

The unexpected discovery here is that these trends show a marked relationship with one particular feature of the preferred animals, namely their body size. The younger children prefer the bigger animals and the older children prefer the smaller ones. To illustrate this we can take the figures for the two largest of the top ten forms, the elephant and the giraffe, and two of the smallest, the bushbaby and the dog. The elephant, with an overall average rating of 6 per cent, starts out at 15 per cent with the four-year-olds and then falls smoothly to 3 per cent with the fourteen-year-olds. The giraffe shows a similar drop in popularity from 15 per cent to 1 per cent. The bushbaby, on the other hand, starts at only 4.5 per cent with the four-year-olds and then rises gradually to 11 per cent with the fourteen-year-olds. The dog rises from 0.5 to 6.5 per cent. The medium-sized animals amongst the top ten favourites do not show these marked trends.

We can sum up the findings so far by formulating two principles. The first law of animal appeal states that 'The popularity of an animal is directly correlated with the number of anthropomorphic features it possesses.' The second law of animal appeal states that 'The age of a child is inversely correlated with the size of the animal it most prefers.'

How can we explain the second law? Remembering that the preference is based on a symbolic equation, the simplest explanation is that the smaller children are viewing the animals as parent-substitutes and the older children are looking upon them as child-substitutes. It is not enough that the animal must remind us of our own species, it must remind us of a special category within it. When the child is very young, its parents are all important protective figures. They dominate the child's awareness. They are large, friendly animals, and large friendly animals are therefore easily identified with parental figures. As the child grows it starts to assert itself, to compete with its parents. It sees itself in control of the situation, but it is difficult to control an elephant or a giraffe. The preferred animal has to shrink down to a manageable size. The child, in a strangely precocious way, becomes