Wild Child: The Story of Feral Chrildren

This documentary presented a few cases of feral children who’d been raised in isolation from society. I’ll take a position that emphasizes the role of nurture in shaping human development from these cases.

The case of Victor showed that when individuals are denied a nurturing environment during their formative years, they may struggle to acquire basic human behaviors, such as language and socialization. His story does highlight the potential for improvement, though there does seem to be a ceiling on the amount of improvement depending on how long you were denied it during your formative years.

Genie was isolated and abused by her parents for most of her childhood and was kept that way for 13 years not even knowing how to speak. When she was finally discovered and placed in a nurturing environment, she made great progress with her language and socialization skills. She learned a great deal of vocabulary and social skills. Genie’s experience illustrates the importance of a nurturing environment in facilitating development.

Adduck, who was raised by dogs in Ukraine, struggled to develop language and social skills due to his early isolation. With proper care, therapy, and a supportive environment, he was eventually able to make strides in development with his social skills. He still lags his peers in language, but he is making progress.

Oxana, who was raised by dogs in Ukraine, struggled to develop language and social skills due to her isolation. She was found at 8 and with proper care, therapy, and a supportive environment, she made considerable progress. That progress does seem to have a cap on it due to how late she was found, but the case demonstrates how far you can be rehabilitated with a nurturing environment.

Genie lacked exposure to language. As a result, she had severe language deficits and couldn’t learn how to effectively converse, express emotions, or use language for social interaction.

Oxana missed out on critical socialization during her the first 8 years of her life. Her lack of human contact meant that she didn’t learn how to engage with people. She displayed the behavior of a dog, like walking on all fours and barking. She can function somewhat normally now, but she can still revert back to acting like a dog.