not necessarily indelible by the work of either Descartes or Locke, even significant and continuing influence on the history of the discipline, was interaction between empirical and rational psychology, which has had such certainty not as logically necessary one. For instance, Christian Wolff's dis-
ment of psychological thought did not constitute a mere unrolling, and work of psychological thought in the previous century, the eighteenth-century-develop-
or explicitly held in the previous century, the eighteenth-century-develop-
ment, and more represent the unfolding of concepts immediately more important in the history of psychology than traditional treatements.

The thesis of this essay is that the eighteenth century was signifi-
and peripheral, context?

although Locke himself used the concept of association in a quite restricted, although viewed in this way, as a mere explication of a Lockean principle, and Cuvierian, so important in the subsequent history of psychology, is un-
ceptual. Even the establishment of assim-
versus Cartesian and Lockean concepts. Even the establishment of assim-
development of René Descartes and John Locke, they have viewed eighteenth-century

Historians of psychology have underestimated the importance of the


DAVID E. LEARY
in the History of Psychology
as a Pivotal Case
The Wild Boy of Aveyron
Nature, Art, and Imitation:

Society for Psychoanalytic Studies.
Published @ 1975 by the American
Reprinted for private distribution from Studies in

155
For the purposes of this essay, presented to this audience, its formal in-
formal plucked full-grown from eighteenth-century aesthetic thought. In any case,
oral like other psychological concepts, intuition seems to have been
cent of eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, there may not be entirely coinci-
dent for the matter of the entire field of Nature, Art, and Intuition (as framing-
and of the concept and this thought since that time—the concept of Intuition. If this concept (and
meant of human character). It is also led to the formal positson of a psy-
To make this point, this essay will draw attention to one particular his-

Intersections between the psychological and social realms.

inception of Nature and Art, the discipline's achievement is to bridge the

Psychology (or at least a significant portion of it) emerged precisely at the
discipline of a discipline in some sense as a Noble Science, or a
culture of nature (almost as a field of study) which was both

These essays propose that the issue was not so

a creative of society (that is, a product of artificially structured intelle-
tion of natural forces, or an act of will. This is not to say that

roduction into psychological discourse is an appropriate second example of the historical significance of the eighteenth century for the history of psychology. The first example, as noted above, is provided by the debate about human nature, a debate that bore upon the issue of the proper nature and methods of psychology.

The context for this debate had a long and rich history, extending back at least as far as the ancient Greeks who distinguished the types of knowledge appropriate to the domains of Nature and Art. More to the point, Christian thinkers (following St. Paul) spoke often about *primus homo* (Adam, the fallen man) being followed and perfected by *secundus homo* (Christ, the New Adam). This convention was secularized in the Renaissance (for instance, by Bovillus), consolidating the typical humanistic emphasis upon the "seconding," or artificial improvement, of human nature. But of course there were others, supported by popular lore, who took a less optimistic view of the possibilities and outcome of "seconding." The cult of primitivism expressed a preference for the natural and unaffected, as opposed to the artificial and cultivated, in human affairs. The tradition of the Noble Savage clearly antedated the Renaissance, and while more than one opinion was expressed concerning the moral stature and desirability of "natural men," there was a good deal of popular sentiment in favor of such "happy beasts." Not surprisingly, social critics from Montaigne to Diderot utilized this tradition as a vehicle for their several animosities.

