Feral Children, Isolated Children, and Institutionalized Children
Feral Children:

- Feral means wild or undomesticated
- A human child who has lived without human contact from a very young age, and has no experience of human care, of loving or social behavior, of human language
- Several accounts of children raised by wild animals (found living in the woods)

Examples:
- 1798: The Wild Boy of Aveyron, France
- Oxana Malaya, the Ukrainian Dog Girl
- The Cambodian Jungle Girl
- The Chicken Boy from Fiji

Oxana "The Dog Child"
Oxana Malaya, the Ukrainian Dog Girl

What has become of Oxana Malaya?

When first found in 1991 she could hardly speak. In 2006 at the age of 23, Oxana Malaya still resides at a home for the mentally handicapped, the Baraboy Clinic in Odessa, where she helps look after the cows in the Clinic's farm.
Cambodian Jungle Girl

- While herding buffalo along the jungle’s edge in Cambodia at the age of 8, Rochom P’ngieng became lost and mysteriously disappeared. Eighteen years later, in 2007, a villager caught sight of a naked woman sneaking around his property attempting to steal rice. Identified as the long lost Rochom P’ngieng due to a distinctive scar on her back, the girl has grown into a 30-year-old woman who had somehow survived on her own in the dense jungle. Unable to learn the local language or to adapt to the local culture, she escaped earlier this year and has not been found.
Sujit Kumar, raised with chickens in Fiji

In April of 1976, Sujit Kumar's mother committed suicide. His elderly grandfather, not knowing how to care for him, confined him to a chicken coop. Sujit was found one night in 1979 by the side of a road pecking for food. He was taken to the Samabula Old People's Home in Suva, where because of his disruptive and violent behavior he was frequently tied to a bed. This occurred for 22 years before Sujit was put into therapy.

A sister in Home said: "Sujit would mostly hop around like a chicken, peck at his food, perch like a chicken and make noises like a chicken," she said. "He would prefer to roost on the floor to go to sleep rather than sleep in a bed."

However, at the start of 2003 a visitor to the Home initiated a rehabilitation program. Although he still cannot speak, he is now learning human behavior and the ability to communicate
Isolated Children

• May have had human contact but were so deprived of interaction that they did not become socialized
  • Most do not learn language and have trouble with basic motor skills
  • Hard to definitively study due to the nature of child rearing (or lack thereof)

• Examples:
  • Genie, the Wild Child
  • Anna
  • Isabelle
Assignment: Abstracts on Isolated Children

Create an abstract (summary) using a maximum of 35 words to describe each of the following studies for:

1.) Anna

2.) Isabelle

3.) Genie
Abstract for Anna: Rough Draft
Anna was confined, by her hostile grandfather, to an attic for six years with little human interaction. Eventually discovered, she lacked the basic skills to walk, talk, or feed herself. Anna passed away at the age of ten.

Abstract for Anna: Revised
Anna was confined, by her hostile grandfather, to an attic for six years with little human interaction. Eventually discovered, she lacked basic life skills and died at age ten.
Attachment Theory

Central theme of attachment theory states children come into the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachment with others for survival.

- The earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life.
- Caregivers who are available and responsive to their infant's needs establish a sense of security. The infant knows that the caregiver is dependable, which creates a secure base for the child to then explore the world.
Attachment Theory Cont…

• Secure Attachment

• Ambivalent Attachment

• Avoidant Attachment
Konrad Lorenz

- Studied goslings and found that upon hatching, the geese immediately bonded with the first thing it saw move (usually w/in 13-16 hrs)
  - Different from learning b/c it is irreversible and must occur w/in a specific time frame

- Filial Imprinting - children learn the characteristics of their parents
  - Begins in the womb (voices)
  - Critical period (up until the age of 2.5 in humans)
John Bowlby

- Expands on Lorenz; states the attachment a child has with its primary caregiver (typically mom) is a prototype for all future social relationships
- Disrupting that bond can have severe, long lasting consequences: MATERNAL DEPRIVATION
Maternal Depravation

- Long term consequences:
  - Delinquency
  - Reduced intelligence
  - Increased aggression
  - Depression
  - Affectionless psychopathy
Harry Harlow Experiment

- Studied attachment in monkeys and hypothesized that attachment must occur within a critical period (one year)
- Baby monkeys raised in isolation; however they were provided with “surrogate” mothers
  1. One surrogate was a wire frame with a nipple for food supply
  2. One surrogate was covered in soft terrycloth without food

**Question:**
- Which artificial mother would the baby monkey attach to?
Wire Surrogate with Food
Cloth Surrogate w/o Food
View Harlow’s Monkey Video
Results:

Bonding is not a result feeding, however, intimate physical contact or “cuddling”

Monkeys isolated for short periods of time (less than 3-6 months) were able to overcome isolation.

Monkeys isolated for long periods of time (more than 6 months) were unable to adapt to a normal life:

- Could not interact with other monkeys “play”
- These monkeys in some cases were unable to have sexual intercourse
- Those who reproduced (artificial) became violent mothers
Institutionalized Children: The Skeels & Dye Experiment - 1930

Experimental Group:
13 children with low IQ’s (possible learning disabilities)

The children were placed into an orphanage with emphasis on both physical and emotional care
- Physical - feeding, diapering, etc...
- Emotional – attention, love (interaction)

Each child had one adult that they formed a close bond with
Control Group:
12 children without learning delays or set backs; higher IQ’s

Received typical institutionalized care:
- Physical care with low emphasis on emotional care
- Propped bottles and little interaction
Results:

2 ½ years later at age 4

Experimental group gained 28 pts in intelligence

Control group lost 30 pts in intelligence

At 25 years old:
Experimental group had an average education of 12th grade, 4 completed some college, 1 graduate student, zero remain in an institution

Control group had an average education of 3rd grade, held low end jobs, 4 still remained in some form of an institution
Results Cont...

Relationships:

Control group – 2 married

Experimental group – 11 married
Different levels of intelligence are genetic but to flourish completely one must have the socialization (human contact) a young age to reach these natural abilities

In other words, environment can hinder one’s natural abilities

Learning delays or attachment issues are clear in most institutionalized children