

What Do We Project Our Self-Image to?: An Expansion of the Personal Space in the Fad of *Atsumori* (Animal Crossing: New Horizons)

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This article sheds light on various aspects of simulation as an element of culture that developed at an accelerated pace during the COVID-19 pandemic. It commences with an examination of the Animal Crossing: New Horizons life simulation game (known in Japan by its nickname, Atsumori) developed for the Nintendo Switch. Launched in 2020 during the pandemic, the game became a big hit amid the resulting worldwide restrictions on leaving home.

In this game, each player uses an avatar of the player's own design and moves to an uninhabited island, where he or she leads a tranquil life. Surrounded by a reality in which the pandemic made it necessary to refrain from leaving home, the uninhabited island that is the virtual venue for this game can be tailored to the player's own liking, resulting in a space that resembles a private room where one can relax and stay for a long time. This private room may cut two ways: it creates opportunities for connection with others while at the same time prompting immersion in a private world tailored to one's personal tastes. In modern times, due to the availability of a number of portable devices, this type of space expanded into a broader range of technologies and became ubiquitous. COVID-19 diminished the portability of this kind of personal space and significantly reshaped social imagination surrounding this concept. The ratio of online to offline has changed dramatically in everyday life, as we see business meetings, school lessons, trips, drinking parties and other gatherings in every aspect of life all being simulated and reconfigured in a different technological context, i.e. in the digital environment. Due to technological advances in AR and VR, this 'technological synthesis of experiences' is becoming increasingly pervasive and is promoting a shift towards simulation as an element of culture. As Atsumori suggests, even in the world of fashion, what gets simulated is not represented clothing but actual experiences related to clothing. The Atsumori game may be able to give us hints regarding how to think about trends in the relationship between fashion and video technology up to the present day.