Chapter Three

Dealing with the Nuclear Threat
This chapter analyses Dick’s novels dealing with the nuclear question and its impact on the human psyche. It seeks to understand this through an analysis of novels’ characters who are both its victims and victimizers. For the purpose of the analysis, Dick’s ten novels chosen for this study can be divided into five categories based on the nature of the apocalyptic world created and the behaviour of the characters under the nuclear shadow. The five categories are:

1. Immediate impact – *Dr. Bloodmoney or How We Got Along After the Bomb* (1965) and *The World Jones Made* (1954)

2. Short term impact - *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965) and *The Penultimate Truth* (1964)

3. Long term impact - *Vulcan’s Hammer* (1960) and *Dr. Futurity* (1959)

4. Last minute prevention *Time Out of Joint* (1959) and *The Eye in the Sky* (1957)

5. Escape into Space - *Martian Time-Slip* (1964) and *Cantata 140* (1966)

Of the two novels that deal with the plight of survivors in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear catastrophe, *Dr. Bloodmoney or How We Got Along After the Bomb* (henceforth *Dr. Bloodmoney*) looks at the reaction of the human civilization in the post apocalyptic world. The novel begins with the dropping of atom bombs on San Francisco and deals with its impact on human civilization in the subsequent years. It is set in West Marin County where a few survivors attempt to recreate a settlement on the lines of avoiding the mistakes of the capitalistic society, which’s failure led to the nuclear catastrophe. The first nuclear attack, which is a part of a series of nuclear attacks, takes place when Dr. Bruno Bluthgeld makes a mistake in his calculations, which leads to an atmospheric nuclear explosion that causes widespread mutations in people making them “phocomeluses”, human beings without limbs
or sometimes even without complete bodies. Dr. Bluthgeld experiences extreme pangs of
guilt and develops a deep-seated hatred towards people. His fear leads to his mind developing
a psychosis that makes him assume that solution to the threat/problem is the complete
annihilation of the ‘enemy’, which happens to be the rest of humanity. Dr. Bluthgeld’s
condition is similar to that of Nazi doctors who believed that the solution to Germany’s
problem lay in solving the Jewish problem by murdering all Jews, as they were all
‘unacceptable’. Lifton’s assessment of the Nazi ‘solution’ to the Jewish problem is true about
some of Dick’s characters that have a reductive, totalistic, and absolutistic perception like Dr.
Bluthgeld. Lifton says that Adolf Hitler’s ideology to cure Germany’s malady was a vision of
German revival by destroying the ‘enemy race’. ¹

As early, as 1920 Hitler had made clear that the only solution for the [Aryan]
malady was “the removal of the Jews from the midst of our people. The
vision, then, was not just biological but biomedical.” ... and [the ideology]
claimed to have the means to reduce all political and historical process to
biological principles; ...invoking a higher therapeutic purpose to justify the
mass murder of Jews (53-54).

Dr. Bluthgeld’s psyche indicates a similar totalitarian approach in dealing with the
‘enemy’, which happens to be the entire human race. Lifton in his work with Nazi Holocaust
victims and victimizers concluded that both went through extreme psychological changes and
lost the ability to feel.² The victims were unable to link the appropriate emotion with their
thoughts. The Nazi doctors, on the other hand, developed alternate psychological mechanisms
like Doubling, Brutalization, and Dissociation to reduce the guilt experienced due to their
actions. Dr. Bluthgeld, the nuclear scientist whose actions led to widespread mutations and
suffering among the people of San Francisco, experiences similar guilt that makes him think
that “There are thousands, even millions of people in the world, who hate me, and would like to destroy me.” In the office of the psychiatrist, Dr. Stockstill recognises Dr. Bluthgeld. This is Bruno Bluthgeld, the physicist. And he is right; a lot of people both here and in the East would like to get their hands on him because of his miscalculation back in 1972. Because of the terrible fallout from the high-altitude blast, which wasn’t supposed to hurt anybody, Bluthgeld’s figures proved it in advance. (10-11).³

Dr. Bluthgeld complains that he is unable to do ordinary things like travelling in a bus or to stay in a public place due to the disfiguration of his face, which had several botches. This takes place even though Dr. Stockstill observes that “The physicist had bad skin and he needed a haircut, and his entire face was marred by worry within him...but there was no disfiguration.” The imaginary malady of Dr. Bluthgeld is evidence of his guilt over his actions that resulted in genocide. In fact, the genocidal mentality in Dr. Bluthgeld is so strong that he becomes responsible for the second nuclear attack on San Francisco. He undergoes extreme forms of Brutalization whereby he ‘makes’ use of the nuclear weapons onboard the revolving satellite under his control to get even with his ‘enemies’. Douglas A. Mackey suggests that

In his mind, he [Dr. Bluthgeld] has responded to the hatred of others from the level of his collective unconscious. Without willing it, he has handed the world the fruit of its alienation [and its elimination] of him. Having helped create the bomb, he thinks he has the mental power to detonate it as a reaction against the enemy, which in his paranoia is all of mankind (60).⁴

Dr. Stockstill while analysing Dr. Bluthgeld in a psychiatric session observes that the physicist is suffering from vigorous pangs of guilt and is in more ways than one, evil. A renowned critic of works by Dick, Douglas A. Mackey says that one of main features of the
writings of Dick is that they have, "...twist ending of his novels is more than a bit of black humour on Dick's part; the evil gods or extraterrestrials clearly represent the destructive implications of nuclear technology, which the scientist has ignored". He makes use of his anti-communist beliefs to undergo a form of Doubling, Disavowal to negate the nature of reality. Thus Dr. Bluthgeld is able to overcome the guilt of the heinous crime he committed by unleashing the nuclear nightmare on innocent population.

At the time Stockstill had felt a twisted quality about the man; he had watched him being interviewed on TV, listened to him speak, read his fantastic anti-communist speeches- and come to the tentative conclusion that Bluthgeld had a profound hatred for people, deep and persuasive enough to make him want, on some unconscious level to err, to make him want to jeopardize the lives of millions. (14).

The followers of the Nazi ideology believed that their acts of genocide were sanctioned by religion, as pointed out by Lifton. "For the Nazis brought to their biology emotions resembling those of the millenarian movements of the Middle Ages whose ideological sources tended to derive mainly from the Book of Revelation and, to a lesser extent, from Old Testament sources such as the Book of Daniel." In order to escape from the angry public Dr. Bluthgeld assumes the identity of a shepherd but he still remains, "...an enemy in sheep’s clothing" as described by Douglas A. Mackey (60) Dr. Stockstill is aware of the extent of threat that Dr. Bluthgeld poses to the world.

*Our enemy, Stockstill thought. Who is our enemy...isn’t it you, Mr Tree? Isn’t it you sitting here rattling off your paranoid delusions? How did you ever get the high post you hold? Who is responsible for giving you power over the lives of others—and letting you keep that power even after the fiasco of 1972? You—and they—are surely our enemies. (15).
The character, Dr. Stockstill is echoing Dick’s sentiments, which he talks about in the afterword of the novel.

So I have to confess to an overly simple view of Doctor Bluthgeld: I hate him and I hate everything he stands for. He is the alien and he is the enemy. I cannot fathom his mind; I cannot understand his hates. It’s not the Russians I fear; it is the Doctor Bluthgelds, Doctor Bloodmoneys, in our society, that terrify me...Doctor Bloodmoney is sick, and sick in a way that is dangerous to the rest of us. And much of the evil in our world emanates from such men, because such men do exist. (302-303).

Though Dick admits to his despising Dr. Bluthgeld, the novel also offers a different perspective. While Dick identifies Dr. Bluthgeld’s role as one of the victimizers, Bonny Keller attempts to understand him and tries to help him, in spite of knowing well that Dr. Bluthgeld is responsible for the nuclear holocaust. She sees him as being “exceptionally able” and of being in need of help. She recommends Dr. Stockstill to Dr. Bluthgeld but the bombs were dropped on the day of the first session itself. Bonny feels that Dr. Bluthgeld is afraid of an imaginary enemy, which Dr. Bluthgeld confesses to Dr. Stockstill saying that there was an international Communist conspiracy to kill him. Dr. Bluthgeld says

I came to America... in order to escape the Communist agents who wanted to murder me. They were after me even then... so of course were the Nazis. They were all after me... They still are, but ultimately they will fail...for I have God on my side; He sees my need and often He has spoken to me, giving me the wisdom I need to survive my pursuers. (15).

The nuclear scientist’s fear of the ‘enemy’ is the basis of nuclear weapon policies of nuclear weapon states as explained by Richard Falk.7
For Americans the presence of the Soviet Union in the world is enough to explain nuclear arms racing, making the nuclearist path seem inevitable, even if increasingly acknowledged as tragic. Presumably the architects of defense policy in the Kremlin see the world scene in reverse, confronted by a militarized United States poised to devastate the Soviet homeland if it were not for the constraining impact of Soviet armed might. (Indefensible Weapons 209).

