



The Wild Boy of Aveyron

Ph.D. Harlan Lane

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The discovery of Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron, and the accomplishments of his teacher, Jean Marc Itard, launched a debate among philosophers anthropologists, psychologists, and educators that has lasted almost two centuries, has given birth to educational treatment of the mentally retarded with methods that are still widely employed, and has led in this country to a revolution in childhood education.

This beautifully written book by Harlan Lane tells the complete story of Dr. Itard's successes and failures with "l'enfant sauvage," a story immortalized by director François Truffaut in *The Wild Child (L'Enfant sauvage)*. Lane takes the reader into the central philosophical and scientific debates of the nineteenth century and sheds new light on questions that persist for our own time. Which human activities require social instruction and which do not? Is there a critical period for language acquisition? To what extent can education compensate for delayed development and limited endowment? What are the critical features of effective training methods?



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