Among the more widely read advocates of the natural and the artificial in mid-to-late eighteenth-century France were Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Étienne Bonnot, known more popularly as the Abbé de Condillac. Although his thought was actually more complex, Rousseau came to symbolize the belief that the pure, simple, natural man was the best possible instance of human nature. Correlatively, his psychology focused upon innate sensibilities and needs, and their ideally organic development and satisfaction. On the other hand, Condillac focused upon the artificial construction of individual human natures through various socially determined structures of experience. In particular, Condillac emphasized the role of language in shaping human consciousness and, consequently, behavior. His psychology, though based (like Rousseau's) upon the premise of innate sensibility, elaborated at greater length upon the supplemental *and positive* effects of learned associations, or habits. Thus, although Rousseau clearly recognized the impact of socialization in the psychological formation of individual character, it was Condillac who presented artificial socialization in its most advantageous light, as something that could be used to shape and re-shape human nature according to the highest possible standards.
These various opinions regarding the relative merits and influences of Nature and Art (to use the common substantive terms of the eighteenth century) set the scene for the public excitement and curiosity about the Wild Boy of Aveyron. Having debated about the treatises of Rousseau, Condillac, and others on the natural estate of mankind—and having read many other treatises on the relations between civilized man, "natural man," "lapsed man," idiots, and animals—the savants and even many common citizens of France were extraordinarily interested in the reports of an actual homo ferus, first sighted and twice briefly captured in the last years of the century, and then permanently captured in early January of the year 1800. Almost immediately upon this final capture, speculation ran rampant: Was this young creature a Noble Savage? Was he in a state of innocence? Was he free of the vices associated with civil life? Was he unusually sensitive? intelligent? uninhibited? free from "unnatural" desires and aversions? and so on. Long before the boy arrived in Paris for observation, he was being touted as an empirical test-case. Many were hopeful, in fact, that a careful investigation of him would serve as an experimentum crucis, resolving once and for all the controversy about the relative impact of natural and artificial factors in the development of human faculties.

As to who the boy was, no one has ever determined. The best estimate is that the ten-to-thirteen-year-old had been abandoned to die in the forests of south-central France, perhaps some six to eight years before. When finally captured for good near the village of Saint-Sernin, he was virtually naked, but still wore the tattered remains of a shirt. For six months, despite the clamor to bring him to Paris for scientific investigation by the newly formed Society of Observers of Man, he remained under the watchful eye and care of a naturalist in the town of Rodez, capital of the district of Aveyron. During this time, the silent and shameless boy, who seemed interested only in eating, sleeping, and escaping, was trained to a leash and more or less housebroken. When the government finally accomplished his release, or rather his transportation to Paris, he was entrusted to the Abbé Sicard, the director of the Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Paris and a renowned teacher deservedly famous for pioneering in the training of handicapped children (for example, in teaching them sign language and other means of increasing their natural abilities). Amidst a flurry of newspaper articles and books, the experts descended upon the Institute for Deaf-Mutes and poked, prodded, and observed the wild child. Not surprisingly, this hoped-for apotheosis of Nature was rather upset by the sort of attention he was receiving.

This attention was organized and implemented for the Society of Observers of Man by a delegated investigating committee headed by Philippe
Pinel, one of the founders of modern psychiatry. The results of the committee’s tests were so clear that, long before the committee’s report was read on November 29, 1800, disillusionment had already set in regarding this particular incarnation of homo ferus. The report, written by Pinel, served to discredit any vestigial notion of the nobility of the enfant sauvage, and to debunk any further intellectual interest in the boy, by frankly declaring him an incurable idiot. Far from being a Noble Savage, the boy was found to lack all semblance of humanity (excepting a physical semblance, of course): his sensory capacities were dull and unresponsive to training (so far as the committee could tell); his intellectual capacity was of the most rudimentary sort, that is, completely at the service of basic physical needs; his lack of language was apparently due either to a physical or intellectual handicap; and his emotional life was that of an animal, or worse.

This is where the story would have ended, with the boy being consigned to anonymous institutionalization for the rest of his life, if it were not for a twenty-five-year-old medical student named Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard. Still three years shy of his medical degree, Itard had begun to drop by the Institute for Deaf-Mutes in mid-1800. Some time in the fall he became interested in the wild boy and undertook his own series of informal observations. By the time Pinel presented the committee’s report, Itard had formed his own opinion of the boy’s state, based not only on these observations but also (and more significantly) upon his close familiarity with the writings of the Abbé de Condillac and of the Abbé’s intellectual guide, John Locke. It is, in fact, not unreasonable to call Itard a young Idéologue and to suggest that he decided, on virtually a priori grounds, that the wild boy had not been thrown out into the woods because he was an idiot, as Pinel had conjectured; but rather, in line with the so-called “metaphysical” theories of his mentors, that the wild boy was an idiot (or at least acted like one) because he had been thrown out into the woods. The lack of nurturance—the lack of artificial stimulation and shaping—had caused the wild boy’s dissolute character, not Nature.