The two principal focus of Dick’s fiction are shifting nature of reality and what it means to be human. In order to study these aspects he looks at certain issues that are generally raised in apocalyptic fiction in Science Fiction in general. One of the main concerns is the issue of human beings becoming victims of their own machinations. The character of Dr. Bluthgeld helps to raise the question of reality, which has always been one of the main concerns of Dick’s works. Dick foresaw the machines’ expansion and taking over control over humans and aimed at cautioning his readers about the looming threat. There have been critics like Paul Brians who have studied the works of other Science Fiction writers like Ray Bradbury’s (1920- ). Brians’ observations, especially on Martian Chronicles (1950) on the need for having apocalyptic literature have a striking bearing on Dick’s work. Critics like Richard Bernstein maintain that Dick believed that unfettered technological advancement had created a world out of which there was no escape.

For Dick, the real question was not whether mankind’s creations would turn against us. He seems to have believed that the existence of nuclear weapons proved they already had. Most of his novels take place in a world rising out of the ashes of a nuclear war. His main fascination was the likelihood that technology would lead to the disappearance of the very frontier between what mankind creates and what mankind is. (124).
While examining diverse aspects connected to the reality of the nuclear threat, Dick ensures that his readers are aware of the need for looking at apocalyptic fiction. Recognising Dick as one who looked into the abyss in order to understand the degeneration of the human psyche in the face of shifting realities in a technocratic and industrial society, Angus Taylor maintains that looking into the abyss or analysing apocalyptic literature is crucial to preventing it. Another aspect of reality that comes up in Dick’s analysis is the reductive and absolutist nature of industrial societies in his fiction where a single panacea is recommended for all problems, whether social or economic. This reductive and absolutist solution often leads to an unequivocal solution which marks the beginning of the nuclear threat becoming reality. Dr. Bluthgeld’s claim to find a “definitive” solution to the Communist threat using nuclear weapons is similar to the threat Lifton suggests in *The Genocidal Mentality*.

Nuclearism ... has become totalistic in its relationship to science, to ultimate power, and to the American religion of anti-communism (and the Soviet religion of anti-capitalism). Totalistic projects seek to “stop history” by means of a once-and-for-all resolution of problems of death and human continuity. They seek to cut off the flow of changing images and forms that make us, as human beings, the historical animal. (88).

Dr. Bluthgeld is described by Dick himself as an evil individual who finds pleasure in afflicting suffering on others. Throughout the novel, Dr. Bluthgeld comes across as an individual who fails to develop any meaningful relation with anyone. In *Dr. Bloodmoney* Dick presents characters who have the chance to change their lives by making the right choice so as to be able to choose life over death. For Dick, death can take several forms, like leading a life of blind acceptance similar to a machine or giving up the choice to say ‘no’. In this context, Dr. Bluthgeld remains a victimizer even when Bonny offers him advice to consult the psychiatrist, Dr Stockstill for treating his schizophrenia. The novel’s strength is in
its offering its characters a chance to choose their destiny. While Dr. Bluthgeld chooses to remain a perpetuator, Harry Hoppington chooses to become a victimizer, in spite of his having been one of the initial victims of the nuclear explosions caused by Dr. Bluthgeld. The explosion makes him a mutant without limbs. His ability to fix things makes him a much sought-after individual in the post-holocaust world but he chooses to use his psychokinetic powers to control people. He attempts to control people’s lives by gaining control over Dangerfield’s satellite, which is the sole link between the surviving communities. He tries to use his psychokinetic powers to kill Dangerfield. Dick, in his afterword to Dr. Bloodmoney, mentions that Harry represents the evil in people “…Harry Hoppington, who epitomises the monster in us: the person who is hungry. Not hungry for food, but hungry for coercive control over others…Harry is incomplete, and he will complete himself at the expense of the entire world; he will psychologically devour it.” (301). Douglas A. Mackey attributes Harry’s drive for attempting control over others to spiritual depravity, “…he is a personification of the blind, grasping, anti-evolutionary trend in human nature. His real deformity is spiritual, not physical.” (61).

The World Jones Made, which is also set in a period after the nuclear war, after the society has accepted the laws of Hoff’s Relativism. Under Hoff’s Relativism, people are free to believe in their own reality without imposing it on others, which is forbidden. Relativist philosophy is aimed at destroying absolutism but fails due to its inherent contradictory nature. The novel looks at the role of totalitarian government in suppressing individual freedom by controlling every aspect of human lives, even forcing them to think according to the dictates of the Fedgov. The ideology of Dick’s fictional societies is similar to the ideology of Nazi Germany with its claims to totalitarianism, reductionism, and absolutism as pointed out by Lifton in The Genocidal Mentality. The central character Jones is a “precog”, who is being investigated by Cussick, a Secpol or secret police for anti-establishment and anti-Relativism
charges. Jones makes use of his precognitive abilities to claim knowledge of "absolute truth". He creates a mass frenzy among the public that the Earth is under threat from the Drifters, an extraterrestrial species. Jones' ideas develop as an ideology counter to the laws of Relativism and he forms a cult with himself as its leader. Jones starts a revolution against the Fedgov and overthrows it but later his government also degenerates into another absolutist state. He convinces people that the only way to save Earth was to destroy the genocide of the alien species and assumes the position of the planet's dictator. Douglas A. Mackey points out that the character of Jones was modelled on Adolf Hitler, the German dictator. Like Hitler who rose to power following his fiery speeches, Jones's speech is also set in Frankfurt, Germany, where he says,

My friends...the entrenched plutocracy has tried to silence me. But they have grown soft; like great parasites they sit behind their desks running the world. They have grown fat on us; they have feasted well. But it is going to end. I can see it...We must strike out!...It is our destiny. The race cannot be denied its future. Nothing will stop us. We cannot be defeated. (121).

Lifton also points out that Hitler had assumed power by creating mass hysteria about the danger Jews posed to the German population and offering the Jewish genocide as a solution to Germany's problems. Though Jones manages to start a war against the Drifters, things turn against him when the Drifters seal the Earth from the rest of the universe. Jones is a victimizer who is responsible for the violence unleashed by his followers in the name of overturning the authoritarian Fedgov. Initially he's a victim of Fedgov, which tries to suppress his freedom to think, and the condition of helplessness is made by Nina, Cussick's wife.

I mean...there was the war and now here we are...For what? Where can we go? What can we look for? We're not even allowed to have romantic illusions,
anymore. We can’t even tell ourselves lies. If we do, she smiled, without rancour. Then they take us to the forced labour camps. (The World Jones Made 81).

Though Jones manages to overthrow the Fedgov’s repressive rule, the government established by him as a replacement is no different as it also forms its own secret police state. Jones’s failure occurs at different levels. His ability to see into the future helps him to establish his rule over Earth but the same ability fails him. The war against the Drifters fails even before it starts and it leads to a popular revolt against him. Jones’s precognitive powers imprison him in the world of his own making, instead of liberating him. At the individual level, though he knows the future, he’s unable to change it and is forced to helplessly watch the future happen.

“And by now you’ve seen it happen, too. Do you grasp how I feel? For one year, I’ve sat facing that moment, knowing it was coming. Knowing it couldn’t be avoided. Suffering through that- and through what comes afterward. Now it’s over. Now I can rest. You realize, of course, that what you did was what I wanted you to do. But probably won’t understand why...I made a mistake. I gambled, I took a chance, and I lost. I was wrong...but not in the way you think. I was more wrong than you think.” (187).

Jones undergoes various psychological mechanisms in the course of his rise and fall. During the initial stages of the revolt, he experiences Dissociation in which a part of his mind separates itself from the whole. This fragmented part of self enables him to unleash violence against people to satisfy his greed for power. By undergoing Psychic Numbing, he manages to overcome the guilt caused by carrying out actions that lead to suffering for others. He starts a war against the Drifters by sending spaceships to attack and destroy them in spite of knowing their benign nature. Here Jones’ psyche undergoes Brutalization by technology to
distance himself from the suffering of the victims of his violence. The creation of secret
police and the hierarchy of his cult are steps he takes to distance himself from the implication
of his actions. Jones’ thoughts are a clear indicator of the changes in his psyche that is
wrought into different conditions by the ever-expanding influence of nuclearism. His
precognitive powers enable him to have a glimpse into the future but its scope is limited up to
one year only. The finiteness of his power is a symbol of the finite nature of human
perception about a technological society that has allowed machines to take over. The thoughts
of Jones’ character, based on the Nazi Leader, Adolf Hitler, show the desire for power, at any
cost. The knowledge that his actions would cause incalculable suffering to people, results in a
turmoil in his psyche with the sense of guilt on one side and the desire for power on the other.
The mad craze for power at any cost, convinces Jones about the need to carry out violent
actions but the accompanying guilt threatens to cause great psychic damage and pain. Due to
the sense of being responsible for unleashing acts of violence against people, Jones’ mind
undergoes Doubling, by which his mind fragments into two and the fragmentary part begins
to function as a whole. The fragmented mind enables the character of Jones to function as a
victimizer. This becomes clear in his thoughts that are a symptom of the Doubling
mechanism. At the time of John’s meeting Jones when he was a Fortune-teller at the
Carnival, we can see the Doubling mechanism operating when a part of his mind functions as
a whole and works towards Jones’ becoming the perceived messiah while the original mind is
grappling with the foreknowledge of the impending doom. On becoming the dictatorial ruler
who unleashes the nuclear war against the Drifters, Jones believes that he would be able to
defeat them and become the messiah of the people on Earth. But when Jones foresees the
defeat of his forces in the battle against the Drifters, his fragmentary mind begins to deny any
knowledge of Jones’ defeat and develops Disavowal mechanism while the remaining part of
the psyche functions normally. When finally defeated and confronted by John Cuissick,
Jones’s mind begins to deny all painful thoughts connected with his life. He tries to manipulate circumstances to provoke John to attack and kill him to make appear as if John’s murdering Jones was responsible for Earth’s defeat in the war against the Drifters, and not Jones’ failure. Thus, we can see that in the course of the novel, Jones’ mind undergoes numerous mechanisms of Doubling, Denial, and Disavowal, to escape from his mental anguish. Dick makes it clear that Jones’ suffering is inevitable and just because of the genocidal crimes he has committed. “The suffering he had caused others did not compare with that which he had to undergo. But it was right; he deserved it. This was his punishment. He had sinned, and retribution had come. The final, sombre phase of Jones’ existence had begun” (164). Jones’s ‘punishment,’ like his precognitive powers, is unique. He is condemned to be conscious of every aspect of his death and the decay of every organ till his body is reduced to minerals while he is still alive.

