, the expedition had come alive again. Their rescue by McNair marked another turning point, another proving of the dream. The nomads had carried away Wayne from the Boot Hill cemetery to their cars, collected a barely conscious Anne Summers from the Long Branch Saloon, and driven them both to the nearby Holiday Inn. (102-102)

McNair narrates the tale of his survival to Wayne and Anne after their recovery from the weaknesses. He tells them that he discovered three steam-cars in the Brooklyn warehouse, and during the time of fallout, he escaped with the help of ship from the calamity. He further reveals to them that the steam-cars were designed for the personal use of President Brown so he has taken those cars with him on the ship. But the
two off-duty stokers ignored the warning of McNair and becomes the victim of fall-out. He also points out that they have seen “the same vision of a vast space-ship that was invariably followed by the mysterious earthquakes and exploding nuclear power stations” (103). Most of the nomads belong to the Gangster tribes, who “were suffering from leukaemia and radiation burns sustained in the quakes that had destroyed Cincinnati and Cleveland” (103-104). Thus, leukaemia and radiation burns are the signs of the negative side of scientific inventions, which once supposed to aid in the human development.

The explorers cross the Rockies and enter in the Las Vegas. According to Wayne, they are the first to enter in the Las Vegas since the American land has been abandoned. The city is totally silent, but it is illuminated with the lights that give the impression of someone’s presence there. Ballard paints the locale in the novel so carefully that he has even considered the minor details. He describes the condition of Las Vegas after the abandonment as:

... Las Vegas seemed strangely silent. The street lamps shown down on the empty car parks, yet there were no cars or people about, no one was playing the countless slot-machines in the stores and arcades. The facades of the casinos in Fremont Street glowed with an almost hallucinatory intensity, but below the Golden Nugget, the Mint and the Horseshoe the side-walks were deserted. Large sections of the city had been invaded by the jungle, and the neon signs on the Dunes and the Desert Inn shone through a tangle of vines and giant ferns. The southern half of the city, to the east of the Strip, was partly submerged under a large lake fed by the mountain rivers, and a second Las Vegas, a
drowned city as incandescent as the first, glimmered at them from a sea of light. (116-117)

The way in which Ballard sketches the locale in the novel really makes him the spokesman of the future. The description of Las Vegas after the abandonment of the people shows the glimpses of the future world where there will be no sign or trace of human being if he continues to invade the natural world. Las Vegas was once the city of dream for every American which is shown in the excitements of Wayne who is eager to see it – he is fascinated with the bright lights of the city, the sound of music and songs sung by popular singers of the time, whose images he experiences there – but now the same city is invaded by the jungle.

Wayne and his companions listen the sound of stage programme; and hence they enter through the rear door of the auditorium. As they enter, they stop in the heavily draped shadows, and begin to look down at the illuminated stage. The theatre is crowded by a middle-aged but well-dressed audience sitting at the supper tables. They see Mr. Sinatra and Dean Martin on the stage between the audiences. However, the people they experience are merely their electrographic dream - an illusion which has been continuously pursuing them since they enter in the deserted land of America. While their observations of the stage show, they are suddenly arrested by few soldiers who further report them that they are the men of President Manson. The soldiers are small, slim-shouldered and looks little more than children of the seventeen or eighteen years old; but they have guns in their hands. Wayne and his companions are puzzled with the new information about President Manson, because, as far as their knowledge is concerned, they do not know any president of America. Furthermore, when America was abandoned a few years ago, it was decided that the
election will be postponed to indefinite time and there will be no government in the country.

As Paco - the leader of the teenagers - and his army drive the cars to their destined place, Wayne notices hundreds of these teenagers with someone who calls himself as a President of America in the midst of flashing hotels, each surrounded by the acres of deserted parking lots. Despite these people the entire Las Vegas is empty, but they keep eye on all movements in the desert. They have fixed the robot cameras at some places which help them to put the entire area under their observations. It is surprising to note that the President Manson and his men still use science and technology after the chaos they face in the form of radioactivity. It should also be noted that though the robotic cameras help them to see everything, they are unable to survive the dying companions of Wayne. It shows that science alone will not help the human being unless he is ready to shoulder the responsibility of it. However, when humans use science for the well-being of society, it always plays the role of great aid in human development. It can be seen in the novel in the form of special building built by President and equipped with the necessary instruments to control the atmosphere. The special construction of building is described as:

Although the windows looked out on the lights of the evening city, the air in the suite tasted curiously sterile. An elaborate secondary air-conditioning system had been built inside the rooms, over-head pipes ran from the adjacent bedroom to a nest of fan-powered filters in the window. The blades fluttered continuously, a devoted fingertip response to minute fluctuations in humidity and temperature. (127)
The special cell of President Manson is an example of scientific miracle which helps to survive the President and his men in the adverse environment of America. Yet, at the same time, it cannot be ignored that the American land has been turned into the desert because of these scientific theories which they try to implement in the form of Bering Straits Dam which has changed the natural cycle. As Wayne and his friends are brought forward, Wayne is surprised to see President Mansion who resembles the former president of America President Nixon, which is not possible because President Nixon was alive before 134 years. Manson is very happy to see the younger version of him in Wayne who tells him how he reached to the place as:

Three months - I was your age when I came across, do you know that it took me two years? I had to crawl through the dust on my hands and knees. It poisoned me, Wayne, some unknown virus crept into my blood, some bacillus that dying nation left behind made up of failure and second-rate dreams . . . (130)

Manson’s story reveal the effects of environmental collapse on the human beings who try to cross the land after its degradation. The American dream is only second-rate dream for Manson, which has been failed to complete the wishes of American people. Thus, the explorers are diverted from their mission and wanders in the deserted American land in search of possibilities of survival. Ballard vividly presents the post-apocalyptic America which will turn down the hopes of future generations if the current generation invades the nature for their materialistic purpose.
4.2 Rushing to Paradise:

Though dissimilar to *Hello America*, Ballard’s another novel *Rushing to Paradise* is not carrying the different undercurrents of the world politics, the text is also a vivid description of ecological degradation. In both these novels, though the stories are different, as one depicts a group of people invading post-apocalyptic North-America, however second explores the adventures of group of environmentalists who try to save a remote abandoned island, have the similar motif of mirroring the environmentalist’s pursuit to save the world from anhelation. Besides this, a threat of radiological contamination is also a similar reason used in these two novels to depict the natural destruction. Only difference in these novels is that one depicts the post-apocalyptic world after several generations, however the later one that covers a time in which the natural destruction is in progress.