Itard’s personal conviction would have made little historical difference had he not been hired as the Abbé Sicard’s junior medical assistant on the last day of the year 1800, just one month after Pinel had delivered the committee’s report. It is much to the Abbé’s credit that he allowed his new assistant to spend several hours every day for six years designing and implementing a special training program for Victor, as the boy was soon to be called (after the name of a “forest child” in a popular French play). In giving Itard this freedom of action, Sicard in essence was abetting his assistant’s public display of disagreement with the medical opinion of the leading psychiatrist of the time, and not only that, he was permit-
ting Itard to try to *demonstrate* that he was right by developing a new form of non-medical therapy, based upon the empirical philosophy of Locke and Condillac. Sicard’s tolerance was especially noteworthy in view of the fact that he himself concurred with Pinel’s diagnosis. Of course, Itard’s own course of action was even more creditable since failure in his daring endeavor could have ruined his still nascent career. As it turned out, it made his career rather than ruined it, for although, as we shall see, there were limits to the success of Itard’s therapy, his new techniques did prove helpful in the case of Victor, and they were subsequently applied with great effect in the cases of deaf-mutes and other handicapped children. Not unjustly, Itard is now seen as the chief formulator of the modern ideal of special education (having a major impact, for example, on Maria Montessori) and as one of the earliest and most sophisticated proponents of what we would now call behavior modification.\(^{18}\)

Itard’s new therapy evolved rather directly from the premises of the sensationalist philosophy that he had embraced. Like Condillac, he was convinced that higher-order cognitions, emotions, and behaviors were built up from lower-order sensations and responses. If Victor did not yet display these higher-order phenomena, the reason was simply that he had not had the benefit of a properly structured set of experiences which would have brought about the appropriate connections between basic sensations and responses. Victor thought, felt, and acted on a primitive level because he had been reared in a primitive environment which had neither demanded nor allowed the development of higher-order skills. If society now wanted Victor to think, feel, and act in a more sophisticated manner, it must allow Itard to carefully arrange the boy’s learning experiences in such a way that these higher-order skills could be constructed. Starting with very simple stimuli, Itard planned to systematically elicit more and more complex responses. Eventually, he would even teach Victor to speak and think. But speaking and reasoning were the final objectives of Itard’s therapeutic regime; first he would have to make Victor more responsive to people, increase the acuity of Victor’s senses (especially his hearing), and develop Victor’s awareness of physical and social needs.\(^{19}\) Without these basic improvements, Itard concluded, Victor could never be trained to speak and reason, for speaking and reasoning depend upon the ability to pay attention and respond to people, the ability to hear what they say, and the awareness of needs that have to be fulfilled.

The painstaking implementation of this course of therapy, with days and weeks of frustratingly little progress, constitutes one of the most remarkable episodes in the history of psychology. Itard’s persistence in the face of repeated setbacks and disappointments, as well as his ingenuity in devising concrete therapeutic strategies to cope with specific therapeutic
problems, was nothing less than marvelous. But persist he did, with the aid of Madame Guérin, the boy’s caretaker at the Institute. In time this persistence was rewarded by modest, but tangible gains. Victor established something like a personal relationship with Itard and Madame Guérin; his sensory capacities increased as a result of Itard’s innovative exercises; and his behavior showed marked improvement. There were even some indications of emotional development, that is, of emotional reactions that transcended mere animal pleasure or displeasure. When Itard addressed the Society of Observers of Man in August of 1801, after only eight months of therapy, he readily admitted that Victor had barely begun to grow toward full humanity, but the point was obvious to all: the so-called incurable idiot had improved; he had taken some steps forward. That was enough to make Itard the talk of the city, or at least of the Society. On the wings of this positive response, he returned to the Institute to work with Victor in earnest for five more years.  