Now, at this moment, with his full faculties intact, he was experiencing it. Simultaneously, he was fully conscious, totally in possession of his senses—and at the same time he was undergoing ultimate psychic degeneration. It was bearing. But he had to bear it. And everyday, every week, it grew worse—until finally he would in actuality die. And then, thank God, the ordeal would end. (164).

When Cussick meets Jones, his life changes forever. He and his wife become victims of Jones’ manipulations. Their marriage and personal relationships with others break down due to turmoil started by Jones’ revolution. After their divorce, Nina joins Jones’ Youth League while Cussick loses his job and becomes a fugitive. When Jones fails, Cussick and she get together and head to Venus where they start a new life out all over again, leaving behind the corrupt ideology and decadent systems of Earth.
In the second category that looks at the short term impact scenario, there are two novels *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and *The Penultimate Truth*. Let’s analyse *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. The short story, “*Fair Game*”, which deals with a nuclear physicist who sees an evil face in the sky and is later devoured, forms the basis of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. In fact, many of Dick’s short stories served as pencil-sketches for his later novels. A recurring theme in many of Dick’s short stories was the threat of nuclear weapons and its proliferation; it was one of the concerns raised by Science Fiction, albeit in a limited way. Dick was one of the first to make use of the nuclear weapons proliferation as a theme in his works and lay bare the threat facing the human species. In Douglas A. Mackey’s words:

> Dick simultaneously thrives on paranoia and exposes its futurity.... he exposes the insanity of unreasoning fear that fans the arms race and casts a nuclear shadow...competitive competition promotes this vicious cycle of escalation. The problem is, of course, not the machines themselves, but the people who think like machines...The arms race escalates the need for new, improved models of bomb shelters; they are designed for planned obsolescence as are automobiles. (Mackey 8).

The novel is set in the post nuclear war period where the war has caused temperatures to cross 180 degrees and people are forcefully drafted to settle in hovels in Mars in order to set up Martian colonies. The colonists, unable to face the harsh reality of Mars, consume Can D, a hallucinogenic drug in tandem with Perky Pat layouts. The drug consumption allows them to experience a hallucinatory life in the world of Barbie-Ken dolls. Like drug abuse, another factor that comes up is the use of precognitive powers to predict future fashion. The novel looks at the conditions created by capitalistic society, which is based on scientific and technological solutions solely for the purpose of profit. It shows how the capitalistic society’s
hunger for power, wealth, and safety leads to its losing all of it. The main characters are Barney Mayerson, his boss Leo Bulero and the novel deals with their fight against Palmer Eldritch who has been possessed by an evil alien power. Both Bulero and Eldritch are business rivals fighting each other for the control over the markets of Martian colonies where they sell hallucinogenic drugs to helpless settlers. Critics like Brian Aldiss and Kim Stanley Robinson suggest that Dick uses the method of setting his novels on alien planets to distinctly show the absurdity of human condition under capitalistic system. His settings show the pathetic condition of human beings in such a stark manner that it jolts the reader out of their complacency.

American business looks like insanity on Mars (or at best like feudalism); personal relationships look fragile, and often meaningless. Yet a close reading forces us to recognise the metaphor, and to acknowledge that these are the same business and personal practices we employ in the here and now--- so that the second movement of the estrangement effect, re-cognition, becomes a powerful shock. (63).

The plight of the Martian settlers victimized by victimizers like Eldritch is similar to that of people who are victims living in the nuclear shadow. Robinson goes further and says that, "Eldritch is clearly a "mad capitalist" (a term coined by Suvin to match "mad scientist"), and it could be said that the alien that invaded him during his voyages represents the spirit of capitalism, just as his product Chew-Z could be thought of as the ultimate consumer item." (61). Another social feature of this work is the absolute power of the corporate and their totalistic control over every aspect of human life and its reduction into a struggle for consumer market. This feature of Dick’s work finds an echo in Lifton’s work about the social conditions that led to the formation of genocidal mentality in Nazi Germany and the way this mentality had the destructive potential to escalate into extermination of the human species. A
crucial aspect of Dick’s work is the use of technology and human skills for corporate success and hunger for power instead of using it to improve human existence. Barney’s precognitive powers are used to predict fashion for designing Perky Pat dollhouses that are necessary for consuming hallucinogenic drug, Can D. As a result of Can D consumption, the characters fail to reach out and establish meaningful relationships because of the psychic numbing they undergo. The splitting of the mind in the Martian settlers causes them to lose their ability to feel or experience any emotion. This is pointed out by Kim Stanley Robinson:

If Dick’s novels are considered as thought experiments, in which various factors of the fictive social reality are altered to test the results on human beings, then *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* is the experiment in which Dick takes his characters into the most hostile social environment he can imagine. In this deadly cage world the offer of a drug even more powerful than the totally hallucinogenic but short-lived Can D is immediately and eagerly taken up. The colonists’ only hope of escaping consumer society is ever-increasing consumption, and this solution—this failure to resist—damns them. (61).

The situation is described by Lifton about the capitalist and industrial world under the nuclear shadow is parallel to Dick’s Martian worlds where the threat to humankind from nuclear weapons is highlighted through hallucinogenic drugs. The fate of Dick’s characters is that the more they attempt to escape, the closer they get to the threat. The condition of people under the nuclear threat is that in their attempt to gain more security they end up creating more nuclear weapons, which instead of freeing them, makes them its victims.

The condition of the main characters in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* is no different from Lifton’s subjects. Bulero is a ruthlessly ambitious businessman who wants to maintain his monopoly over the Martian market. In spite of his intelligence, which enables
him to understand the gravity of his actions, his mind undergoes Brutalization in order to carry out actions that cause sufferings to others. By focussing on technical matters like the merits of hand-pressed and machine-pressed Can D, Bulero manages to distance himself from the plight of the consumers of his company’s product. When he’s forced to consume Chew Z by Eldritch, Bulero himself becomes as victim from the position of a victimizer. Eldritch is presented as an embodiment of evil, a victimizer who wants to gain control over all humans but his plight is no different from Bulero. This aspect of the victimizer becoming the victim is pointed out by Barney, “Should I tell how it tried to help me, in its own way? And yet—how fettered it was, too, by the forces of fate, which seem to transcend all that live, including it as much as ourselves.” (213-4). Eldritch, thanks to the evil alien’s control over him, undergoes psychological mechanisms of Denial and Disavowal. Eldritch begins to deny to himself that he had become a prisoner of the evil race and later a part of his fragmented mind begins to believe that the evil influence has made him a God. These psychological mechanisms take place while the main part of his mind is aware of the plight of the victims. In order to overcome the pangs of guilt, Eldritch’s mind undergoes further regression by trying to cut itself from all human relations completely. The drug Chew Z offers its consumers the power to create their own illusory world where their desires are satiated. The danger is that in these illusory worlds created by Chew Z, Eldritch become its God and its users become his slaves. The drug, like every other consumer item, is produced for consumption and its consumption is increased by increasing production. Every aspect of human life is made to revolve around the basic tenets of a consumerist-industrial society. The evil spirit that enters Eldritch is the symbol of the single greatest threat that humankind faces as the threat can destroy the past, present, and the future. A symbol of the pervading extent of Eldritch’s influence is Eldritch’s stigmata that becomes a part of every character who consumes Chew Z. The critic, Kim Stanley Robinson is of the opinion that, “...Eldritch is clearly a mad scientist and it could be
said that the alien that invaded him during his voyages could be thought of as the ultimate consumer item. The threat of unfettered capitalism that is raised in The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch finds an echo in the threat of nuclear weapons arising from the genocidal mentality among the human race stroked by the presence of nuclear weapons. Dick makes use of stigmata of Eldritch to highlight the negative influence of a consumerist society and to draw a parallel with the influence of genocidal mentality evidenced by nuclear weapons. Lifton argues that genocidal spreads in people due to various psychological mechanisms like Psychic Numbing, Doubling, Brutalization, and Dissociation, so that people lose the ability to feel. For Dick this state is what reduces human beings to a machine that throws its victims into a never-ending nightmare. Dick warns his readers about the dangers of industrial capitalistic society where production is carried out with the sole objective of making profits, irrespective of whether there is a genuine demand or requirement for it. The paradox that operates behind production in the capitalistic technological society finds a parallel with nuclear weapons and its proliferation. Nuclear weapons are made in the name of protection from the nuclear threat and later more weapons are made to maintain deterrence. Nuclear weapons production and its proliferation, threaten human existence under the pretext of protecting it.

