

**Technology and the Human Condition in Philip K. Dick's 1960s Science Fiction:
Empathy in Alternative Worlds**

Philip K. Dick の 1960 年代 SF におけるテクノロジーと人間
—オルタナティヴ・ワールドにおけるエンパシー—

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how Philip K. Dick depicts humans' empathic interactions in four novels written in the 1960s: *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), and *Ubik* (1969). To establish his literary world, Dick wrote science fictions depicting technology that imitates humans or human activities. Technology is used here in a broad sense that can include ancient methods of fortunetelling and psychedelic drugs as well as machines that can aid and simulate actual animals or people. The term empathy – which is defined as the individuals' ability to understand others' situations and feelings – is used as an important tool with which to examine how Dick portrays the human condition influenced by the various technologies that are used in these four works. Dick employs his characters' empathic attitudes as resistance against late capitalistic dominant figures. In addition, applying Lyotard's postmodern theory, this study explores how Dick imagines alternative worldviews by deconstructing various

grand narratives. Dick's protagonists search for meaning in their existence, and Dick depicts them as ontological heroes who struggle against alienation in society and capitalistic exploitation. When they overcome these difficulties, they feel empathy with others and imagine more fulfilling alternative realities which can include embracing technology with a sense of equality. Dick's perspective is beneficial for many people today, who tend to be addicted to technology, commodities, and social media in this digitally expanded world. In such a chaotic society, solidarity becomes important to imagine others' situations altruistically, even if one must rely on technology to establish meaningful fellowship. Dick's four novels in the 1960s represent the inseparable relationship between not only his characters but also contemporary people along with simulation technology.