The frustrations of those subsequent five years were much greater than those of the first eight months. Although progress was made in some respects, it was lost in others. Indeed, with the emergence of “the disruptive effects of puberty,” Victor seemed in many ways to be regressing rather than progressing. By 1806, even in the best possible light, Victor showed only the most rudimentary development in social skills. Moreover, he still communicated only present needs, in various basic ways, and he seemed devoid of any truly human emotions. In sum, Victor had fallen short of becoming a complete human person, and he no longer promised to grow beyond his present state. As a result, in November of 1806, Itard reported to the Minister of the Interior that it was time to bring therapy officially to a close. (He had actually ceased systematic therapy some months earlier.) But in the name of humanity, Itard recommended that the government continue to support Victor and his guardian, Madame Guérin. Still mute and self-centered, Victor could not possibly live on his own in society. The Minister accepted Itard’s recommendation, and for the rest of his life Victor remained a ward of the state, in the care of Madame Guérin. For the next five years, these two — sauvage and guardian — continued to live in the Institute. Then, in 1811, they moved to a tiny house around the corner from the Institute. Victor lived there until 1828, when he died in almost total obscurity.

Technically, of course, Itard had failed to “cure” his patient and to confirm the radical hypothesis underlying his therapeutic approach. In fact, however, he had succeeded in developing a new approach to therapy, and as early as 1805 he had begun to train students to use this approach (with its multiple techniques) in the treatment of deaf-mutes and other handicapped children. From that point on, through an illustrious career of three
more decades, Itard consolidated the radical shift he had begun in the clinical and educational treatment of unfortunates. In this way the case of the Wild Boy of Aveyron, though technically unsuccessful, made a notable difference in the history of psychotherapy and education. But more significant for our purposes are, first of all, the conceptual advance that was symbolized and aided by this case and, secondly, the ultimate explanation Itard gave for the failure of his treatment of Victor.

As regards the conceptual advance, the case of the Wild Boy of Aveyron served to debunk the dichotomous positions of both the “naturalists” and the “artificialists.” On the one hand, it demonstrated that Nature alone did not account for every positive aspect of human character; on the other, it demonstrated that there were limits, rather severe limits, to the malleability of human character by artificial means. As a consequence, in both his 1801 and his 1806 report, Itard argued strongly for the essential interplay of the natural and the artificial in the formation of human character. Although he clearly acknowledged the role of natural physiological factors in the development of human potential, Itard repeatedly emphasized that “it is only in the heart of society that man can attain the pre-eminent position which is his natural destiny.” Noble Savages could not possibly exist apart from the artificial confines of society for the simple reason that the structures and stimulation of social relations are necessary for the development of all that is noble in man. Though society may be the context for human corruption, it also provides the means by which men are humanized, by which they become human. Neither language nor any of the other higher-order faculties that depend upon it could exist outside the realm of the artificial. The interplay of natural endowment, natural development, and artificial stimulation and shaping is the complex nexus within which human nature is formed.

Itard was not alone in reaching this conclusion around the turn of the century—witness the work of Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis, another notable Idéologue; but Itard’s statements, in conjunction with so famous a case, were broadly influential. Together with similar claims by other individuals, they helped bring about a clarification of the proper domain of the newly emerging discipline of psychology, including medical psychology. That domain was located precisely at the juncture of the natural and the artificial. Psychology was to be that fundamental discipline that plied its trade at the point of interaction between Nature and Art, where inborn capacity meets external cultivation. Itard, like Cabanis and others, was explicit in contending that the basic issue of human development has to do with the shaping of natural sensitivities and impulses into civilized forms of thinking, feeling, and behaving. This process was to be the central concern of the new “metaphysical analysis” (empirical psychology)
of human nature. It remains the fundamental concern of psychology to this day.24