The other character who becomes a victim of Eldritch is Mayerson who is thrown into one reality from another constantly till he loses his own perception of reality. Mayerson, at the beginning of the novel, attempts to evade the draft to Martian colony by using a machine that is designed to make him insane so that he can be certified as being unsuitable for the forced conscription to Mars. However, after coming into contact with different realities under the influence of Chew Z and Eldritch, he decides to take his chances on the Martian colony, hoping for a better future. The knowledge of the pervasive and awesome
power of Eldritch and his evil alien, Mayerson decides to look at the possibilities of overcoming his adversaries.

The second novel in the short term impact scenario is *The Penultimate Truth*. The novel is largely drawn from one of Dick's short story collection, *The Defenders*. It deals with the world populationretreating underground after the outbreak of a nuclear war. People are made to believe that due to the nuclear war the Earth’s surface has become inhabitable and that life on Earth is possible only underground in ‘ant tanks’ from where the war efforts can be continued. The war takes place through ‘Leadies’ which are robots made by the people called the ‘Tankers’. The Tankers are victims of a fraud perpetuated by an elite section of society called the, Yance-men or Y-men. Through their false propaganda, the Y-Men manage to convince the people by using fake video images of the destruction caused by the nuclear war. The Tankers are made to believe that they need to carry out industrial production in order to continue the war on the Earth’s surface. The irony of the novel lies in the fact that most of Earth’s population is subjugated under the pretext of a nuclear war and its threat. The Y-men who are skilled speechwriters use a simulacrum, which generates images of an imaginary President Yance Talbot. The fake President Yance Talbot’s speeches keep the Tankers contented that the war is going in their favour and that their enemies are being destroyed. The novel is about Y-men’s hunger for power over the Tankers whose subjugation gives unlimited power to the Y-men who have divided the Earth into private fiefs. The Y-men manage to deceive the Tankers taking advantage of the presence of, what Lifton would call, a genocidal mentality among the Tankers. The Tankers are so blinded by their desire to have their supremacy over other groups that they fail to understand or accept the truth. As a result, when the President Yance Talbot says that war is inevitable and essential to preserve the Tankers’ former way of life, the Tankers become ready to fight for it even when it results in losing the former way of life in the first place. They are so busy fighting the non-existent
war that they fail to see the real threat to them, the Y-men and the machines that are used to
control the Tankers. The war initially ends because of the realization by the Leadies, which
are sent to fight the other Leadies. The machines reason and realize the absurdity of human
conflict and the danger of human propensity for violence because of which humans are not
only a threat to themselves but to all other life forms on Earth.

The novel opens with one of the Tankers, Nicholas St. James noticing inconsistencies
in the images sent from the surface and finding out about the hoax. Though he decides to
reveal the truth about the hoax, the question remains if the Tankers would bury their
differences and forget the reasons that led to the outbreak of the nuclear war. The plot
revolves around the struggle between two individuals; Stranton Brose, the leader of the Y-
men and David Lantano, a native Indian who has ability to manipulate time. While Brose
wants to continue the suppression of the Tankers, Lantano wants to liberate them by
informing them about the truth of their condition. In the analysis, Y-men led by Brose, take
the role of the victimizers of the victims, the Tankers. In this novel, the Brutalization process
is visible in Yance Talbot, a simulacrum that distances the Y-men from having to develop
any relationship with the Tankers or developing feelings of guilt about the suffering of the
Tankers. The simulacrum also allows the Y-men to develop an alternate self, which comes to
the fore while committing actions that cause the suffering of the Tankers. The same alternate
self, which is a fragment of their mind, enables the victimizers to overcome guilt and lead
normal lives when they are in their private estates. The true extent of the Psychic Numbing
and Doubling mechanisms of Denial and Disavowal is revealed when Brose suggests that the
suppression of the Tankers is not only essential for the Y-men but even more importantly for
the Tankers themselves. He tells one of his subordinates, Joseph Adams, that that for a higher
good the status quo has to be maintained and that the repression against the Tankers is
justified. The plight of the Tankers is similar to Lifton’s subjects who were aware of the
developments that later culminated in the nuclear catastrophe but chose not to accept them by using the psychological mechanism of Denial. The novel brings out the extent of the characters’ Denial whereby they refuse to ‘see’ reality. Whereas the Leadies ‘see’ and reason the absurdity of the nuclear conflict and exhibit what Lifton calls, a Species Mentality, the desire to survive as a species.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) suggest that human perception is primarily based on images that are metaphorical in nature. Kim Stanley Robinson argues that Dick uses metaphors in real life as real things in the fictional world. The plight of the tankers is similar to the concept in *Metaphors We Live By* because for them the images sent from the surface world are what constitute reality even though it’s untrue.

One of the paradoxes pointed out by Dick through plight of the tankers is the fact that in spite of knowing about the threat there is no guarantee that the tankers would accept the truth. Lifton suggests the same scenario in his works where his subjects know the futility and danger posed by nuclear war but allow the arms race to continue unabated. In fact, Lifton suggests that the very consideration of using nuclear weapons is a step towards the threat becoming real. Thus, nuclear weapons are metaphors about the dangers of an unfettered technological society that is allowed to control human lives. David Lantano initially comes as a saviour trying to liberate the tankers from the suppression of the Y-men. He is able to return a number of times by using time travel with an intention of changing history to destroy Brose. However all his efforts come to nought due to history being unchangeable. Kim Stanley Robinson suggests that such efforts invariably lead to an alternate history, which though begins differently, culminates in the way as the former. It is in no way different from the former, instead it is worse than it.

...a time trip of the different sort, for in their helpless jaunts through a hostile universe both protagonist and reader are forced to contemplate the nature of
history itself. Infinitely mutable in the moments of its creation in the present, history itself is fixed, a return to it useless. Visits to any of the infinite series of “alternative histories” that represents the future only emphasize that our actions in the present determine which alternative history will take its fixed place in the past. No guides for these actions are provided, and the protagonist invariably concludes that the exercise of rational free will would be made easier if they were simply left in the present to make their choices moment by moment. (Robinson 33).

Lantano makes various futile attempts to stop Brose from establishing his tyrannical rule. He makes use of a time travel machine to go back in the past and murder Brose in the past. However, when Lantano returns to the present, he finds Brose alive. Finally, Brose is defeated when Lantano decides to face him in the present time instead of doing so in the past using the time machine. Dick suggests that the solution to overcoming the nuclear threat lies in taking definitive action in the present in order to save the future of humankind from extinction in a nuclear catastrophe. He maintains that though the actions of the past cannot be changed but individual actions in the present can avert the nuclear Armageddon. The efforts of Lantano are aimed at making the tankers aware of the truth that nuclear war is not necessary or inevitable as they are made to believe. Accordingly, at the end of the novel Lantano announces that the war is over. However, he does not tell them about the hoax of which they had been victims because he is not sure if the tankers would be able to overcome the genocidal mentality, which they had nourished and nurtured for long. Nicholas St. James knows that no lasting peace can established on the foundation of lies and tries to tell the truth about it. The novel ends with a question of whether the tankers would be able to overcome their genocidal mentality and develop a species mentality.
The Penultimate Truth attempts to portray the nuclear shadow as a threat, which though it seems difficult to overcome, can be negated by collective actions of the individual characters in the novel. Dick tries to show his readers that the solution to ending the nuclear menace may be found in individual actions which when carried out collectively has greater impact than separate actions of individuals.

