

# Cantata per vinile e nastro magnetico: Philip K. Dick e la riproduzione del suono

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## **Abstract**

It is quite interesting that Philip K. Dick, before becoming a professional writer of science-fiction, worked as a sales clerk in a record shop in Berkeley, an experience that played a fundamental role in the making of his literary imagination and his perception of the US society. The impact of recorded music (and sound in general) on Dick's life also bears relation to his perception of postmodern or late-modern culture and society in general, well beyond the borders of his own state and country. The reproduction of sound is of course an example of that binary opposition original vs. copy (or authentic vs. inauthentic) which seems to structure much of the PKD world(s). But that opposition may be more a form of dialectics than a dichotomy between irreconcilable opposites.

Therefore Dick's experience as a record salesman made him aware of the commodification of music (and sound), of how a form of art (regardless of its being low- or highbrow) was being turned into marketable goods, an industrial product (interestingly, he uses a music producer as his avatar in *Radio Free Albemuth*). On the other hand, notwithstanding the commodification of music (and sound in general), Dick manages to find a sort of redemptive power in music which obviously bears relation to the counterculture of the late 1960s-early 1970s, but also with his offbeat religious idea of a God that is always to be found in the gutter. These are the issues that this article will try to address, by reading a few novels and stories written by Dick throughout his career.