

# **Post-Nuclear Explosion Crisis and Survival in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?***

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**Abstract** The article deals with the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and aims to show that although the colonisation program to the Mars or other colony planets saves the humans from extinction after World War Terminus (WWT), the remaining human population on earth suffers from alienation and class conflict in the aftermath of the nuclear fallout. On the one hand, the colonisation program classifies the humans clinging on to earth to be biologically acceptable and a threat to the race, and on the other hand, the earth's populace who were physiologically and psychologically affected by the dust are rejected from the normal society. The article also shows that in order to cope with the loneliness and silence, humans resort to technological aids and entertainment devices which ultimately make them even more isolated from each other and tend to infuse them with certain egocentric ideologies. The article further shows that in order to survive and reclaim their shattered identities, humans pick up and try to mend the fragments of ideas and objects which they consider to be indispensable to their existences. Additionally, they tend to transmit their memories, ideas and experiences to the next generation to ensure that the things they believe in and fight for would survive even after their physical demise.

**Keywords** colonisation; isolation; trauma; silence; memories

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## Introduction

Regardless of whether crisis originates from a natural or man-made cause, it always has one dominant effect on human lives—the normalcy of everyday living is disrupted. In times of a crisis, people are thrown off-guard from their comfort zones into unknown and often fearsome horizons and are forced to struggle through the novel situations to keep on living. During the struggle, however, they lose the sense of being in the time they are living in, because, “a sense of time can only exist where there is submission to reality” (Kermode 57). Literature has portrayed, speculated and analysed this struggle of humankind and other organic or constructed beings through its various forms, genres and narrative perspectives with one common goal: to make sense of the sufferings. I will interpret the narrative depiction of crisis and survival in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* which portrays the characters’ struggle against a nuclear fallout. Based on the theoretical frameworks of apocalyptic fiction by Frank Kermode and state control by Louis Althusser, I will also argue that after the initial apocalyptic scenario, consecutive crises in the narrative occur because of the binary conflict or contrasting ideas among individuals or groups due to a false sense of supremacy among the intelligent entities—the synthetic androids and the organic humans—a conflict within which technology acts as a catalyst. By utilizing the theoretical lenses of Solastalgia, Salvage and Postmemory constructed by Glenn Albrecht, Evan Calder Williams and Marianne Hirsch respectively, I will argue that the characters in the novel resort to the fragments of ideas and objects which they consider as indispensable to their existences. Additionally, they tend to transmit their memories, ideas and experiences to the next generation(s) to ensure that the things they believe in and fight for would survive even after their physical demise. The individual and collective struggles after the catastrophes lead some of the characters, if not all, to redefine their identities and reshape their lives and sow the seeds of a secure and prosperous future in their mindsets.

### Post-Nuclear Explosion Alienation and Resorting to Technological Devices

The narrative of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* projects a post-nuclear earth where most of the animals become extinct and most of the surviving humans migrate to Mars after a global military conflict called World War Terminus (WWT). The nature of crisis caused by the extinction of living animals is foreshadowed

in the novel by a real 1966 news clipping from Reuters which states that a turtle which is nearly 200 years old and symbolically respected by the people of Tonga as ‘chief’ had recently passed away. In the dystopian world of Dick’s novel, a wave of destruction and decay after the nuclear fallout, referred to as the “dust,” sweeps away the majority of animals from earth and leaves the surviving humans in a traumatised state (Dick 12). To deal with the trauma, humans start keeping the surviving animals as highly treasured pets while making near-perfect synthetic copies of the extinct and near extinct ones. This practice, in turn, creates a binary distinction between the humans and the animals, since humans value animals for their “ability to register human existence” but treats them as “objectified commodities” because of the nonconvergent nature between human-animal interactions (Vinci 100). In the first chapter of *Do Androids Dream?*<sup>1</sup>, Rick Deckard, the protagonist of the narrative, tells his wife, Iran, of his desire to buy a real sheep to replace the “fake electric one” which they bought after their previous sheep died (Dick 2). Rick longs for another real animal because ‘owning’ an electric animal does not carry the same social status or mental satisfaction as owning a real one, as he expresses to his neighbour who owns a real horse, “‘It’s a premium job. And I’ve put as much time and attention into caring for it as I did when it was real. But—’ He shrugged. / ‘It’s not the same,’ Barbour finished” (9).