But if there is some sort of elective affinity between Nature and Art, why did the treatment of Victor fail? As noted earlier, Itard referred in his second (1806) report to the negative effects of Victor's emerging sexuality, his continued muteness, and his unrelieved self-absorption, all of which (in Itard's opinion) blocked the course of Victor's further development. Because of them, Victor was unable to follow the step-by-step learning process that Itard had envisioned. But below these sexual, linguistic, and egotistic problems, Itard identified a deeper cause of Victor's retardation: Victor had lost the natural capacity to imitate. Over and over, in both of his reports, Itard underscored the absolute centrality of Imitation in the development of human faculties. In fact, in reading these reports, one can only conclude that Itard was proposing Imitation as the critical link between the realms of Nature and Art. On the one hand, he claimed, the fundamental tendency to imitate is endowed by Nature; on the other, it is the very means by which artificial influences have their effects on human development. Without Imitation, Victor could not become a complete human being—intellectually, emotionally, or behaviorally.25

The problem for Victor in Itard's estimation was that the natural tendency to imitate seems, at least in some regards, to be subject to age-related developmental constraints. Stated more positively, the ability to perform certain kinds of imitation is greater in some periods of life than in others. To take one specific and crucial example, the ability to imitate language is greatest in infancy and childhood, and subsequently diminishes over time. If not learned early in life, language may never be acquired, or only poorly acquired.26 If this should happen, the many human characteristics and skills that are dependent upon language become impossible, or severely restricted. This is what had happened to Victor, who had not been exposed to the right kind of stimulation—the right sort of behaviors to imitate—during his critical period of development.27 Because of his social isolation, he had been denied "the fairest prerogative of his kind, the capacity of developing his understanding by the power of imitation and the influence of society."28 Accordingly, the goal of Victor's therapy, established before Itard had fully realized the irreversibility of such fundamental developmental arrest, had been "to try and arouse from their inertia the imitative faculties by submitting them . . . to a kind of gradual education."29 Had he accomplished that, Itard might have succeeded in training Victor to speak and reason, despite the other "disruptive" problems he had encountered. But instead, in 1806, Itard had to admit that the "inertia" of Victor's imitative faculties was more than a match for his graded techniques.
This is not to say that Victor showed no ability to imitate. Indeed, Itard complained that Victor could and did imitate, but only in a very rudimentary, slavish manner, without typically showing any "creative imagination." Victorious namely, as did many animals, but he apparently did so without any real understanding, which would have been shown by some transfer of what he had learned to novel situations. Interestingly, Philippe Pinel had noted this stereotypic aspect of Victor’s behavior in his original report of 1800. The sauvage, he wrote, could imitate certain behaviors, but "only when given a model. That is to say, he only seems to act by automatic imitation." Comparing Victor to idiots he had seen, Pinel concluded that "the tendency to imitate is much weaker in the child of Aveyron."

Itard knew Pinel’s report quite well, of course, and it is reasonable to suppose that Pinel’s remarks about Imitation had some influence on Itard’s use of the concept. But it was Itard, not Pinel, who raised Imitation to a central position both in the understanding of this case and in the articulation of a more general theory of human nature. And the sources of Itard’s use of Imitation as a fundamental premise are surely more extensive than Pinel’s few observations. In fact, as suggested earlier in this essay, Itard had ready access to other avenues of familiarity with imitation. Preeminent among these was eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, particularly as expressed in France (for example, by the Abbé Charles Bateau). As is well known, Imitation was a basic concept in eighteenth-century neoclassical aesthetics, a concept which melded Nature and Art together. The similarity of this mending function to the integrating function of the concept in the economy of Itard’s thought is, of course, rather striking; but more to the point is the fact that the concept of aesthetic Imitation — and the entire mimetic theory of art, as originally formulated by Aristotle — was based upon a psychological theory. Aristotle’s statement of this theory, with which Itard was almost certainly familiar, is relevant:

The general origin of poetry [and the rest of the arts] was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. [1] Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And [2] it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. . . . The explanation [for this natural feeling of delight] is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it.