The next novel to be analysed in the long term impact category are Vulcan’s Hammer and Dr. Futurity. One of his early works, Vulcan’s Hammer is set in a world, which is controlled by a computer called Vulcan 3 in an attempt to prevent another nuclear war like the one, which had taken place in the past. Vulcan 3 and its elite staff called the Unity Organization are challenged by a rebel group called the Healers who are in favour of human control over the world. In his book, Damon Knight In Search of Wonder (231) suggests that “Dick has made his future world a distorted mirror image of our own. The distortion is what makes it Science Fiction; but the image is what strikes home.” The novel questions the transfer of decision making power over the control of human lives to machines and denying human beings the power to say ‘no’. In this regard, Lifton talks about the role played by Brutalization in which the decision making power over the use of nuclear weapons changes hands from humans to machines. Lifton traces the shift in decision making from humans to machines and concludes that part of the reason behind the transfer of decision making power is the logic that human beings might be swayed by emotions of guilt or may not want to be responsible for committing genocide. The transfer of power to machines enables individuals to distance themselves from experiencing the horrors of their actions. Lifton highlights the threats from handing over the decision over the fate of human race to machines, which are devoid of emotions. In his fiction, Dick creates a world where every decision in the world is taken by a computer, Vulcan 3 which is the most efficient logical machine of the time. In spite of all its logical reasoning abilities, it lacks basic human qualities like empathy,
kindness, and sensitivity. Dick’s fictional world is a mirror image of the real world where machines are increasingly taking control over several aspects of human life. Lifton points out the parallel by referring to increasing transfer of power to machines, “...With Star Wars, the technology is literally asked to replace human responsibility. Much of the system is to function automatically...all in the absence of anything resembling the human hand, eye, or heart.” In fictional world created by Dick, the situation is such that the power of Vulcan over human lives is established by law and its logic is taken as unquestionable. The establishment of this particular system where all decisions are taken rational machine does not improve the condition of the individuals or their relations with other fellow beings. Director Barris laments the plight of people like him who are not even allowed to make decisions for themselves. “He thought, it’s this sort of reasoning that’s made us into the thing we are. The paranoid suspicions of one another. Unity, he thought with irony. Some unity, with each of us eying the other, watching for any mistake, any sign.” Barris comes forth as a character who refuses to give in to the control of machines as he feels that they lack human qualities in spite of all their reasoning powers. He expresses his inability to offer condolences at the death of a colleague. “Damn it, he thought. I can’t do it; I never can. ... I can’t write a thing like this. There have been too many [deaths] lately. Too many deaths for me to stand. I’m not like Vulcan 3. I can’t ignore it. I can’t be silent. ... The man wasn’t even my employee. “(296). On hearing about the death, he feels sorry and responsible. His thoughts reveal his realization of the mechanism of Brutalization. “Pitt’s death has done it; I feel somehow responsible, because after all I’m safe here, safe at this desk, while eager youngsters like that go out in the country, out where it’s dangerous. They get it, if something goes wrong. Taubmann and I, all of us Directors – we have nothing to fear ... At least, nothing to fear yet. (295). His concern for the painful death a fellow being is revealed when he thinks of writing a personal letter of condolence and finally pays a personal visit to the
bereaved widow. He is one of the first to realise the threat posed by machines to the human race. Dick's work presents Vulcan 3 as a metaphor for the threat to humans from machines. "Madness, he thought. The ultimate horror for our paranoid culture: vicious unseen mechanical entities that flit at the edges of our vision, that can go anywhere, that are in our midst. And there may be an unlimited number of them. One of them following each of us, like some ghastly vengeful agent of evil." (373). Thus, Dick presents the actual threat of nuclear war facing human kind through the character of Barris. Dick reasons that resultant genocidal mentality is the product of the conditions created by a technological society. The human plight is indicated through the case of Unity Director, Jason Dill. Barris says, "Dill has childishly anthropomorphized the mechanical construct with which he deals, month after month. It is only in a climate of fear and hysteria that such a delusion could be spread, could be passed on, and shared by others. The menace of the Healers has created an atmosphere in which sober adults could give momentary credence to a palpably insane idea." (385–6)

Lifton also suggests that one of the factors that lead to the spread of genocidal mentality is the mutual distrust and suspicion among the countries of the world; like the Cold War rivalry between the former Soviet Union and the USA. This singular aspect of Dick's work is truer in the present world than in the fictional one.

Dick's perception of the differences between a machine and a human being are human qualities of empathy and ability to take independent decisions. He admired physical labour done by human hands and abhorred the duplication of items by mechanization. For Dick a person who breaks his relationship with fellow beings and gives up physical work is as lifeless as a machine and ceases to be human. An ideal example for this is Jason Dill whose job is to place and receive instructions from Vulcan 3. Dill loses his ability to have emotional experiences due to the restrictive environment of suspicion and deceit, created by the machines. Interestingly, Dill manages to escape from his "machine – state" through the help
of another machine, Vulcan 2. His transformation back to “human state” takes place when he
dies fighting Vulcan 3. At the beginning of the novel, Dill does a small action of withholding
information from Vulcan 3 that later leads to his retransformation into human. He is one of
the victimizers, who exercises his control over the world as the Director of Unity, the
organization that rules earth by forcing people to be victims to give up their freedom and
become servile towards machines. The Healers’ movement is a rebellion of the victims
against the victimizers. Dill undergoes the extreme psychological mechanism of Doubling
whereby he develops a second- self that negates the reality of Vulcan 3’s threat by Disavowal
while the former self remains in a state of Denial and goes to the other machine, Vulcan 2 for
help. His psyche undergoes Brutalization, a state in which he is unable to think independently
and is able to justify his actions as mere dictates of the machine. Thus, Dill is a character who
changes from a victimizer to a victim while his subordinates, Taubmann and Reynolds,
remain victimizers who function as extensions of the machine. Barris comments that since
they obeyed machines all their lives, functioning as victimizers, such a life “is the only
existence they know.” Barris is one of Unity’s Directors but he realizes that the actual threat
to human existence is from Vulcan 3, not the Healers. In a way, this is also true of Lifton’s
subjects who are greatly endangered by nuclear weapons. Barris’ statement shows the
possibility of saving human kind from genocide “May be so, Barris thought. But are we
going to be guided by a murder? That was what he had said to Father Fields – I will never
follow someone who murders. Whoever they are. Man or computer. Alive or metaphorically
alive – it makes no difference.” (386 – 7) Through Barris’ character, Dick tries to say that
instead of allying with any of the different warring parties of victims or victimizers, human
kind needs to form a new side, the side of the survivors. “We’ll have to join one side or the
other, Pegler said. We’ll have to retreat to the fortress and join Reynolds or ... Then it’s the
healers. Daily fingered the pencil beam. One or the other. Which will it be? After a moment,
Barris said, Neither. We’re not joining either side.” (390) Dick cautions that if we don’t act on the nuclear threat, human race would have no future, past or present “Pawns, Fields was saying. We humans – god damn it, Barris; we were pawns of those two things. They played us off against one another, like inanimate pieces. The things became alive and the living organisms were reduced to things. Everything was turned inside out, like some terrible morbid view of reality.” (421) Dick does not give any solutions to remove the nuclear shadow but leaves the reader with a glimmer of hope using Fields as his spokesperson:

“The real reconstruction – not the buildings and roads, but the minds. Distrust and mutual suspicion have been bred into us since childhood; the schools started it going on us – they forced our characters. We can’t shake it overnight. He is right, Barris thought. It’s going to be hard. And it’s going to take a long time. Possibly generations.” But at last the living elements, the human beings, had survived. And the mechanical ones had not. That was a good sign, a step in the right direction.” (422).

The novel points to a paradox in the capitalistic-industrial system where production is carried to make profits, not for the sake of use or consumption. This contradiction has a parallel with the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The paradox operating behind the logic of producing nuclear weapons and their proliferation is that they are produced initially for solely the purpose of defence on the basis of the deterrence policy. But the policy of deterrence is based on the willingness to consider using nuclear and the determination to do so. This in turn leads to the situation where nuclear weapons are made for the sake of protection from nuclear weapons, which were built for the sake of protection in the first place. Thus, nuclear weapons endanger the very purpose for which they are built for. Dick employs a similar contradiction in his novels to highlight the nature of the nuclear shadow and its implications for humankind. This particular aspect has also been raised by Paul
Brians, who argues about the need in the present nuclear world to react against the dangers it has created for itself.  

The novel *Dr. Futurity* is set in the future after a nuclear exchange called the H–War has taken place. All the people belonging to different races are amalgamated into tribes. It’s based on Dick’s short story “Time Pawn” (1954). The protagonist, Dr. Jim Parsons, is taken by a native Indian tribe using a time machine in order to revive their wounded chieftain, Corith who was fatally wounded while trying to kill the first European traveller to America to prevent the capture of Native American tribes by Europeans. In that particular world, the notions of life and death are reversed. Death is courted as the necessary step to improve and develop the ideal human race. Dr. Jim Parsons is taken into the future by Corith’s supporters, to a time when society has changed its outlook towards life and death. He is a victim caught between two worlds; the former, which trains him to value life as a healer while the latter treats him as a criminal for performing his profession of saving lives. The future world is based on the Fountain, which is the primary centre for the eugenics project where all efforts are directed towards making the perfect race by eliminating all “defective” individuals. The Fountain, led by Director Stenog, tries to stop Dr. Parsons from reaching Corith’s supporters for if Corith were revived, the European invasion would not be stopped and hence the Fountain and its world would never come into being, along with Stenog. To prevent the action that would do away with the death – focused society, Stenog repeatedly goes back in time to kill Corith while Dr. Parsons attempts to stop him. The plot revolves around different situations all of which show that history cannot be undone, it prevails in one way or the other. Dr. Parsons, on realizing the inevitability to prevent history from happening, attempts to prevent genocide and to protect the present by deciding to give up his own life rather than to take the sacred life of another being. Dick’s protagonist manages to bring about a change in the situation by virtue of his human qualities of empathy, respect for manual skills like
practising medicine, willingness to fight or even sacrificing his own life for humankind and
the determination to emerge as a survivor, even in the most perilous times.