As the narrative progresses, the human endeavour to ‘care’ for animals proves to be futile because unlike electric animals, organic animals must die of old age, disease, or accident. In contrast, the innate anthropocentrism prevents humans from being compassionate towards electric animals which, unlike humans, are not living ‘beings’. This creates complexities in the human psyche which is further intensified by the arrival of the androids. Although the colonisation program to Mars or other colony planets saves the humans from extinction after WWT, the remaining human population on earth suffers from alienation and class conflict in the aftermath of the nuclear fallout. On the one hand, the colonisation program classifies the humans clinging on to earth to be “biologically unacceptable, a menace to the pristine heredity of the race,” and on the other hand, the earth’s populace who are physiologically and psychologically affected by the “dust” are termed as “special[s],” rejected from the “regular” society, and effectively denied to be a “part of mankind” (Dick 13). As a result, the ideologically divided humans scattered all over the scorched earth are haunted by silence and antiquated objects- “pudding-like kipple piled to the ceiling of each apartment” (17). The traumatising effect of silence and

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1 From this point onward, I will use the shortened form, *Do Androids Dream?*, to refer to the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*.

kipple in the human psyche is reflected in the narrative through the experience of Isidore, a ‘special’ who lives alone in a suburban residential building:

Silence. It flashed from the woodwork and the walls; it smote him with an awful, total power, as if generated by a vast mill. [...] It unleashed itself from the broken and semi broken appliances in the kitchen, the dead machines which hadn’t worked in all the time Isidore had lived here. [...] It managed in fact to emerge from every object within his range of vision, as if it—the silence—meant to supplant all things tangible. (Dick 20)

In the dystopian world of *Do Androids Dream?*, both silence and piles of objects act as catalysts to increase human suffering. The silence is amplified because it “acts to undo human achievements” (Sims 77), and there is nowhere on earth the surviving humankind can go to escape it; the ‘kipple’ is a constant reminder for them of all that has been lost. To cope with the loneliness and silence, humans resort to technological aids and entertainment devices such as the television, mood organ and empathy box. However, technology addiction and media manipulation ultimately make them even more isolated from each other and tend to infuse them with certain egocentric ideologies which increase their sufferings. Galvan explains the media manipulation in *Do Androids Dream?* with Jean Baudrillard’s media theory which states that mainstream media transmission is “unilateral” and lacks “reciprocity,” hence the receiver cannot communicate a message to the sender and is hegemonised by the “totalitarian” entity holding power (qtd. in Galvan 421-423). When Isidore turns on the television in the second chapter of the novel, he is ‘greeted’ with an advertisement by the government’s Mars Colonisation Program.

The TV set shouted, “Duplicates the halcyon days of the pre-Civil War Southern states! Either as body servants or tireless field hands, the custom-tailored humanoid robot—designed specifically for YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS, FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE—given to you on your arrival absolutely free, equipped fully, as specified by you before your departure from Earth; this loyal, trouble-free companion in the greatest, boldest adventure contrived by man in modern history will provide—” It continued on and on. (Dick 14)

Although the advertisement states that the program will provide androids—human like companions—free of cost to those who willfully migrate to Mars, it hides the hidden agenda of depopulating earth of the remaining humans and

strengthening the colonised planets while at the same time falsely marketing their merchandise, the androids, which are proven to be neither “loyal [to humans]” nor “trouble free” throughout the narrative (Dick 14). Likewise, both the mood organ and the empathy box, two innovative devices in Dick’s fictional world, fail to do what they are designed for: to reduce human loneliness in the collapsed earth by positively altering one’s mood and by nurturing compassion for all sentient beings respectively. The negative impact of the mood organ is evident in Rick and Iran’s conversation in the first chapter. While Rick prefers to set his organ to an uplifting setting, soon he and Iran gets into an argument about Rick’s profession as a bounty hunter, and Iran threatens him that if he sets the organ to a “thalamic stimulant” to help him win the argument, she will also do the same but in maximum setting (Dick 2). To resolve the argument, Rick proposes that they dial the same schedule for the day, to which Iran replies, “My schedule for today lists a six-hour self accusatory depression” (2). This shows that the characters in the novel often abuse the mood organ, a technological aid, to cause further complexities in their mental wellbeing and interpersonal relationships than they are already in.

