

<http://www.necessaire.com/exposition/vitrine1/piece11.htm>



L'Enfant Sauvage or
The Wild Child
Francois Truffaut
1970

Clip #1 from "Something Wild"

Defensive Competence in nature vs No Weapons against Forms of Culture

- How does the wild child handle the dogs?
- Why is it worth noticing that he has no weapons against the hunters – and particularly against their strategy of “smoking him out”?

The film begins with sounds from nature - and no speech. Why do you think Truffaut made that decision?

-
- To create suspense? What else?
- --

Unaccommodated man

- The wild boy is found naked, and it requires a lot of effort to get him to wear clothes. Why are clothes so important? What is the significance of nakedness?
- Compare:
 - "Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings."

Iris in and Iris out

- What does Truffaut seem to aim at or to achieve through the iris shots?

Movement from natural setting (something wild) into highly sophisticated intellectual culture of Itard

- The juxtaposition of settings works both narratively and analytically.

Different kinds of curiosity



- The scientist
- The crowd
- The paying spectators

Clip #2 from "The Freak Show"

http://www.cndp.fr/tice/teledoc/dossiers/dossier_sauvage.htm

Why does this film need to make such careful distinctions about kinds of curiosity?

- ► The scientist ► The crowd ► The paying spectators
- ►

The "freak show"

- This section advances the narrative by recapitulating (though in fragments) the boy's history with society.
- This curiosity is principally juxtaposed with the minutely investigative curiosity of Itard and Pinel.

Can he be trained? -

A question that advances the narrative -

- Itard: "I don't know. But it's useless to bring him from the forest and lock him up as if he were being punished for disappointing the Parisians."

Doing everything for the first time

- Truffaut emphasizes Itard's principle of activating the child's senses: We'll teach him to look and listen

A sense of order

- Why is it important to Itard's training program?

"This is your home."

- What do you think of Truffaut's move to "domesticate" the wild child's story?
- How do viewers want it to end?

Remaining on the border?

Does Victor remain a liminal figure in the film?
What evidence would help answer this question?

Truffaut in the role of Itard

- What difference does it make to you as you view the film that Truffaut plays the part of Itard?
 - What inferences might you draw?
 - How is the role of director like the role of the scientist experimenting with the education of the child?
 - Have you ever heard of Pygmalion?

Puberty

- What does Itard say about puberty? Why do you think the topic does not come up in the film?
- What difference does it make that there is no sexual suggestiveness in the film?

“I did not want to spell out my message, which is simply this: man is nothing without other men.”

- Does Truffaut's film seem essentially aligned with Itard's report?
- What are the differences?

How would you characterize Truffaut's use of music in the film?

- Vivaldi

How to make connections . . .

- Unaccommodated man
- State of nature
- Family
- Social cement