Ballard’s *Rushing to Paradise* deals with a situation in which a species of a bird is endangered due to the nuclear testing centre on a small island. In the novel Ballard portrays a deeply rooted fear of nuclear annihilation. The island, in the novel is symbolized as the earth and the endangered bird for mankind.

Dr. Barbara Rafferty, a protagonist is obsessed of to save Albatross on the Saint-Esprit Island, which was used as a land for nuclear testing by the French Government. Previously, she was a medical practitioner but after the death of one of her patients and allegation of overdosing, she starts working as an environmentalist.

When she comes to know that the nuclear testing centre of French Government is a major cause behind the extermination of the Albatross
from island, she forms a small group of people who were aware about environmental degradation. In order to focus this environmental imbalance, she decides to make a documentary on her visit to island and therefore appoints Neil as a cameraman. But unfortunately, during their visit the Neil was shot by the French military cop. Media covers this news and shows that what happened with Dr. Barbara who was attempting to save the birds. The news covers that how the French navy war vessel smashes the ship of environmentalists which about to land to the island. Though in this incidence though Neil was injured, his camera left on recording mode that captured whole scene, leading the media to raise once again a big news, which causes French navy to leave the environmentalists unharmed. The incident also causes to drag more rush of visitors from several parts to island in order to participate in the conservation of the endangered animals.

However, to control tremendous rush of visitors, Dr. Barbara forces Neil and her other residential companions to cut off themselves from the non-native people, which causes to turn the sanctuary into a dystopian land. She systematically begins to poison, except Neil, the male inhabitants, who become sick and slowly die. In order to survive themselves, they begin to eat endangered animals. In the course of time, Neil realizes that he is the only male left in the island, who has to pregnant as many women as he can. However, he also falls ill in the course of time, but soon other male members who arrived on island took his position. In the last phase of novel, the inhabitants of island turn insane as a result of Dr. Barbara’s feminist control over residents. She believes that only female can be survived on the island and therefore poisons male members. Anyhow, Neil along with some of the inhabitants
is saved by French navy, who finally reports the authorities about the crisis on island.

The story clearly depicts a vision of Ballard who wants to create a paradise of women as they have a power to create a new world but at the same time forget to maintain a balance. As a result of it the fictional world created in the novel is self-destructive. Ballard depicts an individual’s attempt to create a paradise, where it is possible for a man to live and cope up with the natural order. One of the Kirkus Reviews published on the website goodreads.com rightly comments on the environmentalism depicted in the novel as “[l]ed by a charismatic and slightly unhinged woman, a group of environmentalists wrest control over a small South Pacific island in hopes of cultivating it into their own private Eden” (Web). However, Dr. Barbara forgets that she is also a part of natural cycle, and has no control over the nature. Ballard succeeds in relating the aspects of environmental degradation to the emotions of human beings that helps him to control the feelings over rational thinking.

Bringing together the characters from different regions including Japan, French, Hawaii, Mexico, etc, he tries to produce multicultural environment on an uninhabited island. The twenty different sections of the novel comment on various aspects of human life in relation to the environment with the painful picture of drowned planes, debris of dead birds, disused runways, shattered residential structures, and scattered remains of the nuclear testing.

In order to suit his eco-conscious motif, he has delineated the characters who are aware with the environmental decay and also want to conserve it by taking certain essential measures. Dr. Barbara is very much aware about environmental degradation as her proclamation, “[s]ave the
albatross . . ! Stop nuclear testing now . . !” (1) afterwards appears as a central action of the novel that directly and symbolically moves around the issues of environment. Her proclamation suggests that there is something visibly wrong with the natural cycle and it has endangered a bird Albatross. This threat at the backdrop of the storyline significantly contribute in shaping it and even influences the meaning make out of the text. Though Dr. Barbara’s project centres at saving the birds albatross, she focuses on entire ecological devastation, which is the result of nuclear testing. Her voyage along with her crew members to the remote island, which is the home of albatross, suggests her consciousness about the extermination of albatross because of the nuclear testing. She has recognized that extermination of albatross is just the beginning, and if we fail to stop, it will create a threat to entire mankind. Her awareness about this gradually increasing threat is clearly visible when she gave a slogan – “[s]ay no to biological warfare . . ! Save the albatross and save the planet . . !” (1). Throughout her sea voyage from Papeete to Saint-Esprit she thoughts about the government’s actions on island and how without showing any concern about nature they have declared it as an approved scientific experiment, but in reality, which is a very dangerous nuclear testing. It can be observed that she is too much enthusiastic to reach to the shore. Her companions, especially Neil, are irritated with continuous descriptions of the island during their three-weeks voyage. She has even forgotten to take care of herself and, as Neil observes, “her body is nothing to” her or she has also forgotten the other ecological issues like “the polluted water tanks of the Bichon, the antique ketch that had brought them from Papeete, their meagre rations and sodden bunks counted for nothing” (2). She is only obsessed with saving of albatross.
However, very soon the irony in the nature of Dr. Barbara is revealed in the novel. She is introduced as a person who strongly intends to save albatross. But she has reached to the island without any medical equipment or first aid box either for themselves or for the wounded Albatross. She travelled to the island without “hypodermic syringes and vitamin ampoules that would have cleared the ulcers on their lips, or even a roll of lint to bandage a wounded albatross” (5). Instead of these things, “. . . there were aerosol paints, a protest banner, a machete, and a video-camera to record the highlights of their raid” (5). She perfectly knows that the video shooting of devastated island and dangers to the lives of albatross will make her popular. The motif behind the video shooting is to convey an emotive message, which will create awareness in people. However, on the other hand, though she is a physician and even a daughter of a physician, she must be conscious about the dangers that her crew might face in an unknown island and should carry at least the first aid box which can be used in the critical situation.