Similarly, the empathy box, a virtual reality environment revolving around the messiah-like figure, Wilbur Mercer, who goes through an endless cycle of stoical suffering to preach empathy to all living beings essentially detaches the narrative’s characters from reality and isolates them from their physical surroundings. Galvan notices how Iran’s overdependence on the empathy box essentially diverts her from a healthy relationship with Rick (416). After Rick buys a real goat and shows Iran, she instantly wishes to ‘share’ the joy with everyone inside the empathy box instead of cherishing it with Rick, “Going over to the empathy box, she quickly seated herself and once more gripped the twin handles. [...] Rick stood holding the phone receiver, conscious of her mental departure. Conscious of his own aloneness” (Dick 153). Iran’s indifference to Rick, in turn, causes him to lose his attraction towards her, as he laments, “No support, he informed himself. Most androids I’ve known have more vitality and desire to live than my wife. She has nothing to give me” (82). These references from the novel about human interaction with technology show that, although technology itself is a neutral medium, it can negatively impact the quality of living for the humans through excessive use or abuse by its users as well as selfish motifs of the designers. The lives of the humans on earth in *Do Androids Dream?*, already battered by the adversities caused by nuclear fallout, animal extinction and overdependence on technology, come under an even direr threat when android escapees from the Mars Colonisation Program successfully land on earth and blend in with the human community, ultimately threatening the

very notion of human identity. Originally designed to be a “Synthetic Freedom Fighter” for the WWT, the androids are later repurposed to serve as “mobile donkey engine[s]” to the humans willingly migrating to Mars and be treated as their mere “possession[s]” (Dick 13). However, unlike the animal ‘possessions’ which cannot react to anthropocentrism, the androids are infused with artificial intelligence which evolves with every new version, surpassing human intelligence itself with the invention of the Nexus-6 brain unit, as Rick reflects,

The Nexus-6 android types, [...] surpassed several classes of human specials in terms of intelligence. In other words, androids equipped with the new Nexus-6 brain unit had from a sort of rough, pragmatic, no-nonsense standpoint evolved beyond a major—but inferior—segment of mankind. (Dick 25-26)

This excerpt describes how the androids equipped with Nexus-6 brain units infiltrate the human ranks of anthropocentrism and hierarchy. The humans begin to feel threatened because the Nexus-6 androids challenge their binary construction by surpassing the intellectual capabilities of a specific category of humans called ‘specials’ who supposedly have lesser intelligence than an ‘ordinary’ human person. Furthermore, the “Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test” invented by the humans to re-establish their apparent authority over the androids by detecting the presence of ‘empathy’ in the subject also proves to be problematic because it falsely detects “schizophrenic human patients” as androids (Dick 32). Along with this loophole in the Voigt-Kampff test, the bounty hunters’ license to ‘kill’ the androids also questions the notion of empathy and Mercer’s teaching in the empathy box. To justify the killing of the androids, Mercer, the preacher of compassion, tells Rick that he (Rick) is “required to do wrong,” breaking his [Mercer’s] own ethical conduct (155). Therefore, the presence of synthetic intelligence in the novel sets long-nurtured human prejudices into uncertainty, forcing humans to re-evaluate their identity and the implication of ‘empathy’.

The manifold crisis in *Do Androids Dream?*’s post-nuclear earth, henceforth, is primarily caused by a false sense of supremacy among the two intelligent entities—the synthetic androids and the organic humans—a conflict within which technology acts as a catalyst by complicating the adversities. Sims argues that the reason behind this conflict is not the “dehumanization of technology” but the humans’ profound submersion into their own selves which blinds them from recognizing other entities as equal (71). In contrast, the desperation of the androids, especially of the comic TV personality Buster Friendly, to prove the human notion of empathy as a baseless

abstraction provokes them to torture an organic spider and kill an organic goat (Dick 198), ironically confirming the lack of compassion that they are accused with. According to Vinci, androids nurture such behavior because they are “not allowed to be traumatised, and this prohibition is itself traumatic to the android[s]” (97). In turn, both the humans and the androids use animals as a scapegoat to “quarantine trauma” and continue the vicious cycles of conflict: on the one hand, between the organic and the synthetic, and on the other hand, between the powerful and the powerless (99). The ultimate conflict in the narrative occurs when the ideological values which the humans conform to turn into repression in their treatment of the androids. In turn, the androids mimic the same form of repression to defy human supremacy and brutalise organic animals.

