

Schaefer, Fabian, University of Leipzig, Germany

“Ludic Philosophy”. Subjectivity, Choice and Virtual Death in Video Games

To this day, philosophy still basically remains a Euro- American and logocentric project. The aim of this paper is to set the frame for an intervention into this formation of Western philosophy. On the one hand, I contextualize “Western” philosophy with contemporary thought in Japan in order to overcome the geopolitical dichotomy between a hegemonic (universalistic) Western philosophy and marginalized non-Western philosophies. On the other, acknowledging that video games contribute to philosophical discourse through the audio-visual refiguration of its key concepts, video games can offer a possibility to overcome the logocentrism of philosophy. In particular, based on the assumption that philosophical concepts and issues inherent to digital games can be experienced (or even reflected?) in a “playful” way through the act of playing these games (something I call “ludic philosophy”), I would like to distinguish Japanese cultural critic Azuma Hiroki’s concept of human and animal action, and Martin Heidegger’s authentic and fallen selves, in terms of the notions of choice and reversibility, and pose the question of whether the questions of subjectivity, virtual choice, and death in video games such as first-person shooters like Counter-Strike or Call of Duty is best understood in one context or the other.