

Simulacra

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Simulacra (singular *simulacrum*) were predicted by the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard as a form of product resulting from the gradual erasure of the distinction between an original and a copy in the postmodern era (*Otaku*, p. 25-26).

Origin

Simulacra's existence in reality was established in the Japanese derivative market for otakus, which provides fan-made, and often eroticized, doujinshi, craft, and other works based on original anime, manga, and games (*Otaku*, p. 25). These works cannot be originals, but according to Japanese cultural theorist Otsuka Eiichi, many of them are not copies either, as they strictly adhere to the tone and style of the original work (p. 30).

Hiroki Azuma theorizes that simulacra fulfill the need for smaller, fragmented narratives within anime, manga, and game continuities (p. 31).

Examples

The author of Sailor Moon made several entries in the derivative market before publishing her manga, as well as many other published Japanese authors and artists (*Otaku*, p. 25-26). Studios such as Gainax have actively courted otaku through the production of parody games that may be considered simulacra.