Neil observes that Saint-Esprit island is very close to the nature and full with the sea birds who aimlessly wander in the desert sky of the island. However, the signs of scientific experiments can be witnessed on the island. Earlier, the land was used as a ground for the nuclear testing, which was further abandoned in 1970s as those experiments were shifted to the Mururoa, the Gambier Island safely remote from Tahiti. Yet, Saint-Esprit was deserted because of the nuclear testing and two hundred native inhabitants has been “relocated to Moorea, in the Windwards, and the island with its camera-towers and concrete bunkers lay undisturbed during the long years of the nuclear moratorium” (6). Now, again French nuclear scientists are returning to Saint-Esprit with the threat of a new series of atomic tests. The first step of this threat is already taken place in
the form of French engineers who has destroyed the breeding ground of albatross by extending the military airstrip.

As the ship landed, Dr. Barbara jumps out of the it like a commando; and following her, Kimo and Neil get out to the shore, where they waited for some time till the sun sets. As soon as they find the right time to move in, Dr. Barbara shoulders the responsibility of their safe passage to Kimo, who, in turn, assures her that he will definitely take them to the land of albatross.

Since their journey, Dr. Barbara has given various responsibilities like heavy sails and bilge pump only to Kimo, and she has not given any task to Neil. Neil has the clear understanding of this kind of treatment to him that she has spared him for some more difficult tasks. However, when she senses the awkwardness in the eyes of Neil, she assures him that he has been “saved for more exciting role than that of expedition cameraman” (11). Yet she is aware about the fact that she and her team members cannot help to save the albatross, and therefore, she tells Neil that they “can’t help the albatross yet, but [they] can show people what’s happening here” (*ibid*). She further tells him that they are going to protect everything including the palm, vine and blade of grass on the island and not just the albatross. Her concern to every aspect of the environment shows her ecological consciousness. Even she thinks of saving the mosquitoes of the place, which reveals Ballard’s ideas about the fantastical landscapes that he has presented in almost all of his novels. His eco-enthusiastic team sketched in the present novel deals with the same ideology.

As Dr. Barbara and her companions move to the atoll, time to time, she advises Kimo to take rest so that they can maintain their energy.
Kimo has adopted a cautious manner so that they can remain safe and away from the eyesight of French military. While moving through the forest, their feet begin to sink in the spongy ground. Kimo walks ahead showing the followers the rusty steel sections of a “small-gauge railway. Everywhere lay the debris of Saint-Esprit’s earlier occupations. Wooden huts leaned on their worm-riddled stilts, roofs open to the sky, hibiscus and morning glory flowering between the floorboard” (12-13). The entire scene of the place shows the remains of earlier life that was flowered some time before it was declared as the land of nuclear-testing. Between the prayer shacks of Catholic missionaries and the modest farm plots, the development of various trees like breadfruit trees, jack and eucalyptus, and vegetables like wild yams and sweet potato show nature’s ability to cope up with the man-made destructions. However, nature has some limitations. It cannot regenerate everything that is destroyed by the human being; and if the humans continue invading in the same way, it has its own system to deal with and balance environmental disasters.

Soon they passed a drainage ditch and stepped through the screen of palms, where Kimo diverts the attention of Dr. Barbara to the albatross. In fact, they are surrounded with the albatross, but all of them are kicked apart. The entire scene is described as:

A colony of albatross had nested among the hillocks, taking advantage of the wind that rose from the surface of the dunes. Their nests were little more than hollows in the sand, crudely lined with feathers and grass, but every one of them had been kicked apart. The heel-marks of heavy boots had stamped themselves into the rain-sodden ash. Fragments of broken shell trembled in the cool air, blurs of down quivering on their serrated edged. Dead chicks lay in the
crushed grass, smeared with the yellow stomach oil that their parents had vented over them in their panic. Wings outstretched, dozens of the great birds rested at the water’s edge, clubbed to death as they tried to escape. The ruffled plumage glared against the black sand like ice-white blossoms thrown into a refuse pit. (14)

The debris of dead chicks, their parent’s pain, numbers of birds at the water side for their last breath and the white rush everywhere makes the entire land very threatening. Kimo begins to count the dead birds; meanwhile Neil tries to locate Dr. Barbara in the heap of dead birds, “hair floating like threatening vapour above volcano. . .. the beach seemed to shiver under her gaze” (14-15). She instructs Neil to cover as many birds as possible as she wants to show them to the entire world. As he begins to film the birds which look like ‘chrysanthemums,’ he notices that Kimo has been climbing on the nearby tower. After ten minutes, Kimo made a sound informing the remaining two to be aware of French soldiers. Yet Dr. Barbara instructs Neil to “climb the ladder and wrap the banner around [his] shoulders” (16). She asks Kimo to make a film of Neil with the protest banner.