Dr. Futurity is the opposite of the modern technological society that’s under the nuclear shadow. Dick’s fictional world of Dr. Parsons may be the opposite of the present world but it is strikingly similar to the world of Nazi Germany examined by Lifton. Lifton suggests that for the Nazis under Hitler the proposed ‘cure’ for Germany’s collective trauma was the Nazi biomedical vision which aimed at attaining Aryan racial purity and revitalization by purging the country of “racial pollution”. The Nazi ideology was based on a so-called racial therapy through genocide. Under the Nazi ideology, medical doctors, trained to save lives, underwent numerous psychological manipulations to be able to carry out acts of genocide. The Nazi ideology was essentially reductionist. It reduced all political and historical processes to a scientific procedure. It was absolutist – the Nazis claimed that Jewish genocide was given biblical sanction. It was also totalistic: all its principles were considered absolutely true and no other options were available or acceptable under any circumstances. Lifton says,

Nazi racial thought and policy were wildly visionary and romanticised on the one hand, and narrowly technocratic and scientistic on the other. These two seemingly contradictory patterns were, in fact, inseparable. ...[Both of them] are visionary in the extreme: the one, a claim to have discovered the means to reduce all political and historical process to biological principles; the other, invoking a higher therapeutic purpose to justify the mass murder of Jews. What the Nazis called “scientific racism” or “racial hygiene” was in actuality a mystical and lethal approach to biology in particular and to science in general. We can speak, then, of the biomedical ideology as “totalistic”- as containing and all – or – none set of assumptions which are equally absolute in their
claim to truth and in their rejection of alternative claims. (Genocidal Mentality 54).

The world of the future in Dick's work is fixated on developing a pure human race with best strains in the future, even at the cost of the present, past, and the future as well. In order to have a better understanding of the nature of the society in Dr. Parsons's world in the future, it would be helpful to have a real life parallel for the purpose of comparison. Dick's works, being based on imagination, are extrapolations on developments in the real world. He looks at the nature of a society that has started to focus on death instead of life and by doing so sensitises the readers to an impending doom by highlighting the similarities between an imaginary and historical act of genocide. As a writer sensitive to the destructive powers of uncontrolled science and technology, Dick tries to warn his readers that if the present trend of machines' taking control over human lives continues, its consequences would be similar to his fictional world and even more dangerous than the one that took place in history. Like Dick, Lifton was also convinced that certain forms of social behaviour displayed by the Nazi professionals that led to the Holocaust are similar to that of present-day societies facing the nuclear danger. 22

A striking parallel between Dick's fictional world and Nazi Germany is the fixation with the future, at the cost of the present,

So, Parson's thought, their minds aren't fixed on the present; it's the future that's real to them. Those to come, in a sense, are more real than those who are walking around now ... So out of death comes life. In their view, death is the cause of life. ... 'Immortality.' Then death, he realised, has a positive meaning. Not the end of life. And not merely because these people wish to believe, but because it is a fact. Their world is constructed that way. This is no idle mysticism! He realized. This is their science. (182 – 183).
Like the Nazi ideology and society, Director Stenog’s world has a lot in common with the nuclear threat. “The ideological cure for atomic trauma had, then, to treat not military defeat or alleged “racial sickness” but the threat of extinction. ... seized upon the weapons themselves as a means of alleviating the searing threat to existence by those same weapons.” (Genocidal Mentality 70) which is similar to Stenog’s society. The future world is in no way different from the world of today. While analysing Stenog’s world, the readers are reminded of the parallel between the Nazi and nuclear regime. Both have a basis in science and claim to have a cure for all the problems faced by society, which is genocide. Both ideologies claim to have social approval to carry out acts of violence for the sake of the future, even though the plight of the future generations is endangered.

Yet this was a society built on death. Death was an everyday part of their lives. Individuals died and no one was perturbed, not even the victims. They died happily, gladly. But it was wrong. It was against nature. A man was supposed to defend his life instinctively. Place it before everything else. This society denied a basic drive common to all forms. (184).

The author makes a critique of the twentieth century, which courts death by neurotically refusing to consider or accept death.

Parson said slowly, ‘We may ignore death, we may immaturely deny the existence of death, but at least we don’t court death. You did indirectly, Stenog said.’ By denying such a powerful reality, you undermined the rational basis of your world. You had no way to cope with war and famine and over population because you couldn’t bring yourselves to discuss them. So war happened to you; it was like a natural calamity, not man-made at all. It became a force. We control our society. We contemplate all aspects of our existence, not merely the good and pleasant. (184-185).
When Helmar criticizes Stenog's world the criticism is equally applicable to the contemporary world under the nuclear shadow.

We have made our point, but we have achieved a calcified society that spends its time meditating about death; it has no plans, no direction. No desire for growth. Our nagging sense of inferiority has betrayed us; it’s made us expend our energies in recovering our pride, in proving our ancient enemies false. Life the Egyptian society – death and life so interwoven that the world has become a cemetery, and the people nothing more than custodians living among the bones of the dead. They are virtually the pre-dead, in their own minds. So their great heritage has been frittered away. (208).

This description aptly describes the human plight under the nuclear shadow.

Director Stenog is a victimizer who undergoes extreme form of Psychic Numbing by immersing himself deeply in the ideology of building a new social order based on racial superiority. As the leader of the Shupos, he develops a second self to advocate the importance of death, which enables him to carry out acts of violence without feeling remorse, while at the same time the former self allows him to preserve his own life. Parsons realizes that while Stenog urges others to die in different ways like throwing oneself before a moving vehicle; he himself is a careful driver. Corith is the victim of the death worshippers who are determined to subjugate all into devoting their life to death. He attempts repeatedly, using time travel technology, to kill Francis Drake and prevent the Europeans from coming to America by undergoing Brutalization to distance himself spatially and ideologically. Lorris and her children; Grace and Nathan, are victims of the Shupos and they undergo Psychic Numbing largely in order to preserve their lives to save other victims from falling a prey to Stenog’s ideology. The reason for their desire not to remain victims is the strong relationship they develop with other victims and the drive to survive against all odds. Dr. Parson’s plight is
similar to the German doctors who were exposed to Nazi genocidal ideology. He is a victim who is forced to undergo Psychic Numbing due to the dominant ideology of the future. He realizes that in order to survive, he would have to undergo Doubling mechanisms of Denial of his medical training and Disavowal of the ideology that life is sacred in Stenog's world. When he is confronted with a situation, he decides to give up his own life for the sake of others. His selfless action leads to creating an alternative for others to follow by not choosing to be a part of the victims or the victimizers. For his efforts, he is given a chance to get out of the time paradox that the victims and victimizers fall a prey to. The character of Dr. Parsons offers an alternate option instead of becoming a victim or victimizer in a world besotted by genocidal mentality under the nuclear shadow.

Time Out of Joint falls under the last-minute-prevention category. The characters in the novel can be divided into victims and victimizers based on their role in a society under the nuclear shadow. The character of Bill Black shows the extent to which Psychic Numbing can take place in victimizers whom Dick describes as

The odd thing in this world is that an eager-beaver type, with no original ideas, who mimes those in authority above him right to the last twist of the necktie and scrape of chin, always gets noticed. Gets selected. Rises. In the banks, in insurance companies, big electric companies, missile-building firms, universities.... simultaneously inching their path up with all their might and main. Everything but sending their wives over to the administration building as bait ... (11-12).

Bill undergoes psychological mechanisms of Doubling and Disavowal. He refuses to accept the truth about the suffering his actions would cause to the Lunar colonists. We can see the development of Dissociation whereby a part of the mind gets fragmented from the whole and a second self is developed. This second self enables Bill Black to follow orders from the
military without asking questions. He even agrees to send his wife, Margo, to play the role of Victor Nielson’s wife while he plays the role of being the husband of Junie. Victor Nielson, like Bill Black is a victimizer who is a part of the captors of Ragle Gumm in the make believe world of 1959. He undergoes extreme form of Psychic Numbing and as a result of it begins to believe that the illusory world is real. The extent of suffering his action would cause the victims of genocide against the Lunar colony exposes him to the feeling of guilt. To overcome this guilt, his psyche undergoes Doubling and remains in a state of Denial where he begins to realize that he does not want to leave the illusionary town, which is revealed for what it is. He makes himself believe that the illusionary world is the only true solace left by saying that he does not have any other place to go. The inability of Victor to leave the 1959 California, created in 1996 is mainly due to his exposure to the world of constant doubt and suspicion. By remaining for so long as a part of an illusory world, the personal reality, or idios kosmos of Victor becomes dominant over the shared reality or koinos kosmos. Lou Stathis, in his afterword to the novel, comments about the characters of Dick: “In his books, people muddle through their lives, coping with the cold awfulness of it all as best as they can, and await their deliverance- push for it- and then recoil in horror when it comes, because it is always a hell of a lot heavier than they bargained for.” (217). Margo and Mrs. Keitelbein are victims who are the part of the conspiracy against Ragle Gumm and undergo extended Psychic Numbing so as to be able to perpetuate the fraud in order to carry on the nuclear genocide against the Lunar colonists. Margo, in her first appearance, is seen trying to petition the health board authorities to clear empty lots of old house foundations. She undergoes Doubling whereby she is able to develop an alternate self that is able to carry on in a fake reality in spite of knowing the duplicity being carried out on Ragle Gumm. By occupying herself with petitioning local bodies about non-descript issues, Margo remains in a state of Denial. Mrs. Keitelbein is portrayed as being busy with her Civil Defence program. The
psychological profile of her character is similar to that of nuclear strategists and planners discussed in Lifton’s work. Like the strategists, she believes in the ability to fight and win a nuclear war through systematic planning. Lifton points out that many of the estimates on being able to fight and win a nuclear war, are based on the assumptions like the impact of nuclear exchange would be similar to conventional warfare and that life though briefly disrupted can be revived later. The assumptions, though true when applied to conventional weapons, are bound to be false with the use of atomic weapons. Mrs Keitelbein makes use of strong Doubling mechanism in order to remain in a state of Denial whereby she is able to refuse to see the reality of the nuclear threat.