Mimetic theory, then, was historically based on two psychological premises: first, that humans possess a natural instinct to imitate and, second,
The Wild Boy of Aveyron
and that the Wild Boy of Averion appeared just after the turn of the

century. For the modern discipline of psychology began to emerge:

a fundamental concept that remained at the core of much psycho-

analytic thought is the idea that the experience of love, art, and imagination was in the 19th

century, as a result of the development of psychology and the rise of formal

metrical frameworks. The relationship between nature and art, the role of the artist in the

construction of a reality, and the role of the imagination in the construction of a

reality, are fundamental aspects of the history of psychology. The development of the

framework of psychology, and by extension the history of the discipline

defines the proper domain of study for the newly evolving discipline

and articulates utilization, this case considerably in a significant way to the

discursive and epistemological aspects of nature and art, between natural endowment

and cultural construction. The case of Leary's inverted pyramid shows that the

position in the history of psychology comes at the end of the epistemological

vision of psychology as science and the beginning of the wide acceptance of

operation and assertion that human characteristics have been unified, and they were therefore

able to develop other human characteristics, including such alluring, modes

dear metals, and not been isolated from civilization, their natural faculties

along with observation, is necessary to the normal development of human beings. Leary's

inverted pyramid, therefore, serves as the means of observation — the role of

observation, since they are essentially observers and innovators. Awareness, self-knowledge, and

self-knowledge, the awareness that has been clarified through the class of onlooker,
alike the role of the artist, is clearly much greater in this class of onlooker. Leary's

inverted pyramid, therefore, serves as the means of observation — the role of

observation, since they are essentially observers and innovators. Awareness, self-knowledge, and

self-knowledge, the awareness that has been clarified through the class of onlooker, is clearly much

greater in this class of onlooker. Leary's inverted pyramid, therefore, serves as the means of

operation and assertion that human characteristics have been unified, and they were therefore

able to develop other human characteristics, including such alluring, modes

dear metals, and not been isolated from civilization, their natural faculties

along with observation, is necessary to the normal development of human beings. Leary's

inverted pyramid, therefore, serves as the means of observation — the role of

observation, since they are essentially observers and innovators. Awareness, self-knowledge, and

self-knowledge, the awareness that has been clarified through the class of onlooker.

In other words, without elaborating a formal theory of human nature,
century the investigation of this enfant sauvage served as a lightning rod, dissipating the dichotomy between Nature and Art and highlighting the concept of Imitation.

NOTES


2 See John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1959), pp. 527–35 (Vol. I, Bk. 2, Ch. 23). This chapter, “Of the Association of Ideas,” first appeared in the fourth edition (1701), though it was probably written at an earlier date. Locke relied on association to explain only that which is “odd” and “extravagant” in “the opinions, reasonings, and actions of other men” (p. 527), not all reasoning and behavior.

3 I will follow the convention of historians of psychology and use the term “psychology” throughout this essay even though the term was just coming into use in the eighteenth century. Other commonly used terms that had overlapping, but not equivalent domains of reference were pneumatology, anthropology, the science of man, moral philosophy, and even (à la Condillac) metaphysics.

4 Wolff’s distinction was made in his works on Psychologia Empirica (1732) and Psychologia Rationalis (1734), in his Gesammelte Werke, ed. Jean Ecole, 52 vols. (Gildesheim: Olms, 1962–74), Pt. 2, Vols. 5 and 6 respectively. For an excellent introduction to this distinction, see Robert J. Richards, “Christian Wolff’s Prolegomena to Empirical and Rational Psychology: Translation and Commentary,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 124 (1980), 227–39. The point in the text is that, in light of Wolff’s distinction, historians of psychology have subsequently tended to read Descartes only as a rationalist and Locke only as an empiricist; or, noting disparate elements in their work, they have tended to point out how Descartes and Locke were “inconsistent”
In their orientations, consult almost any history of psychology in this regard.

In any event, the distinction between psychological and physiological thought, followed in principle by all of the forms of classification and synthesis in the physiological and physiological sciences, led to the distinction between rational and empirical psychology. Herein consists the problem they want to show how the terms of psychology could be.

In their orientations, consult almost any history of psychology in this regard.

11 See, for example, Michel de Montaigne's L'apologie de Raymond Sebond (1580) and Denis Diderot's Supplément au voyage de Bougainville (1796).