Neil advises her to wait for some time as the soldiers are armed, but she forces Neil to follow her instructions. She snatches a camera from him and places it in the hands of Kimo so that he can record Neil while holding banner. As the soldiers approached them, Kimo escapes from there; but Dr. Barbara remains where she is and even compels Neil to stay where he is. When he tries to escape from the place, a soldier shot behind him which results in a deep wound at his legs.
The news of Neil being shot and the environmental degradation spread all over the world; and as a result, the ecologists from various fields have begun protest rallies against the government actions leading to desert the island. Neil, who is admitted in the hospital, watches the entire coverage of the issue on the television set at Nimitz Memorial Hospital and comments on the way it has been covered by media as:

The protest rally at the University of Hawaii campus had reached at climax, its rhetoric as inflated the helium balloons, emblazoned with ecological slogans, that rose from their cradles beside the podium. (18)

The influences of the media coverage can be clearly seen on the people as numbers of people turned to be an ecologist. Neil, lying in the hospital bed, can listen to the speeches and slogans in rally even when the TV is turned off as the hospital is a mile away from the protest place. He knows that he has become a celebrity in town; and the environmentalists have begun to acknowledge his efforts in saving albatross. He can see the helium balloons in the sky with the images of albatross; various people including his parents – who are very much impressed with Neil’s being celebrity – and media reports have visited him in the hospital. Neil observes that how a “local basketball commentator turned eco-evangelist, began his address to the student audience” (18). His speech has been mixed up with the religious beliefs and high-flown sporting analogies: “Buying a Citroen or a Hermes scarf was a sin equal to the destruction of ten acres of rain-forest or the murder of a hundred albatross” (18).

He watches the television where the basketball evangelist is delivering his final peroration to motivate and create awareness among the people regarding environmental degradation. Neil experienced his
extreme position in the matter as the speaker referred his contribution during the speech. He addresses:

. . . And let’s not forget someone who gave everything in the fight against ecological terrorism – Neil Dempsey, lying at this moment in the Nimitz. That French bullet he took was aimed at every one of us, at every albatross and dolphin and minke whale. We’re with you, Neil, lying right next to you in that bed of pain . . . (19)

The speaker says that the island’s deserted condition is the result of ecological terrorism and further acknowledges Neil’s role in saving that devastation.

In the hospital, Neil’s nurse Carole Crawford, who knows that he was not interested in saving albatross, asks him why he has joined Dr. Barbara. Though he is uncertain about his response to Dr. Barbara’s call and her entire behaviour during the period, replies that he wanted to witness future in the land where bomb has not been exploded; the pattern of life and death and the way things are there in the absence of life.

Dr. Barbara has also become a famous person, who receives a standing ovation from the action committee when she takes a step to hold the podium. The albatross has become her trademark and so many people begin to support her. Neil elaborates the way she gets support as:

Too many of the people at Dr. Barbara’s rallies were tourists, elderly Japanese couples and family groups from Sydney or Vancouver, from whom an ecological protest meeting was an established part of the holiday street scene,
along with the fire-breathers, pickpockets and nightclub touts. (21)

The list of supporters has begun to increase day by day. However, Neil knows that Dr. Barbara has not succeeded like the established environmental organizations viz. Greenpeace, Amnesty International and the Live Aid and is still a minor media phenomenon, who appears only in footage with her bird-atrocity. Though she has succeeded in getting the attention of a group of dedicated admirers, she has failed in getting support of established animal rights groups. Though there are only a few audience and supporters, she delivered speech in the rally with all her old favour. Neil notices that the salt-water ulcer and the eye-infection, which she refused the French doctors to nurse, have been now healed. He has experienced the kindness and passions of this woman when he was shot and being carried away from the airport as she turned from her aggressive behaviour to emotional stance in such a way that she has almost cradled him in her arms.

Neil remembers the past days when he has met Dr. Barbara five months ago. His past memories reveal that he was living with his mother and step-father Colonel Stamford, with whom his mother married after the death of his father. His father was a radiologist, who, as Neil describes, “had diagnosed his own lung cancer and decided to end his life while he could breathe without pain” (22). The suicide of his father is a sign of intolerant modern society, which believes blindly in science. Neil’s father was not suffering with breath problem; and even though he committed suicide. Only discovery of lungs cancer does not mean end of life and suicide is not the solution to it. The hospital counsellor told his mother that the suicide act of his father is a suggestive act which can pass on from a father to son like a dangerous gene. Hence, to become a
different from his father, he gave up studying medicine and concentrated on the body-building, judo and swimming. His passion to swim English Channel at night coupled with Colonel Stamford’s descriptions of great seas compelled him to work as a pool attendant. Alienating himself completely from his studies, he secured a part time job as a projectionist at the university film school.

However, Neil’s parent told him about their urgent move to Georgia; hence, he took their permission to live there in Honolulu for summer. His mother’s agreement to his decision was very surprising for him. In fact, as he realized, she began “to reject him. An anxious and easily tired woman, she saw in his shoulders and boxer’s jaw an upsetting reminder of her dead husband” (23). At the time of their departure, Neil went to say good bye to them at the airport, where for the first time he saw Dr. Barbara, who was trying to create awareness about the dangers of environmental degradation with the banners in hand and shouting in a strong voice: “Save the albatross! Stop oil pollution now!” (23). As she tried to approach Neil, the doormen struck her to the ground. Neil rushed to help her to her feet. At first, she supposed that Neil is also one of the delegates, but he clarified to her that he was there to say goodbye to his mother and step-father who is in US Army. Her reaction to Neil’s explanation is very much revealing about common belief that army is a threat to environment: “‘The American Army? One of the world’s greatest environmental threats.’ She brushed the dirt from her hands. ‘No use saying goodbye, they said goodbye to us a long time ago” (24). Dr. Barbara points to the invention of nuclear bombs and its testing which caused the destruction of germinating biodiversity. Furthermore, the invention of new dangerous weapons and its practice by the army causes much loss to the environment. Then, Dr. Barbara asks him to help her in
distributing the leaflets and holding a banner to create awareness among the people. In this way he is involved against his wishes with Dr. Barbara. He expresses his feelings as:

Ecological movements had always failed to stir him, though he sympathized with activists who were trying to save the whale or protect the beaches where rare species of turtle laid their eggs after immense oceanic journeys. The whales and turtles were swimmers like himself. But the obsessive do-goodery of so many animal rights groups had a pious and intolerant strain. (25)

Thus, Neil feels himself like the rare species which are in the zone of complete extermination. But his refusal to accept ecological movements points out the passivity and negligence of entire humanity towards the threat to environment. He merely feels sympathy for the environmental activists, but he does not care for environment. However, the efforts of Dr. Barbara to catch the attention of tourists make him restless in the same way “he had worried over his mother in the month after his father’s death” (26). At that time, he felt that he is among those endangered species; and now he begins to sympathize with the albatross. It is a kind of moral blackmail that he feels at the moment. Furthermore, his discovery of truth in the campaign of Dr. Barbara – surprisingly that fascinates him more than saving albatross – drive him closer to her.

In his second meeting with Dr. Barbara, Neil reveals his dream of swimming Thames from Tower Bridge to Teddington at the night. According to him, swimming is as adventurous as saving albatross. In the third meeting, Neil sees Dr. Barbara in the company of Kimo, a former sergeant in Honolulu police, who has been forced to resign for his
participation in a campaign for an independent native Hawaiian kingdom. He has been always noted for his anti-nuclear and animal rights protests. His involvement in ecological movements highlights his awareness about the environmental loss. Ballard sketches the character of Kimo not only to develop the plot but also to present the effects of scientific experiments on man as well as on the environment. Through the introduction of Kimo, Ballard reveals man-made devastation of environment and the compensation that he has to pay, because whatever is the aim of invention, and especially discovery in the area of explosive chemicals, human being has to bear the loss more than other animals on the planet. This fact is aptly expressed in Kimo’s past experience when he served as a volunteer to move the islanders of Rongelap Atoll. His experience is noted as:

In 1985 [Kimo] volunteered to sail abroad the Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior, which resettled the islanders of Ronglap Atoll, 100 miles to the east of Bikini. Many of the Ronglapese had been contaminated by the radioactive ash that fell on them after the Bravo hydrogen bomb test in 1954, and over the decade suffered from high rates of leukaemia, stillbirths and miscarriages. The Rainbow Warrior moved the islanders to Kwajalein Atoll, and later sailed for New Zealand, where she was sunk by French agents hoping to put an end to anti-nuclear protests in the South Pacific. (30)

The results of hydrogen bomb tests can be seen on the people who suffer with high rates of leukaemia, stillbirths and miscarriages over the decade. The radioactive ash, which fell on them after the explosion of bomb, is only the reason of these diseases. The animals – including human beings
– on the land are not only victim of this experiment but the water creatures are also affected as the sunk ship can pollute water and become a cause of harming creatures living in water. Thus, scientific inventions and experiments in the direction of destroying one another are great cause of destroying environment.

Kimo is working with Dr. Barbara for the last two years; and it is he who has told her about threat to albatross on Saint-Esprit Island. He has also filmed Neil being shot; the footage became very famous that made Neil and Dr. Barbara very popular among the environmentalists, and so many people begin to join Dr. Barbara in her efforts of saving albatross.

One of those environmentalists is Irving Boyd, a thirty-five years old computer entrepreneur who has sold his software company for wild-life causes. Dr. Barbara tells Neil that Irving Boyd has gifted a ship called Dugong, a 300-ton Alaskan shrimp-trawler, which he intends to convert in a floating marine laboratory. She further informs him that they are leaving for Saint-Esprit in next three weeks and expects him to join her. However, though at the moment he agrees with her, he has planned not to join her as different news regarding the sea-raid of environmentalists on a military outpost of the French colonial empire, the neutral response of Defence Minister of Paris about re-starting of nuclear tests on Saint-Esprit, and the warning to sailors that any unauthorized vessel entering the exclusion zone would be boarded and seized.

However, Neil becomes curious to see Dr. Barbara before she leaves for Saint-Esprit and goes to the ship Dugong, where the Hong Kong Chinese skipper Captain Wu spots him in the crowd. Meanwhile Dr. Barbara also comes there who then invites Neil on the ship and
introduces him to different people on the ship including Monique Didier, the daughter of Rene Didier, France’s first animal rights activist, biologist and writer. Monique was chief steward with Air France, but “she was dedicated to her campaign, brow-beating her first-class passengers on the Paris – New York and Paris – Tokyo runs. After repeated warnings, Air France had lost patience and sacked her” (41). Then he is introduced to Captain Wu, Irving Boyd, and Professor and Mrs. Saito.

Professor and Mrs. Saito are professional botanists but they have abandoned their careers at the University of Kyoto in order to serve Dr. Barbara’s vision. While meeting with these people Neil feels that he has to find out a way of “preventing Dr. Barbara and her ship of fools from ever leaving Honolulu” (43). In fact, he begins to visit the harbour every afternoon only to find out whether the ship has been scuttled by the French agents. He also realizes that media interest in Dugong has been remained high and so many people begins to celebrate the cause including a group of hippies, who dances among the stall-holders selling balloons and environmentalists geegaws to the tourists. In addition to this Captain Wu and his seven Filipino’s loading of ship with necessary things under the observation of Irving Boyd gives him the impression of Poseidon lost in a dream of his sea adventures. Looking at the entire scenario, he begins to feel that this antique ship and its antique crew will not leave the port.

