

**Call for Papers**  
**“Worlds Out of Joint: Re-Imagining Philip K. Dick”**  
**An International Conference**  
**15-18 November, 2012**  
**TU Dortmund University, Germany**

2012 sees the thirtieth anniversary of the untimely death, at the age of 53, of Philip K. Dick – a figure whose cultural impact within and beyond science fiction remains difficult to overestimate. Dick’s academic and popular reputation continues to grow, as a number of recent monographs, several biographies and an unceasing flow of film adaptations testify. Yet while his status as “The Most Brilliant Sci-Fi Mind on Any Planet” (Paul Williams) is rarely questioned, scholarly criticism of Dick has not kept pace with recent developments in academia – from transnationalism to adaptation studies, from the cultural turn in historiography to the material turn in the humanities. Too often Dick remains shrouded in clichés and myth. Indeed, rarely since the seminal contributions of Fredric Jameson and Darko Suvin have our engagements with Dick proved equal to the complexity of his writing – an oeuvre indebted to the pulps and Goethe, Greek philosophy and the Beats – that calls for renewed attempts at a history of popular culture. The aim of this conference is to contribute to such an undertaking.

At a time when mass protest against irrational economic, political and cultural orders is once again erupting around the world, the Dortmund conference will return to one of the major figures of the long American Sixties: to an author whose prophetic analyses of biopolitical capitalism and the neo-authoritarian surveillance state remain as pertinent as they were 30 years ago.

Confirmed keynote speakers: **Marc Bould** (University of the West of England, Bristol), **Roger Luckhurst** (Birbeck, University of London), **Umberto Rossi** (Rome), **Norman Spinrad** (New York/Paris), **Takayuki Tatsumi** (Keio University, Japan). As part of the conference we will also host the premiere of *The Owl in the Daylight* a film by David Kleijwegt (Netherlands).

Possible topics for panels and papers include but are in no way limited to:

1. **The Realist Novels:** What do Dick’s early realist novels add to our understanding of his work? In what relation do they stand to late modernist and realist U.S. literature? Can they be understood as Beat writing?

2. **Transnational Approaches:** Dick drew on various European and non-European cultures, and his SF worlds are highly transnational in their hybridity: What cultural transfers and transformations are evident in his work?
3. **Dick's Global Reception:** Dick's fiction has been widely translated – from Portuguese to Japanese, from Finnish to Hebrew. Yet we know little about his global reception. How has Dick's work been read abroad, and transformed in translation? What has been his impact on SF outside America?
4. **Dick and the SF Tradition:** Critics have rarely engaged in-depth with Dick's contribution to SF. What is Dick's debt to the pulp magazines, to Robert Heinlein, A. E. van Vogt, or other SF authors? To what extent did Dick influence his contemporaries, and what does today's SF owe to him?
5. **Dick and Fandom:** Long before his canonization as a literary figure, Dick was a cult author, and he retains a committed fan base. How has fandom shaped the way we read him? What role does Dick play in SF cultures of fandom today?
6. **Narrative Structures and Aesthetics:** Dick's short fiction and novels are linked by common motifs, tropes and fictional devices. How do they shape his writing? His status as a popular writer has also meant that the aesthetic dimension of Dick's fiction has often been neglected. How can it help us understand his work?
7. **Dick and Mainstream Literature:** Dick's impact on 'serious' literature has often been posited but rarely analyzed. What do Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut or David Foster Wallace owe to Dick? What role have his writings played in the integration of SF into mainstream literature?
8. **Adaptations:** What makes Dick's writing so attractive to filmmakers? How have these visual narratives changed our understanding of his work? Should we pay more attention to adaptations to other media – from opera to computer games?
9. **The Letters and Journals:** How do Dick's letters and journals, as well as interviews with him change our understanding of his fiction?
10. **The Final Novels:** Dick's late novels are gaining increasing attention, but critical evaluations vary widely. Are they evidence of a spiritual turn in Dick's writing? How do they allow us to look at his work of the 1960s anew?
11. **Dick and the Sixties:** Recent scholarship drastically has changed our understanding of the Sixties. Does this necessitate a re-writing of Dick? What can we learn from the contradictions and achievements that shaped this era and Dick's writing?
12. **Dick and Global Capitalism:** How do Dick's analyses of global capitalism, mediatized politics and individualized consumer culture correspond to our own present?

Please send an abstract of no more than **500 words** and a short biographical sketch to **Stefan.Schlensag@udo.edu** before **29 February 2012**. Presenters will be asked to submit a full version of their 20-minute presentation by 31 August, and an electronic reader will be distributed before the conference to all participants. A selection of the papers given at the conference will be published in book form.

**Conference Organizers:**

Walter Grünzweig, Randi Gunzenhäuser, Sybille Klemm, Stefan Schlensag, Florian Siedlarek, (TU Dortmund University); Alexander Dunst (University of Potsdam) and Damian Podleśny (Poland)

**Conference Director and Contact:**

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