Junie Black, the supposed wife of Major Bill Black, goes through suppression by her domineering husband by making use of different psychological mechanisms. By being reduced to a victim of the nuclear shadow by her husband, she undergoes Psychic Numbing by retreating into her ‘private world’ of adolescence. She can be said to be undergoing Disavowal mechanism wherein she develops an alternate self that refuses to look at the nuclear threat and focuses on a world of fantasy and illusion while the former self attempts to ignore the reality. Margo’s supposed son, Sammy, is a character who is a victim in a state of Denial like Junie. He is forced to accept the society’s ideology and deprived of exercising independent reasoning. The reductive, absolutist and totalitarian aspect of the consumer society is portrayed through the sign he is given to put on his club house of which he is the sole member. Like Junie, he is a victim of the nuclear threat, which prevents its victims from establishing relations with others and overcoming the nuclear shadow on their lives. Ragle Gumm is a character who is kept in a fake make-believe world to exploit his abilities to further the interests of the totalitarian and absolutist government that has a reductive approach towards solving the problem caused by the revolt of the Lunar colonists. Gumm is a victim of a fraud, which aims at using his precognitive abilities to advance the government’s
nuclear war efforts. He experiences fragmentation of reality, as described by Lou Stathis (217). The incongruity between the *Idios Kosmos* and *Kronos Kosmos* leads to his realizing the fraud perpetuated on him. Ragle Gumm goes through Psychic Numbing process before realizing the fraud. When he experiences the disappearing of the soft drinks stand, he feels the Doubling mechanism that had been operating on him along with Disavowal mechanism to be losing its effect. The formation of an alternate self by Doubling mechanism is visible when he sees magazines belonging to Sammy, which contains pictures of Marilyn Monroe who is not supposed to exist in his illusory world. The newspaper game “Where will the green man appear?” of which Gumm is the sole winner who represents the Brutalization mechanism, which distances him from the horrors of nuclear attacks carried out on the basis of his precognitive abilities. What sets him apart from the other characters in the novel is his being able to reach out to people so as to establish a relationship with them and knowing the true extent of the nuclear threat.

*Eye in the Sky* is set in alternate worlds, which exist in the minds of the characters who experience an atomic accident, controlled by one character that has the most awareness at different points of time. In these private worlds, the subjective reality of the dominant character is imposed on the objective reality of the other characters. His works suggest his suspicion of people who tried to alter reality or its perception because of the danger they pose to individual freedom. His concerns of the danger from characters like Dr. Bluthgeld of *Dr. Blood money* who live in a world of paranoia and try to force it on others. Lifton refers to the Nazis with their fear and hatred towards Jews, which culminated in the development of a genocidal mentality in Germany and the similar threat to human kind from the nuclear shadow. The warping takes place in an atomic research facility where each character gets temporary control over worlds of others. The characters are aware of the consequences or
their actions on others but through different psychological mechanisms, they are able to carry out their actions that have the potential to harm others.

Miss. Joan Reiss is a paranoid woman who thinks that everyone is conspiring against her or attempting to persecute her for her beliefs. As a result, her private world is one in which cats are “turned inside out” while still alive and Hamilton’s house becomes alive and tries to devour people. Her personal reality reflects the extent of Psychic Numbing she has undergone to carry out the actions that would settle her scores with her enemies. Like the Nazi doctors who use technology to distance themselves physically and psychologically from feeling the horrors of the genocidal mentality, Miss. Reiss undergoes Brutalization to carry out her genocidal intent on those she hates. Her plight of being caught in such a world indicates how she is both a victim and an aggressor – she is a victim of the objective world who becomes the victimizer in her personal world. Mrs. Edith Pritchett is a middle aged stout woman with lofty ideals of culture and wants to make a perfect world by removing everything she doesn’t agree with like car horns, aeroplanes, and rock music. She is a victim of the atomic instrument’s malfunctioning in the objective world but she becomes a victimizer in her private world where she does away with all forms of dissent, be it Russia or music. Mrs. Pritchett’s subjective world is an expression of the Doubling mechanism on her psyche. The abolishing of “unpleasant things” leads to the downfall of her private world as she does away with the very things that make her world. The Denial state of her mind leads to a Disavowal state whereby she attempts to change the nature of the reality. Arthur Silvester, the old war veteran is a fanatical Islamic cultist with racist views. His private world is a totalitarian and absolutist world with his God in control of every aspect of life. Scientists are reduced to seeking miracles by praying and holy charms are as effective as modern technology. In Silvester’s character, we see the Dissociation process taking place in which a part of his mind is split from the whole. The fragmented part functions as a whole and
enables him to overcome the feelings of guilt, which wouldn’t be possible otherwise. Like other characters, he too is a victim who is imprisoned in his private world where he is a victimizer. Jack Hamilton and his wife Marsha are the victims of a smear campaign in the objective world by Charlie McFeyffe. While Jack works, as a weapons design engineer at a nuclear missile plant, his wife Marsha is an educated and intelligent woman who exercises independent thoughts. The couple is falsely accused of being Communists by McFeyffe to cover up his being a communist spy. Marsha’s action like signing the Stockholm peace proposal and Save the Rosenbergs Appeal are trumped up as proof that she is a Communist and therefore a threat to America. Jack loses his job for the same reason but it gives him a chance to realize that his true calling in life is to build musical instruments and not missiles or nuclear weapons. The exposure to different subjective realities of the other victims and their subsequent transformation into victimizers in their private worlds makes him think that people make their own worlds. Some of the victims make their worlds full of pain and suffering like Hell while the others have the potential to make them better. Though Jack’s initially remorseful about losing his job, he realizes that his work at the missile plant was responsible for contributing to the genocidal mentality, which had made people’s lives miserable. Losing the job becomes, for him, an opportunity to start making music boxes that would encourage plurality of opinion and support the co-existence of diverse ideas. Jack and Marsha come through as characters who choose not to be victims or victimizers. They suggest to other victims that it would be possible for them to escape from their repressive private worlds by working together to form their own shared objective world or Kronos Kosmos, as suggested by Dick. The shared world enables them to escape the repression of the genocidal mentality they had been victims of and to lead a safer and fuller life.

The last category to be analyzed is that of ‘Escape into Space’, namely Martian Time-Slip and Cantata 140. The Martian Time-Slip deals with the human settlement on Mars. The
UN is the government that controls the colonies set up by different countries. The colonists take over lands from the natives, the “Bleekmen”. The colonization of Mars is promoted by the factors like a nuclear explosion on earth that resulted in widespread mutation in people (making them schizophrenic or autistic), over population and the taking over of control by machines. The exploitation on Mars is done by a totalitarian, reductionist and absolutist regime. The economy is dependent on the Plumber’s Union that controls the water supply on Mars. Its leader, Arnie Kott, is a ruthless capitalist who wants to profit by exploiting the weak like the native Bleekmen or the colonists who are forced to migrate to Mars. He tries to use Manfred Steiner, a precognitive schizophrenic child’s abilities to profit from the new apartment complexes, which are going to be built. Manfred is a schizophrenic who experiences the world in a different way; he lives in a subjective world of perpetual decay and has the ability to draw others into his decaying world to see the destructive aspect of life.

The third main character is Jack Bohlen, a near-schizophrenic who works as a repair man for Arnie Kott to build a communicator so that Arnie Kott can talk with Manfred Steiner.

Arnie Kott comes through as a ruthless opportunist who has no qualms about exploiting the Bleekmen by giving them substandard salaries and depriving them of their lands. He is a victimizer who’s insensitive to the suffering of others, especially his victims. When his former wife urges him to help in preventing the shutting down of B-G camp for autistic children, he refuses to help, as it would not be conducive for his business. His refusal to help, in spite of having his own son at the camp, shows the extent of Psychic Numbing he has undergone. His craze for wealth and control over others reveal the impact of Brutalization through which he manages to use technology to distance himself from his victims’ suffering and the resultant feelings of guilt. Arnie is not the only one who keeps a prejudice against the victims of radiation. Norbert Steiner, Manfred’s father, is told about the possible closure of B-G camp by the owner of Red Sox restaurant that,
Anyhow, if they'd destroyed them years ago we wouldn't have such places at B-G, because in my mind there's a direct link between the monsters born in the '60s and all the freaks supposedly born due to radiation ever since; I mean, it's all due to substandard genes, isn't it? Now, I think that's where the Nazis were right. They saw the need of weeding out the inferior genetic strains as long ago as 1930; ... (39).

While the restaurant owner voices the Nazi ideology, which proposed a single solution for all the problems of society, other voices that speak about the sense of guilt that plagued the Nazi victimizers in spite of their adopting numerous defensive psychological measures. 23

Arnie tells Anne Esterhazy that the Martian colony needed to be authoritarian and totalistic where all problems can be reduced to technical matters that had a technological solution. He insists that the conditions created by the repressive society, though it forces people to commit suicide, are actually good for everyone. Like in the Nazis, the Doubling mechanism allows Arnie to develop a second self and further it develops into a Disavowal mechanism that allows him to alter the perception of reality.