After a week, Neil comes to know that a few new people have joined Dr. Barbara which leads him to realize that Dr. Barbara’s campaign will succeed. Among them there is a group of three film maker people – Janet Bracewell, the Australian director, her American husband Mark who also works as a camera-man, and the Indian sound-recordist named Vikram Pratap. They have not only joined Dr. Barbara, but also
began to film the reporters and animal rights activists who have visited the ship *Dugong*.

However, Neil is trapped in the dilemma whether to join the campaign or not. At this point, he meets David Carline, an American businessman who owns a small pharmaceutical company in Boston. David learned about the mission of Dr. Barbara and comes to join her. He is a dedicated environmentalist who frequently takes “leave of absence to join American missionary groups in Brazil and the Congo, teaching in mission schools and delivering lay sermons at the open-air church services. Intelligent, rich and eager for hard work, he was the first sane presence on board the *Dugong*” (45). Thus, all these people, who have joined Dr. Barbara, either abandoned their careers or have been dismissed from their post. But they have passionately dedicated themselves to the campaign, which reveals their ecological consciousness. They deeply feel for the environmental deterioration; in fact, they go a step further and stand to protect the environment, even at the cost of their sources of earning money or livelihood. Their past experiences also reveal that at some point somewhere they have experienced the environmental degradation threatening the extermination of entire human race or even the post-apocalyptic world.

The appearance of David Carline on the scene threatens Neil and he begins to feel rivalry with David. He comes out of his dilemma and resolves to join Dr. Barbara. When he goes to the ship he learned that nuclear test will be resumed on Saint-Esprit on 15\textsuperscript{th} July. He feels that there is no point in going to the island, but Dr. Barbara decides to move ahead. The *Dugong* crew set on their journey and within few days reaches near Saint-Esprit, where they find that there is already a ship of French navy called *Champlain*. However, the French Military Ship allowed the
Dugong to approach the island and “waited patiently as the inflatables performed their water-borne pas de deux” (53). As the ship reaches to the shore, Dr. Barbara and other crew members go to the shore leaving behind Neil as he is not completely recovered from his injury. Dr. Barbara also warns Neil to do not swim to shore in her absence. Her instructions to him clearly reveal her awareness that the French military would aim higher this time than Neil’s feet. Her fear soon comes in reality when the military officers lose their temper and becomes tough in their behaviour with the crew members. Their harshness is described as:

As their tempers rose they had restored to tougher tactics. Escorting them out of the exclusion zone, the Sagittaire had almost rammed the trawler. The officer in charge of the boarding party physically threatened Captain Wu, and his NCOs had manhandled Kimo, silencing Dr. Barbara and Monique with their loudhailers when they tried to make an impassioned speech to Bracewell’s camera. (55)

Though the military officer forces the crew members to remain out of the exclusion zone and though he tries to make them inactive in this mission, the crew was fully prepared for this unexpected obstacle. Since the beginning of their journey, Dr. Brabara was trying to convince them that their mission to the nuclear island will succeed. They remained silent for next three days within which Neil finds different approaches of his companions regarding the environmental issues. Sometimes the ecological discussions make him to be wearied because of some of members relentless attack on the government’s ecological policies. Some of them like Bracewell tell that they are there only to protect the main members like Dr. Barbara and Neil and make documentary over their efforts. During this period, Kimo had sneaked so many times to the shore
and reported that: “the military base was no more than an airstrip depot where some thirty French soldiers lived in tents pitched under the palms, safely away from the stench of the beaches. The killing of the fish and albatross continued, but to no clear purpose” (59). Kimo’s reporting gives the impression of human’s tendency to destroy everything without purpose. The killing of fish and albatross for no purpose by the military reveals the negligence of people to the serious environmental issues.

The French military gets out from the island and set their course for its anchorage which provides an opportunity for Dr. Barbara’s crew to step in. As they are escorting with the help of speedboats, the French military vessel crushed the ship of Dr. Barbara. Within a few moments, everything shatters, as Neil sees through the roar of sirens and the erratic flashing of the signal lamps. In the incident, Bracewell dies; and with him, Dr. Barbara’s dream also shatters. After the burial of Bracewell, David addresses to the crew members who stand around the grave:

‘Before we go, let’s think of Mark, first, and then think of ourselves. Contrary to general belief, no one’s death diminishes us. Nature in its wisdom created death to give each of us our unique sense of life. We’re not part of the main. Each of us is an island, every bit as real as Saint-Esprit, and death is the price we pay to keep ourselves from drowning in the larger sea. Like Kimo here, we’re all island people – Brabara and Monique, Professor Saito and Miko, and especially young Neil, dreaming about another kind of island. Mark Bracewell lived for twenty-seven years, and his island still floats in the sea of time and space . . .’ (68)
David’s speech highlights the fact that nature is the creator and controller of everything and human being is just a smallest part of its creation and not controller of it. It provides time and space to everyone to perform his or her role in a separate way. In a way, David warns to the entire humanity that the sense of uniqueness is given to the human beings by nature and the realization of uniqueness is given in the form of death. Therefore, man should live with the harmony of nature and should not destroy the natural creations. He should learn to respect the time and space of each natural creation.