### **Surviving and Reclaiming Shattered Identities through Memories, Ideas and Experiences**

After an event of great distress, the survivors suffer from loss of mental tranquility, fueled by unending grievances for their loved ones and their desecrated homes. In order to survive and reclaim their shattered identities, they pick up and try to mend the fragments of ideas and objects which they consider as indispensable to their existences. Additionally, they tend to transmit their memories, ideas and experiences to the next generation to ensure that the things they believe in and fight for would survive even after their physical demise. The novel of Dick portrays the characters’ struggles to be free from their shackles through the “fictive powers” (Kermode 64) of imagination, because “[...] imagination is a function of man’s inescapable freedom” (135). I will utilize the theoretical lenses of Solastalgia, Salvage and Postmemory constructed by Glenn Albrecht, Evan Calder Williams and Marianne Hirsch respectively to argue that the characters in *Do Androids Dream?* resort to the aforementioned survival techniques to deal with their individual and collective existential crises which, in turn, reshape and redefine their identities and livelihoods. The individual and collective struggles after the catastrophes lead some of the characters, if not all, to redefine their identities and reshape their lives and sow the seeds of a secure and prosperous future in their mindsets.

In the first half of the article, I examined how the nuclear fallout disrupts the everyday living of the characters in the novel by bringing drastic changes to their surrounding environments and how they long to return to their lost homes and loved ones during the initial aftermath of the crises. The popular term to explain the longing for one’s home is ‘nostalgia’ which originated from the Greek words ‘nostos’ (returning home) and ‘algos’ (suffering). Therefore, nostalgia means the suffering

that one goes through when one is away from one's home. However, in the novel, the characters are not always displaced from their homes. Rather, the calamities and violence infiltrate their domestic lives within their own habitats for the most part. Realizing the limitation of nostalgia to describe such a condition, Albrecht coined the term 'solastalgia' to explain "the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of isolation connected to the present state of one's home and territory" (45). He also states that solastalgia shares a "ghost reference or structural similarity with nostalgia, [therefore] a place reference is imbedded [between them]" (45). Furthermore, he adds that solastalgia refers neither to "looking back to some golden past" nor "seeking another place as 'home,'" rather it deals with the "'lived experience' of the loss of the present" which results in the feeling of displacement while "one is still at 'home'" (45). In *Do Androids Dream?*, the characters' struggles to survive portray characteristics of both nostalgia and solastalgia which leads them to either more despair and desolation or willingness to overcome the dire conditions based on their distinctive narrative contexts.

Solastalgia, in *Do Androids Dream?*, can be observed from the perspectives of the two intelligent species of the story: the organic humans and the synthetic Nexus-6 type androids. Although the humans in the narrative are biologically 'born' and live a 'full life' while the androids are manufactured in factories, the root cause of their solastalgia is the same: the destruction during World War Terminus and the Mars Colonisation Program that follows. In "'Solastalgia' A New Concept in Health and Identity," Albrecht describes how the people of Hunter Valley region in Australia suffer from distress caused by "a wave of aggressive colonization by large scale, extractive and power-generating industries owned by State, national and multinational corporations" (54). A similar manner of large-scale colonial aggression is observed in the post-nuclear landscape of *Do Androids Dream?* where multiplanetary corporations such as the Rosen Association and Sidney's Animals And Fowl dictate how the humans should seek comfort in their post-war distress through the android and animal 'subjects' and how the intelligent androids should be 'repurposed' after the war to serve an anthropocentric agenda. This authoritarian tendency of the conglomerates, in turn, fabricates existential dilemmas within the psyche of both the humans and the androids while altering their desires of overcoming individual solastalgia into interspecies conflicts. In their drive to find solace in the entropy of Dick's dystopian landscape, the humans long to be united, while the androids struggle to be identified as individuals instead of manufactured commodities (Vinci 98).

As the novel's human protagonist, Rick Deckard, sets himself on a mission to

identify Nexus-6 androids with the Voigt-Kampff empathy test and “retire” them in exchange of “bounty” money from the San Francisco Police Department, the irony of his situation and the existential turmoil of all the other humans become apparent (Dick 11). The only thing that Rick wishes to do with his earnings is to buy a highly expensive organic animal and share the joy with the human community through the “empathy box” (27). Ironically, he overlooks the fact that, through his former act, he is conveying absolute apathy to the synthetic yet sentient androids who are similarly treated as mere “servant[s]” by Mars emigrants (Sims 73). In addition, the futility of the empathy box as a medium to provide solace in human distress becomes more obvious when Isidore, despite owning an empathy box, exclaims to himself,

It's someone else in this building, he thought wildly, unable to believe it. Not my TV; that's off, and I can feel the floor resonance. It's below, on another level entirely! / I'm not alone here anymore, he realized. Another resident has moved in, taken one of the abandoned apartments, and close enough for me to hear him. (Dick 21)