One thing, when you hear about a suicide, you can be sure the guy knows this: he knows he's not a useful member of society. That's the real truth he is facing about himself, that's what does it, knowing you are not important to anybody. If there's one thing I'm sure of it's that. It's nature's way- the expendable are removed, by their own hand, too. So I don't lose any sleep when I hear of a suicide, and you'd be surprised how many so-called natural deaths here on Mars are actually suicides; I mean, this is a harsh environment. This place weeds out the fit from the unfit. (49).

Like the Bleekmen, Manfred is also one of Arnie's victims who are exploited for profit. Being a schizophrenic, Manfred remains in a subjective and personal world, which
resembles the degenerated form of the external objective reality. His psyche, like other victims of the nuclear shadow, undergoes extreme Psychic Numbing and Dissociation whereby a part of the mind splits from the whole. The fragmentary part of the mind begins the functions as an independent entity in order to cope with the trauma of the threat. However, Manfred develops the ability to affect the personal reality of others and becomes the victimizer of others like Arnie and Jack briefly. Jack is a victim of Arnie as well as of the Martian society’s exploitation. He is a technician who detests the extent of machines’ control over human life. The schools, which are run by the Simulacra machines, expose students to extreme psychological conditions by preventing them from developing relations with other people. The machines split the minds of the students and force them to undergo Dissociation mechanism. The students then begin to identify themselves with the machines and become schizophrenic.

I think this Public School and you teaching machines are going to rear another generation of schizophrenics, the descendents of people like me ... you ‘re going to split the psyches of these children because you’re teaching them to expect an environment which doesn’t exist for them. (72).

Jack, in spite of his slight schizophrenic condition, is able to reach out to other individuals and even the Martian natives to establish a meaningful relationship with them. His empathy towards the Bleekmen is in stark contrast to that of the rancher Mc Auliff’s indignation towards the Martian colony.

No one had less use for the Bleekmen than did the big ranchers; the poverty-stricken, nomadic natives were constantly showing up at the ranchers for food, water, medical help, and some times ... nothing seem to madden the prosperous dairymen more than to be used by the creatures whose land they had appropriated (21).
Jack’s qualities, like his abilities to repair things, refusal to identify with the dominant culture of machines and humaneness towards the Bleekmen enable him to break out of the vicious control of the machines and retain his humaneness in spite of being forced to become an automaton like Arnie. His human qualities help him to escape the threat of nuclear shadow.

The last novel to be analyzed is Cantata 140 The novel, set in 2080, is about a world plagued by over population and most of the population, called Bibs, are kept in deep freezers until a time when a solution to the problem of overpopulation can been found. The novel begins with the election campaign of Jim Briskin, the first black presidential candidate. Jim’s campaign initially takes a plunge when he advocates the closing of mutant, George Watt’s satellite, which provides carnal pleasures to its patrons. His opposition of the mechanization of different aspects of human life earns him the enmity of George Watt. Salisbury Heim, Jim’s campaign manager tells the mutant about the reasons behind Jim’s opposing Bliss Satellite.

“He knows what he believes in; he thinks the satellite is undignified. The way it’s all handled up here, boom, boom, boom-mechanically, with no personal touch, no meeting of humans on a human basis. You run an autofac; I don’t object and most people don’t object, because it saves time. But Jim does, because he’s sentimental (28).

Dick uses Jim’s character to raise questions about what constitutes being a human in contrast to a machine. On coming to know about an alternate Earth, which can be reached through a “crack in space”, he proposes the waking of Bibs and sending them to inhabit the new planet. He shows genuine concern for his fellow beings; coloured and white alike. In fact, it’s later relieved that his feelings of empathy are not limited to his fellow beings but extended to even the inhabitants of the alternate world, as found by his dealings with the Peking Elder. Jim is
not free from weakness as he too undergoes Psychic Numbing. His redeeming feature is his ability to break free from the genocidal mentality that grips his people on knowing about the presence of a virgin environment, waiting to be conquered and exploited. Jim is aware of this fact that it was the past nuclear war of 1993, which killed most of the whites and made it possible for him, a black to run for the post of the American president. But he instead chooses to ignore the fact that the actual extent of threat of the nuclear scourge is to the entire human species, not only to Whites or Blacks. Notwithstanding his limitations and failures, he remains a symbol of human will to survive on the basis of human values and qualities. Even under extreme duress, he refuses to be intimidated into accepting the machines’ totalistic and absolutist control over humans. His moral astuteness enables him to establish meaningful relations with others, even with his detractors, so as to develop, what Lifton calls, a “species mentality” in his fellow beings. In contrast to Jim’s character is the character of George Watt, the mutant with one head and two bodies. The owner of Bliss Satellite, George Watt, enjoys causing suffering to others due to being unable to empathize with any individual. His psyche experiences Doubling, the formation of a second self in addition to his former individual self. In his words, Dick made use of metaphors as real things, hence the mutant’s twin bodies. Watt and George, who share a single head, experience the psychological mechanism of Denial and Disavowal of reality. The mutants’ negative influence on others is not limited to promoting immorality but also extends to reducing human qualities in people to adopt a subservient attitude towards machines by becoming machine-like. The state of the characters, according to Dick, is the worst nightmare that enslaves individuals by developing genocidal mentality through absolute isolation, cut off from the rest of the species. The mutants’ awareness of the implication of their actions on their victims, coupled with the resultant fear of guilt leads them to undergo Brutalization by using technology to distance themselves from their victims.
The analysis of the characters in Dick’s novels depict how the characters experience extreme forms of mental anguish due to the presence of the nuclear shadow and attempt to develop various defensive psychological mechanisms like Doubling and Denial. The characters under threat initially develop into victims or victimizers but eventually all of them end up as victims without fail. Dick offers hope of redemption through those ordinary characters who perform extraordinary actions and by virtue of their collective action, they are able to avert the nuclear catastrophe or are able to rekindle life even among the ruins of a world ravaged by nuclear war.
Notes and References


8 Brains says that Science Fiction “is the story of humanity, which is punished for its genocidal deeds by committing genocide on itself. Having killed off most of the Indians, having driven desperate blacks to flee the ... for Mars, and having contemptuously--almost without noticing--annihilated the wise, gentle Martians, humanity destroys itself in an atomic holocaust which is one last act of typical, unexplained stupidity. It is not necessary to explain why nuclear war consumes the Earth: it is the logical consequence of the parochialism, bigotry, and greed, which are displayed, in the earlier chapters.” Brians, Paul. "Nuclear War in Science Fiction, 1945-59." Science Fiction Studies 11 (1984): 253.


10 Angus Taylor argues that Dick made use of shifting reality to highlight the need for analysing and understanding the nuclear danger for what is in order to prevent it from
happening. He says, "The presence of the abyss reveals Dick's position as fundamentally existential. [Jean Paul] Sartre's dictum that "man is condemned to be free" neatly sums up Dick's vision of man's place in the universe....All roads in his fiction lead to this apocalyptic revelation (though they do not end there). When the "objective" social reality breaks down, the individual is starkly confronted with the problem of dealing anew with the world beyond himself, of coming to terms with the non-self. The individual divided from his social and physical surroundings becomes increasingly divided against himself. Alienation implies a lack of integration with an environment perceived as unrelated to oneself and beyond control...More specifically, this lack of interaction is at the level of personal experience or the inanimate; the exchange between inner and outer space has been reduced to simply mechanical. " (17-19) Taylor, Angus. "Philip K. Dick and the Umbrella of Light." Contemporary Literary Criticism 30 (1984): 124.


18 Knight, Damon. In Search of Wonder Chicago: Advent publishers 1967. 231

Brians says that, “As with the sexuality rampant in nuclear war fiction, the sorts of mutation figuring in most of these works are ways of avoiding thinking realistically about the probable consequences of atomic warfare. Far more appropriate to the theme is Philip K. Dick’s ironic image in his 1953 short story, “Second Variety”, where rats mutated in the radioactive wasteland have learned to construct their own shelters out of ash. The rats and robots will survive, but not hapless humanity, which has brought destruction down on its own head. But more often, nuclear war in fiction seems to signal the end of democracy, not of humanity as such. Whereas the authors shy away from depicting racial death, they are fascinated by the prospect of the post holocaust social collapse. The simplest method of representing this is by depicting society as having reverted to the sort of savagery portrayed in traditional adventure fiction.” Brians, Paul. Nuclear Holocausts: The Fiction of Atomic War, 1945-1984. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1987. December 2005 http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/nuclear/.html.


The novel Martian Time-Slip depicts that while the Germans who carried out acts of genocide using nuclear weapons to establish the most advanced technological society, they do undergo extensive psychological damage, namely from the sense of guilt over their actions. It could be said that the condition of humankind being chased by the demons of its own making find a voice in Martian Time-Slip. “There’s been so much sorrow in Germans since that drug plague, those children born with flippers. I’ve talked to some who’ve said openly they thought it was God’s punishment on them for what was done during the Nazi period. And these weren’t religious men, these were businessmen, one here on Mars, the other at Home.” Dick, Philip K. Martian Time-Slip. London: Gollancz, 2003. (50)