After the speech of David, Dr. Barbara decides to abandon her mission and go back to Honolulu. But within no time, Neil diverts her attention to the helicopter approaching them; and David soon realizes that they are not alone but “the world’s come to save the albatross” (70). The arrival of more people strengthened the campaign of Dr. Barbara; and they have even taken an initiative to stop the military forces on the island. Dr. Barbara leads the crowd gathered on the shore, who then begin to cheer and clap for the leaders like David involved in destroying military belongings. The entire scenario is described as:

Led by Dr. Barbara, a crowd had gathered on the beach. They cheered and clapped as the mast leaned from its plinth, and urged on the bulldozer when its tracks slewed in the milled coral. Carline stood at the controls, working the brake levers with his frantic hands like a fairground organist grappling with a berserk calliope. His cotton fatigues were covered with oil and sweat, but the same high gleam shone from his eyes that Neil had seen when Carline first mastered the bulldozer’s controls and crushed the French storage huts. (71-72)
Thus, destroying the mast, they have also destroyed the landing of aircraft. With the demolition, albatross begins to circle at the location: “Unsettled by the mast’s demolition, a dozen wandering albatross circled the peak, keeping a safe distance from the crowd whistling to them. Neil was glad to see that the great birds had begun to return to Saint-Esprit’” (72). However, besides being successful in their first attempt in destroying French military base, everyone is unsure about the re-arrival of French military again on the island. So many people begin to arrive on the island to support Dr. Barbara; and most of the sympathizers in the crowd are French.

After two days, three yachts’ have been arrived on the shore with the intention to arrest Dr. Barbara. Following them, half dozen protest crafts have also arrived there to support Dr. Barbara, who then begins a sit-down demonstration on the beach; and each crew begins to protect a member of Dr. Barbara’s team. However, to their surprise, “the exhausted captain of the Sagittaire made no attempt to seize the protesters, and the soldiers returned to their bivouac beside the runway” (74). Afterwards, Dr. Barbara and her companions come to know that the French prime minister and his members of cabinet has been jeered and jostled at the election rally in Paris, and the American State Department has recalled its ambassador to discuss Bracewell’s death.

Blind faith in science has always been a threat to the environment. Ballard critically comments on this blind faith of human beings with the astute eye on his every behaviour. To focus on this blind faith and illogical behaviour of human beings, he places Dr. Barbara and her companions between the “stench of diesel oil and dead fish, in a shanty town of chart-room furniture, galley stores, dismantled bunks and TV equipment which Kimo and Carline ferried from the Dugong” (74).
Furthermore, Professor Saito points out a dozen of plant and animal species which the oil slick threatened with extinction. The spillage of diesel oil from the broken ship caused number of species and animals including sea birds on the verge of annihilation.

The presence of military forces begins to disturb the crew members. Besides this, there are only a few living sources remain with them, which leads Dr. Barbara to realize that her mission will not succeed. But in the midnight, the military vessel has disappeared, which provides once again an opportunity to them to destroy everything that might be of use of French military. The wandering albatross has once again returned to the island. After a few days, “the government has made Saint-Esprit a wild-life special zone” (85). Dr. Barbara succeeds in her mission. Numbers of people begin to come to the island including TV crews, journalists, publishers’ agents with their unlimited destructive power. They begin to take interview of the leaders of the mission and broadcast the wild-life of the island. Dr. Barbara delivers the speech to them as:

‘First, I want to thank the French President and the French people. They’ve saved a great deal more than the albatross. They’ve saved Saint-Esprit and its wild-life, and above all they’ve saved hope – hope throughout the planet for a better world, where all species can live together without fear. The twentieth century is nearly over, but it still carries with it the terrible possibility of nuclear and chemical death. I want Saint-Esprit to be a beach-head, the doorway through which we step into the next century. Save the albatross, save Saint-esprit, and save the twenty-first century . . .’ (87)
Dr. Barbara is conscious about the environmental protection. She cares for all species on the Saint-Esprit; and at the same time, she is aware that there are the possibilities of nuclear and chemical death which will continue forever. Therefore, she intends to create paradise at Saint-Esprit which will be a doorway to step in the next century. She decides that she will live forever as her “work and life are . . . on this island. Saint-Esprit is a refuge for all living creatures . . . I want every threatened plant and animal to know that it can find asylum here” (88). She declares the island as a sanctuary for the entire planet and everything that lives on it.

However, the arrival of more crowds on the island distracts Dr. Barbara from her purpose. Therefore, she instructs Neil to block the runway first of all. She decides to separate the island from the crowd. Carline points out that the crowd of people is there only to help them in accomplishing their dream. Dr. Barbara accepts the points but at the same time draws the attention of her companions to the fact that Saint-Esprit has become a rubbish tip picked over by TV crews. She addresses them as:

I want Saint-Esprit to be a sanctuary, not a holiday camp for ecological tourists. The hippies on the beach aren’t interested in saving the albatross or anything else. If we wait much longer Saint-Esprit will be a heaven for druggies and drop-outs. Everyone has to work, and we can’t work when we are sleeping off last night’s hangover. (111)

According to Dr. Barbara, the arrival of crowd will take them away from their mission of saving albatross. More than that, the young people are not interested in saving of the albatross, but they are only busy in making fun. Their presence will turn the island an ecological park and not
sanctuary to save the albatross. Meanwhile Kimo takes the attention of Dr. Barbara to the basic needs required to live there including tools, equipment and food. But Dr. Barbara tells him that they have enough things, and especially food with which they can survive for next two months. She further advises her companions that if anyone intends to leave the camp, he or she can take the last flight next morning. Then without giving enough room for the discussion, she assigns the duties to all members.

Dr. Barbara boosts up all the members to accept the challenge of living there, because surviving on the island is “a lot tougher, but it’s worth the effort. Think of Saint-Esprit as the ultimate environmental project – we’re engineering the ecology of paradise” (112). However, Neil and other members feel that their mission has been failed as they have cut themselves from the outside world. This feeling has been strengthened further when Dr. Barbara refused to land the new ship called Dakota. She has determined to block the outside world. Neil observes it as:

Dr. Barbara had insisted on having her way, but a wary silence hung over Saint-Esprit, depended by the old Frenchman’s illness and the sense that they were cut off from the world beyond the horizon. By shutting everyone else out they had also shut themselves in. The black beaches of the atoll were effectively a wall, and the whole Pacific was Dr. Barbara’s moat. (116)

Dr. Barbara forces everyone to live according to her desires. She has prevented the outside world to enter in her paradise. She has even set fire to the radio-station – the only source to connect them to the outer world –
secretly; and to hide it from others, asks Neil to investigate whether the German hippies are responsible for it.

