

Michael Hayata

JAPAN FOUNDATION RESPONSE PAPER 2

Mr. Hiroaki Muto's presentation on the "Ghost in the Shell Realize Project" highlights the relationship between fiction, commercialism, and science within the arts and society. It is particularly interesting to me that the Project seeks to materialize the ideas of an anime and distribute it throughout society in the form of such product developments as cyber brains, cyborgs, and smart cities. The realization of "Ghost in the Shell," then, has implications far beyond the anime's fan base, and may dramatically transform how we understand such things as robotics and artificial intelligence because it seeks to influence our lifestyles and change our relationship with technology. In this sense, Mr. Muto's presentation shows us how the boundaries between "reality" and "fiction" are being dissipated through commercialism and science, as "reality" comes to rely on "fiction" for its creative content and working existence.

For many fans, the world within "Ghost in the Shell" is attractive because it acts as a sort of dream, fantasy, or utopia. It seems as though many of them are attracted to not only the technology that exists within the series, but also how the characters use that technology amongst one another. Consequently, the materialization of "Ghost in the Shell" may open up new possibilities in regards to human relations by shaping our interactions within both the virtual and physical world. If this is the case, I wonder how many other utopias are fast becoming possible to realize as a result of commercialism and science.