Isidore's reaction here proves that the technological aids such as- TV, mood organ or empathy box are not adequate enough to soothe human solastalgia in the post-nuclear world. As a result, Isidore is unwilling to give away Pris and her associates to the bounty hunter Rick later in the narrative despite knowing that they are androids, because by then he treats them not as mere machines but downtrodden individuals just like him (Dick 191-192). On the contrary, in their desperation for recognition as individuals in the anthropocentric social structure, the androids show clear signs of compassion among themselves but ironically oppose the very idea of ‘empathy’ itself, hence conforming to the hegemonic role enforced upon them by their human ‘makers’ in the Rosen Association. In chapter 9, the android Luba Luft seeks the help of an android masquerading as a human police officer to detain Rick in a fake police department (96), while the androids Pris, Roy and Irmgard work together and ‘vote’ for their plan of action before they are cornered by Rick in the novel’s climax (143). Yet, when Pris sees the spider which Isidore discovers, she ‘curiously’ cuts off its legs to see if it needs all eight legs (179-180). In a similar manner, Rachel takes revenge on Rick by throwing his newly bought goat off of the roof (198). These self-contradictory actions by both the humans and the androids in specific scenarios prove that the distress that they face in their present condition is reinforced when they conform to their expected social roles and reduced only when they are able to think and act out of the ‘box’.

Another survival technique which dominates the transition phase between the initial catastrophe and utopian imagination of the survivors in the narratives is the repurpose and reuse of ideas and objects from their pre-crisis lives. Evan Calder Williams defines this practice, salvage, as “[...] the discovery of hidden value or use in what appears beyond repair or sale—or, at the least, a wager that the already ruined might still have some element worth saving, provided one knows where and how to look” (845). Salvage is a crucial theme in understanding the transformation of the characters’ lives in the novels from the initial meaninglessness to finding new meaning because it allows them to pick up fragments from their pre-nuclear lives respectively in forms of words and ideas they can reutilize or objects and places they can repurpose. In doing so, they empower themselves to face their existential challenges, like Salman Rushdie states while talking about his childhood home Bombay, “[a] broken glass is not merely a mirror of nostalgia. It is also [...] a useful tool with which to work in the present” (429).

In *Do Androids Dream?*, salvage in the post-fallout earth is heavily influenced by human exceptionalism, with anthropocentric views dictating which objects and ideas to uphold and which to reject. Williams shows how the “wreckers-salvagers,” a fictional group in Peter Weir’s *The Cars That Ate Paris*, intentionally destroy and salvage objects because they “appeared to delight in the ruin” (848). A similar tendency is found within both the androids and humans in Dick’s novel. In chapter 7, Isidore mistakes a real cat for an electric one because the latest models of electric animals are built with “disease circuits” which make them appear as lifelike as possible (Dick 67). Despite this stunning resemblance which is often extremely difficult to differentiate, humans keep prioritising organic animals over synthetic ones and use electric animals only as a proxy to fill up the void of not owning a real animal. Similarly, humans build androids to be as human-like as possible yet treat them as mere disposable and/or salvageable utilities to suit their imminent needs of a fighter, a companion or a domestic help while refusing to accept them as equals. Sims finds this anthropocentric treatment of androids ironic, stating, “If they are manufactured to be servants, what is the need to invest resources into the refinement of their brains so that they convincingly perform ‘human-ness?’” (73). The treatment of androids, despite their simulacral resemblance with organic human beings, as salvageable ‘commodities’ instead of living, feeling individuals becomes more evident when Rachel contemplates the four years lifespan of all androids (Dick 170-171). Because of the androids’ short lifespan, their physical “brain units” can be salvaged from their torso and infused with “false memories” of the humans’ desire (51), a fate that the humans would not consider for themselves. Similarly, the theology called “Mercerism”

which is salvaged and repurposed from old world religions to preach empathy for all living beings terms androids as “killers” with “no regard for animals, which possessed no ability to feel empathic joy for another life form’s success or grief at its defeat” (27). This anthropocentric loathing towards synthetic intelligence is self-contradictory and ironical, as androids are the most technologically advanced synthetic intelligence and Mercerism itself is dependent on the technological advancement of virtual reality, the “empathy box” (27), to collaborate with its followers. In retaliation to all the mistreatment and marginalisation, the rebel androids from the Mars Colonisation Program infiltrate the human-made hierarchy in their attempt to survive and make the bildungsroman protagonist of *Do Androids Dream?*, Rick Deckard, realise the flaws in the system, enabling the imagination of an earth where both the androids and humans can live in harmony.