Neil goes to shore, where he finds four persons – two men and two young women called Inger and Trudi– with a child, who were starving for their livelihood. Looking at their starvation, he takes them to the camp, where after few days Dr. Barbara asks them to leave the place as there are only a few resources of livelihood remaining. When Trudi refuses, she asks them to work with the camp people.

The search of food becomes a major question for Dr. Barbara and her companions. They have even decided to attack on the hippie’s camp to earn their food. They have been helped time to time by the reserve stocks in the padlocked storage tent. The challenge of surviving has helped them to be organized in a better group. However, Dr. Barbara soon becomes fed up with the job-rosters and work-targets, which “provoked [her] into fits of impatience. By making a fetish of self-discipline and the work ethic they were institutionalizing the sanctuary and suppressing the anarchic spirit that had brought them to Saint-esprit” (128).

Six weeks after the destruction of radio-cabin, the sanctuary begins to resemble the encampment of a religious sect. Neil begins to feel that he has been running a zoo instead of free-range sanctuary. Dr. Barbara has decided to live there only to protect the wild-life on the island, but now she is trying to control the same wild-life. In fact, she is stepping out of her limitations and trying to control the environment. In addition to this, the male members have begun to weaken day by day and more and more work begins to fell on the females. Gradually, a new kind of fever spreads over the island and so many persons begins to victim of it. It is a new
kind of challenge to Dr. Barbara, which she eventually accepts. She is suspicious of the hippies and even believes that they have brought the mysterious fever with them. However, soon Professor Saito discovers the source of the fever, which lies in the contamination of water supply by faecal matter.

In the course of time Dr. Barbara wants to increase the population on the island; and therefore, she gives this responsibility to Neil. He is advised to court Inger and Trudi, the youngest women in the camp. She purposefully selects Neil for the task as she has analysed him several times – each time concluding that Neil is healthiest man on the island. Very soon, her plan works out and there were so many women pregnant on the island with only a few men to serve for them. It is nearly a challenge for Neil and other men to feed them every day. Neil points out this fact very effectively when he remarks as: “The trouble with Saint-Esprit was that there were so many mouths to feed, and too many of those mouths belonged to pregnant women and adolescent girls, two groups with the voracious appetite of a great white shark” (188). The result of it begins to show on the island – there are only few resources at the hand. They have even destroyed the wild-life, which they intended to save. They have used all edible plants on the island and when the resources on island become insufficient; they entered in the sea and begin to destroy the marine life.

But soon, the male members on the island begin to become sick and fail to respond to the medicines and begin to die one by one. It is very much strange that only male members are victim of this unusual rare fly-fever. According to Br. Barbara, “in many ways men are weaker than women” as men have no resistance power like women (204). Within a few days, all men on the island die, and Neil is only one man left there between the women.
But after the arrival of new people – mostly women with single man – Neil also falls ill. He is aware that all women have turned against him as Dr. Barbara has infected their minds against men and more than that he knows the secret behind the death of all men. But still he “found it difficult to accept that she wanted to kill him, as she had killed Professor Saito, Kimo and David Carline” (212). In the course, Neil realizes that all women have turned insane; and the sanctuary has been turned into the death island not only for the people who live in it but also for the endangered animal. The mission has lost its purpose. Therefore, Neil escapes from the island and reports the truth to the French authorities who then take over the island.

Thus, the novel aptly explores the apocalypse of the natural world because of the scientific experiments of a man. The blind faith in science is always dangerous and can be a threat to the environment. However, the ecological consciousness of some of the environmentalists, who attempts to create awareness about the environmental degradation, helps to unfold the importance of nature. Ballard succeeds in projecting human endeavours to control the nature which is necessarily a step towards the self-destruction.

Thus, after the analysis of the novel it becomes apparent that Ballard wants to depict a world which was once present in the ancient history of the earth. Dr. Barbara’s attempt to create a natural paradise on the island by cutting of it from the influence of modern world, is in fact an attempt to lead the mankind in the pre-historic age where the natural instincts are more important to sustain the existence than modern scientific gadgets. She strongly believes that it is a science that bestowed an extreme power upon the mankind and turned him into an insane master who unknowingly moves towards the destruction. The island used as a
setting is a symbolic replica of the real world as a result, this small geographical location stands for the entire earth. In this simulacrum Ballard has mirrored an alternate universe that faces a serious problem of nuclear radiation. Dr. Barbara wants to inhabit the island as it was before the invention by the modern man with his atrocities generated out of greed. This is an environmentalist’s pursuit who wants to retrieve the earth to its previous nature-friendly mode. It is also admitted in the novel that creating such a world is impossible as on island man deprived of from his secured civilization becomes savage starts killing the endangered animals for whom they have protested a lot and even has won a battle with the government. It is also emphasised that man to extend his existence can very willingly destroys other species.

Thus, Ballard by delineating the characters with an eco-conscious emotion; dealing with the burning issue of nuclear radiation; exploring human beings’ atrocities against nature attempts to create a discourse that not only entertains the readers with its throbbing storyline and enchanting descriptions but also gives a strong message in connection to the degradation of the nature.

Thus, both the novels Rushing to Paradise and Hello America present the serious environmental issues - *Rushing to Paradise* shows the human endeavours to survive the island form being deserted and *Hello America* sketches the post-apocalyptic land where there will be no possibility of human life after the man-made deserts. Where *Rushing to Paradise* unfolds the blind faith of human being on science which will cause to shatter every hope of existence, *Hello America* depicts the scientific attack on human existence leading him to leave all his dreams and go back in the primitive life in the company of nature.