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## **Nonhuman animal players: Overcoming speciesism in cultural studies of digital game play**

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Writers such as Cavalieri (2001), Wolfe (2003) and Castricano (2008) and posthumanist theory in large discuss the challenges Cartesian and Judeo-Christian legacy sets for addressing nonhuman animal subjects in humanities and cultural studies. 'Speciesism', particularly, is becoming a more prominent discursive and practical category of discrimination under study.

The theoretical basis of game studies, meanwhile, accepts humans and non-human animals as equal subjects and agents – namely as players. Already the early play theorists proposed play as a form of communication that precedes language and serves a similar purpose in the lives of all mammals (e.g. Huizinga 1938, Sutton-Smith 1997). Today, gameplay is assumed as an *autotelic* activity (Ducasse 1929; Csikzentmihalyi 2002) that allows exploring play regardless the players' cultural, historical and personal qualities since all players face common goals, rules and preferred outcomes.

Based on an ongoing research and design project among orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*), this paper proposes a framework for approaching orangutans as digital game players.

### **References**

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