

## Abstract of Doctoral Thesis

### Title: Music in Japanese SF Literature: A View on Sound and Body in Literature

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Taking Sound Studies and Literary Sound Studies as framework, this paper presents an interdisciplinary approach to music in Japanese Literary Science Fiction, with the concepts of “sound” and “body” as the main axis. Focusing on sound phenomena related to the construction, division, and destabilization of the subject, this thesis examines how “sound” is conceptualized and the relationships it establishes with other concepts like animality, gender, alterity, and technology. The conceptual framework for this thesis is provided in the introduction, which includes a panoramic approach to Sound Studies and theories related to the conceptualization of the body, as well as to the study of music in the Science Fiction milieu and its presence in Science Fiction Literature.

The main body of the thesis is divided into two parts. The first one centres on sound-related technologies. Through the examination of sound as written word, this part explores the evolution of how the body is conceptualized in relation to the advancement of technology and the effects of these changes in the subject. The object of study in the first chapter is Unno Juza’s short story “Juhachi-ji no ongaku-yoku” (“The Musical Bath at 1800 hours, 1937). Music in this story is analyzed as a tool for the construction of the national body. This music is depicted as a physical phenomenon that penetrates the body through vibration and exerts the identification of body and machine in the context of a progressively more advanced technological civilization. Chapter 2 approaches Takano Fumio’s novel *Musica Machina* (1995) in relation to the development of Cybernetics. If in the previous chapter the human body was being conceptualized as a machine, in this chapter the story reveals an identification of the brain and its functions as a computer, which is used in the production of electronic music and as a database for its storage and browsing. Chapter 3 focuses on Okuizumi Hikaru’s *BBB Be-Bop* (2014) in which, along with the emergence of the singularity, depicts the final stage of the identification and boundary-blurring between human and machine. In this chapter, the examination of music, as well as the body, is centered on the notions of repetition and reproduction, which we analyze

as a symptom of the posthistorical society the novel presents. In this way, while focusing on sound phenomena, this first part discusses the reciprocal influence of technology and the body. The three works examined in this part present three steps of the evolution of technology and its relation to how the body is conceptualized.

The second part of this thesis revolves around alterity and the drive to establish contact with the other, bringing into attention the construction of subjectivity and alterity. This part is organized into two chapters that centre on the opposing concepts of “life” and “death,” as portrayed in the examined works. Chapter 4 analyzes Furukawa Hideo’s novel *Music* (2010) with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming” as axis. This chapter argues that, through the novel’s identification of music as a force that bonds the characters, not only with each other but with the environment they inhabit, music appears as a manifestation of life itself. Chapter 5 analyzes Ueda Sayuri’s “Yumemiru Ashibue” (2009), Tobi Hirotaka’s “Duo” (1992), and Kurimoto Kaoru’s “Seiren” (1979), approaching them as stories in which the subject is invaded by the other through music. This chapter shows how “death” appears as a motif when the contact with the other and the notion of “becoming worldly/music,” examined in the previous chapter, is understood as the dissolution of the subject itself. Through the analysis of music in these works, as something that threatens the subject, we argue that music appears as a potential disruptor of the frontiers between the I and the other. Through the analysis of the works approached in this second part, we conclude that life and death are not dichotomic motifs but appear as two ways in which the drive to make contact with the other is conceptualized.

Finally, either it is produced by a human voice, an instrument, an audio system, an animal, an alien, a city, or space itself, we argue that music in literature takes the body to the front and makes these works engage with “encounters” that bring the possibility to the body/subject destabilization, movement, network-establishing, its collapse and division, organization and destruction, all the processes that become possible through encounter.