12 In his Discours sur les sciences et les arts (1750), Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (1755), Émile ou de l'éducation (1761), and Du contrat social (1762), Rousseau showed an ever-increasing awareness that the highest development of human capacities can be reached only by means of a well-structured education within a properly ordered society. However, his biting criticisms of education and society as typically constituted served to maintain his reputation as an extreme advocate of Nature. Three of the above works are collected under the major title Du contrat social (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1963); Émile (Paris: Garnier, 1964) has been published separately.


14 In this regard, Condillac would have agreed with his mentor, John Locke, who wrote that "of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. 'Tis that which makes the great difference in mankind" (Some Thoughts Concerning Education, in John Locke on Politics and Education [Roslyn, N.Y.: Black, 1947], p. 210).

15 Regarding the basic facts of the story of the sauvage de l'Aveyron, see Harlan Lane, The Wild Boy of Aveyron (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); Roger Shattuck, The Forbidden Experiment: The Story of the Wild Boy of Aveyron (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1980); Th. Gineste and J. Postel, "J. M. G. Itard et l'enfant connu sous le nom de 'Sauvage de l'Aveyron," La Psychiatrie de l'enfant, 23 (1980), 251–307; and Thierry Gineste, Victor de l'Aveyron (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1981). Translated excerpts of critical documents are provided in Lane's book, and Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard's two major reports on the Wild Boy are reproduced in Itard's The Wild Boy of Aveyron, trans. George and Muriel Humphrey (Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962). Since the facts of the case are so readily available, I shall not provide extensive documentation in these notes. I should remark also that my own discussion of this case, while certainly overlapping and even relying in parts upon the discussions of Lane, Shattuck, and Gineste, focuses somewhat uniquely on the definition of the domain of psychology and on the historical significance of the use of Imitation as an explanatory concept in this case. I thank Roger Shattuck for providing information about the work of Thierry Gineste.

16 Whereas "natural men" were supposedly reared as well as maintained in the state of Nature, "lapsed men" were those who, having been reared in Society, were then isolated for a long period of time from Society, whether by chance or not. Homo ferus was a separate classification proposed by Linnaeus in the
tenth edition of his *Systema Naturae* (Stockholm: Salvius, 1758–59) for the "wild man" species falling between man and animals.

17 Pinel's report is quoted at length in the third chapter of Lane's *Wild Boy of Aveyron*.

18 As a doctor, Itard was also the founder of modern otorhinolaryngology, the study and treatment of the ear, nose, and throat.

19 The objectives of Itard's therapy program are spelled out and discussed one by one in his "First Developments of the Young Savage of Aveyron," in Itard, *Wild Boy of Aveyron*, pp. xx–51.

20 Itard's report, "First Developments," was published on 20 Oct. 1801.

21 "A Report Made to His Excellency the Minister of the Interior," which was published on 19 Nov. 1806, can be found in Itard's *Wild Boy of Aveyron*, pp. 52–101.

22 Itard, Foreword to "First Developments," p. xxi.


24 Of course, Aristotle had the same concern, but this concern had not remained central to the later tradition of "mental philosophy." In many ways, psychology since the eighteenth century has returned to the Aristotelian problematic of the empirical actualization of inherent potential. This is not to deny, however, that there have been fluctuations in the degree of commitment on the part of psychologists to natural scientific and social scientific concerns. See my "Wundt and After: Psychology's Shifting Relations with the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Philosophy," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 15 (1979), 231–41. The point is simply that the shifts in theoretical and practical emphasis over the past two hundred years have revolved around the nexus of Nature and Art.

25 The importance of Imitation is underscored in both of Itard's reports, "First Developments" (see especially its conclusion, pp. 49–51) and "Report Made to His Excellency" (see especially its conclusion regarding the development of the intellectual faculties, pp. 82–86). The centrality of Imitation is further underscored in a brief description of the case of the *enfant sauvage* given by Itard in 1825: "It was a question of observing in a mute boy, not deaf, raised far from all human society, the delayed development of the instinct of imitation, the influence of imitation on the development of speech, and of speech on the formation and association of ideas" (quoted in Shattuck, *Forbidden Experiment*, p. 95).

