

The Gaming Object and the *ti esti* Question

Hallvard J. Fosshem

The general idea

Three interrelated foci:

1. The object
2. The structure
3. The agent

“Is it?” versus “What is it?”

- *Ei esti* (“whether it is”) vs *ti esti* (“what is it”)
- *Ei esti*: preliminary identification
- Next move: *ti esti*

Substance and other ways of being something

- Ways of being: quality, quantity, time, place, etc.
- Primary way of being: substance
 - More basic (dependence)
- I.e.: two groups of “things”
- “What is it”: primarily about substance

Substance and function

- Barrels and cups: non-Aristotelian vs Aristotelian analysis of substance
- The Aristotelian version: function
- Scholastic/"Modern" terminology: attribute vs mode
- Attribute: substance (nature, essence)
- Different functions → different objects
 - Example: barrels

Things and their structures

- Things are entwined: object → structure
 - Examples: cup, pencil
- Structure: elasticity
 - Several settings
 - Historical change
 - Creativity

The place of the agent

- Carving up reality: objects and agents
- Agent: player/imagined agent/avatar/etc
- Agent as player
 - Engagement
 - Choice
 - Expertise

The player's motivation

- Ex. First Person Shooter
 - » daytime fantasy;
 - » challenge;
 - » getting technically better;
 - » "negative" pleasure;
 - » the adventure as a whole;
 - » safely pretending