Finally, after the initial phase of survival following the nuclear fallout in the narrative, the survivors get more accustomed to their new ways of living while still trying to make sense of their present and/or former sufferings. In “The Generation of Postmemory,” Marianne Hirsch, the coiner of the term ‘postmemory’, states, Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up (106). A close analysis of *Do Androids Dream?* reveals the transmission of experiences of trauma, or a life before the traumatic event(s), from the witnessing generation to the next one. In the novel, old-world ethics and religious values are transmitted through the teachings of Mercerism, while false memories are imprinted into androids’ brain units to emulate a sensation of having a past without actually experiencing it.

Although there is no direct example of intergenerational transmission of experience or trauma in *Do Androids Dream?*, the absence of postmemory itself may explain some of the loopholes in the story which turn the androids and humans against each other. For example, Mercerism is widely regarded as a theology which preaches compassion to living beings, yet there is no trace of where it originated from. Sims notices that words like “God” or “Jesus” are simply used as manners of expression by the characters in the novel, lacking any “spiritual significance” (78). However, similar to the egocentric biases and ambiguities of conventional religions, Mercerism, on the one hand, preaches empathy and on the other hand, Wilbur Mercer justifies Rick’s killing of the androids by saying that he [Rick] is “required to do wrong” (Dick 155). Therefore, the notion of empathy that Mercerism preaches resonates anthropogenic values and does not take synthetic intelligence into

consideration, perhaps because such intelligence had no place in the scriptures that the theology possibly originates from. The absence of postmemorial transmission and its consequence is further noticed in the notion of false memory in the androids when Rick tests Rachel Rosen and Phil Resch with the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test in two points of the narrative respectively. In Chapter 5, after being tricked into believing that Rachel Rosen is not an android, Rick finally notices how Rachel addresses an owl as “it” instead of “her,” and asks one more question from the Voigt-Kampff Test to confirm that she indeed is an android (50). Afterwards, he asks Eldon Rosen, the owner of Rosen Corporation, if she [Rachel] knows that she’s an android, to which he answers, “Sometimes they didn’t; false memories had been tried various times, generally in the mistaken idea that through them, reactions to testing would be altered” (51). In contrast, when Phil Resch, another bounty hunter like Rick, suspects himself as an android, he expresses his despair to Rick, “I own an animal; not a false one but the real thing. A squirrel. I love the squirrel, Deckard; every goddamn morning I feed it and change its papers—you know, clean up its cage—and then in the evening when I get off work I let it loose in my apt and it runs all over the place” (111). The examples above make it evident that false memory cannot be a substitute either for the real experiences of an individual or experiences that are transmitted from one generation to another because it lacks the emotional depth associated with those experiences. For this reason, Rachel is tested as an android despite being unaware of her identity, while Phil Resch’s test comes negative because his emotional reactions are indeed based on real experiences.

## Conclusion

My analysis—under the theoretical lenses of Kermode, Althusser and others—reveals that the narrative depicts the way binary opposition is intentionally generated by specific individuals or groups to oppress others and achieve selfish agendas, which, in turn, causes the collapse of their respective systems and creates turmoil. The androids and the humans in *Do Androids Dream?* could have shown more sympathetic and understanding towards each other and utilised technological advancements to rebuild the war-ravaged world and make room for both organic and synthetic life to grow instead of fighting for a feigned notion of supremacy. It also shows the loneliness and overdependence on technology which in turn makes humans more alienated. Through my research, I have also attempted to discover that during the survival phase, the characters’ mental and physical wellbeing as individuals and as collective communities depend on their existential choices, even if the choices are limited by dire conditions. Additionally, the theoretical lenses that

I used—solastalgia, salvage and postmemory—make the polarities and impacts of these choices intelligible. For example, the consumerist, entropic world of *Do Androids Dream?* makes solastalgia backfire and sets the humans and androids into an endless loop of egocentrism and intolerance and android's fake memories caused by an absence of adequate postmemorial transmission makes them apathetic and hostile to organic entities. Again, the individual and collective struggles of some characters help them remodel their lives, heralding the advent of a new world. Although the diversity and extent of the characters' survival experiences in the novel, therefore, proves that there is no single utopian 'magic solution' to all their problems, it is the very same diversity which indicates some of the common causes of their sufferings, e.g., intolerance, egocentrism, inflexibility and so on.

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