**Research animal representation in toy design and other media, and use this information to develop an aesthetic for the toys that are realistic, but also inspiring and allowing children to use their imagination.**

Anthropomorphism in animal characters research (done last semester)

* Conrad, M., Marcovitch, S., & Boseovski, J.J. (2021). The friendly fossa: The effect of anthropomorphic language on learning about unfamiliar animals through both storybooks and live animal experiences. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 201*.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2020.104985>.

This article discusses anthropomorphic descriptions of animals within a storybook context as well as a zoo context, but I will be focusing on storybooks. This article states that books about animal characters are generally more popular, specifically in a preschool setting. There is also emphasis on the degree of ‘humanness” the animal characters have; the more human they seem, the less children will associate them with real animals.

* Geerdts, M.S. (2016). (Un)Real Animals: Anthropomorphism and Early Learning About Animals. *Child Development Perspectives, 10*(1), 10-14.<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12153>

The results of this study indicate that anthropomorphism has a negative impact on children’s learning. It is stated that in early education, anthropomorphizing animals will hinder children in learning about different types of animals and other biological knowledge, though older children (high school age), generally find anthropomorphism helpful in learning science.

* Geerdts, M. S., Van de Walle, G. A., & LoBue, V. (2016). Learning About Real Animals From Anthropomorphic Media. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *36*(1), 5-26. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1177/0276236615611798>

Interestingly enough, the same author as *(Un)Real Animals: Anthropomorphism and Early Learning About Animals*, has worked on this article, and states that contrary to previous ideas, anthropomorphism does not interfere with children’s ability to learn biology and animal science. This article also emphasizes that children have a preference for stories featuring animal characters rather than human characters. It is also emphasized that what really matters is the degree of anthropomorphism of the animal characters. It is even stated that animal characters are beneficial to aiding children in biological reasoning.

* Hooykaas, M. J. D., Holierhoek, M. G., Westerveld, J. S., Schilthuizen, M., & Smeets, I. (2022). Animal biodiversity and specificity in children’s picture books. *Public Understanding of Science*, *31*(5), 671-688. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1177/09636625221089811>

This article is particularly relevant to my interests in endangered animals. Including a more diverse population of animals in children’s storybooks is a small but important step for raising awareness about the importance of these species in their ecosystems. This article discusses the relevance of picture books in Western children’s lives, therefore allowing children to perceive more animal diversity.

* <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bu/reader.action?docID=4505095>
* Media affects people’s perception of real life animals, ex. Jaws makes people more scared of sharks (pg 33)
* Cartoon animals’ implications (pg 59)
* “For instance, unlike cartoon mice, real mice are not obsessed with cheese (Associated Newspapers Ltd. 2006). Americans experience such strong indoctrination of these false assumptions that it is difficult to imagine their untruth, let alone harm. The knowledge acquired from cartoons distorts the needs of non/ human animals, such as rabbits. This ultimately damages their health and safety.” (59)
* “Although cartoons primarily exist as entertainment, they influence the way humans historically and culturally treat non/human animals.” (60)
* “...cartoons ‘inspire at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching specific roles, values, and ideals as more traditional sites of learning such as public schools, religious institutions, and the family do” (Giroux 1995, 99).” (61)
* “For a child (or adult) who has never met a live rabbit, and is only indoctrinated with knowledge of Bugs, the fictional anthropomorphized entity is what’s real.” (64)
* “Due to anthropomorphism, and the cute factor discussed in other chapters of this collection, humans tend to enjoy pet keeping. It is probably not coincidental that, in the early twentieth century, the rate of pet keeping steadily rose alongside an increase in anthropomorphized cartoon characters.” (65)
* “The rabbit heroes of Watership Down contain many elements typical of animated non/humans. Although the characters hop and run, many of their gestures are anthropomorphized, and their bodily appearance is drawn in rounded lines.” (104)
* “As Disney animators Thomas and Johnston state, characters in Bambi were drawn according to “what people imagine a deer looks like” (1981, 332). Animators deliberately created idealized non/humans to make them credible as characters with personality (332).” (104)
* “Rather, what triggers disnification in Watership Down is not that the rabbits do not look like real rabbits, but that the rabbits look like cuddly toys. Again, this prompts the viewer to perceive the non/human as exclusively a metaphor. Baker discusses a comparable case of a teddy-bear looking character, Rupert the Bear, to suggest that across the range of critical literature there is a sad tendency to presuppose “in such stories the . . . pictorial image of the animal does not signify ‘animal’ at all” (2001, 136).” (105)
* “The clips advertise human kinship with non/human animals through the shared behavior of the species. However, by framing the non/human animals’ motivations, actions, and reactions in a humanizing way, it resorts to a specious anthropomorphic explanation.” (138)
* <https://web-p-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.bu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=78d1aabc-14ba-4c73-8bc8-0ef3038cfc89%40redis>
* Discuss differences between humanized animals and realistic animals, but I don’t have to actually find an answer to what is the best way to represent animals to kids