26 In his "Report Made to His Excellency," Itard wrote:

> When one thinks that speech, which is without question the most marvelous act of imitation, is also its first result, admiration is redoubled for that Supreme Intelligence whose masterpiece is man, and Who, wishing to make speech the principal promoter of education, could not let imitation, like the other faculties, develop progressively, and therefore necessarily made
it fruitful as well as active from its beginning. But this imitative faculty, the influence of which extends throughout the whole of life, varies in its application according to age. It is used in learning to speak only during earlier childhood. Later other functions come under its influence and it abandons, so to speak, the vocal instrument (p. 85).

27 The concept of a critical learning period—that is, of a developmental stage during which certain kinds of experience must take place if a particular kind of learning is ever to take place—has been utilized by twentieth-century ethologists. Although no historical connection is apparent, the concept proposed by Itard is clearly similar.

28 Itard, Foreword to “First Developments,” p. xxi.
30 See ibid., p. 78, for one instance of “creative imagination.”
31 This quotation is taken from the translation of Pinel’s report in Lane’s Wild Boy of Aveyron, p. 68.
32 Ibid., p. 76.
35 Aristotle’s Rhetoric is obviously closely tied to his Poetics, and in fact since Aristotle western rhetoric has stressed the importance of imitating great orators in order to achieve a proper speaking style. Interestingly, having placed Imitation at the core of artistic expression, Aristotle goes on in the Rhetoric to speak about “the human voice, which of all our organs can best imitate” (The Rhetoric of Aristotle, trans. Lane Cooper [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.]: Prentice-Hall, 1932, p. 184).
36 Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon, “Discours sur la nature des animaux,” Histoire naturelle, in Œuvres complètes, 6 vols. (Paris: Société des Publications illustrées, 1839–41), III, 478–512. I thank Robert J. Richards for bringing this reference to my attention. The use of Imitation in discussions of animal behavior goes back at least to the previous century, when the concept of “aping” came into the English language. Kenelm Digby, for instance, wrote about “the tendency to imitate” in the first of his Two Treatises (Paris: Blaizot, 1644), p. 335. Finally, regarding the use of Imitation in discussions of language and animal behavior, it is worth noting that in 1749 David Hartley utilized the concept for both purposes in his Observations of Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations (Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1966), I, 107–8, 261–63. However, Hartley did not give much space to his treatment of the
concept, and it does not seem to have had any influence. I thank Jeffrey Barnouw for bringing Hartley's use of Imitation to my attention.

37 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind*, in *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, trans. Lester G. Crocker (New York: Washington Square, 1967), p. 179. If Rousseau did influence Itard, there is some irony here, of course, for Itard would then have been using Rousseau's classic work on the Noble Savage as a source for his analysis of the case that put the tradition of the Noble Savage to rest. But the very fact that Rousseau's was a famous treatise on "natural man" makes it likely that Itard conferred it during the course of his dealings with Victor. Interestingly, Rousseau seems to have been aware of the aesthetic origins of the concept of Imitation that he applied to human life. See the analogy he used, as discussed in Richard Sennett's "Rousseau's Indictment of the City as Theater," in *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Vintage, 1978), pp. 115-21.

38 Itard, "Report Made to His Excellency," p. 85.


40 These limits were forgotten by some of the radical behaviorists of this century, such as John B. Watson, but they have been clearly restated, particularly under the influence of ethology, behavioral genetics, and sociobiology.

41 As indicated in note 24, there have been disagreements about this definition, but psychology remains at the crossroads of the natural and the artificial: this is still the position to argue for or against. To that extent, it continues to define the endeavors of psychologists.

42 A very partial list of subsequent thinkers for whom Imitation has been an important concept reads like a Psychologists' Who's Who: Charles Darwin, Gabriel Tarde, Sigmund Freud, James Mark Baldwin, C. Lloyd Morgan, William McDougall, E. B. Holt, Jean Piaget, Neal Miller, John Dollard, and Albert Bandura.