

FERAL CHILDREN IN FICTION AND FACT

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Author's Note: The article below was written in 2006 for the Leanta Press edition of Tarzan of the Apes. Due to its length, only the first half of the article was printed at that time. This is the first time that it has been brought to the general public in its entirety. Some minor changes have been made in the text by the author for this web edition.

You are holding in your hands a new edition of the story of one of fiction's most famous feral children, *Tarzan of the Apes*. We all know the tale. His birth parents dead on an African shore, animals raised Burroughs' titular hero. Burroughs calls these animals "great apes" or *Mangani*. Philip José Farmer in his "definitive biography of Lord Greystoke" *Tarzan Alive*, suggests that the creatures that adopted Tarzan were not animals at all but rather an almost extinct precursor of *Homo sapiens*, "a giant variety of *Australopithecus robustus* ... a hominid supposed to be extinct, but possibly surviving in the remote jungles even to this day." He states that they had speech, which made them human no matter what they looked like.¹

If Burroughs had known or read the stories of real feral children available at the time he wrote *Tarzan of the Apes* in 1912, he would have suggested something very like this. Almost all of fac-

tual literature regarding feral children indicates that if children do not learn human speech at an early age, and if they are not living in the vicinity of human beings that have speech and talk to them, they never learn to talk. As we shall see, the ability to speak is critical to a feral child's living as a functioning adult member of a human community—the usual definition of “human”.

This lack of speech in most feral children appears to have nothing to do with lack of intelligence, autism or neurological impairment. Rather, speech is learned, and learned at a certain time in a child's life, with repetition being a good part of the learning process.^{2, 3}

Tarzan picks up languages easily. He speaks over nine to a greater or lesser extent, and more than twenty dialects as well. To the contrary, most feral children chronicled in the last several hundred years cannot even speak their native tongue. They know only the language of the animals that raised them: barking, growling, wolf howls. The meaning of this language is for the most part incomprehensible to humans.

Cases of actual feral children are comparatively few and hard to come by. Researchers have discovered around 120 examples of children confined, isolated or found living with or around animals. After sorting through these stories, we find that several were hoaxes, and many are sad tales of children confined in small cages or isolated from humanity in other ways. A small percentage of the children were in the wild on a temporary basis, lasting only a few days or weeks at most.⁴

Less than half of the children listed were actually living with, or appear to have been kept alive by, animals. These reports and anecdotes range in time from our own era back through the

Middle Ages, with one lone story from Roman times of a child discovered with goats. A few tell of feral children in modern times, who have also been found with herbivores such as gazelles, cows, sheep and again goats.

More often the animals the children are taken from are carnivores of one kind or another or primates such as chimps or monkeys. There are around thirty stories where wolves, dogs or jackals are the parental figures, eight with apes or monkeys (all of them in the 20th century), seven with bears and one each for leopards and panthers, both of which came from India. One wonders if Kipling heard of these before he wrote *The Jungle Book*?

Most of these stories are not backed up with any proof that could even begin to be called scientific, and in modern times newspaper articles about these children are “rescued” are usually without any follow-up since the writers move on to newer stories. When these reports appear in more than one paper, the chances are that they all go back to a single source.

As we dig back into the early legends of feral children, we enter the realm of mythology or perhaps mythologized history. The best-known ancient story of feral children is that of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, twin sons of Mars via the rape of the Vestal Virgin Rhea Silvia. They escaped death through a series of happy circumstances, including being fed by woodpeckers and suckled by a mother wolf. This last well-known part of the Romulan legend brings their story firmly into this article.⁵

While their story has many mythological elements, modern Italian anthropologist Andrea Carandini, among other modern scholars, believes

in the historicity behind the Romulus legend. He bases this on the discovery of the *Murus Romuli*, or Romulan fortifications, found in 1988 on the north slope of the Palatine hill in Rome.⁶ We have the same problem here that we will have with many of these accounts. We have no way to verify the anecdotes, and even archeological discoveries are open to interpretation. Most historians would not agree with Carandini, and one suspects that even the Romans of the time of Augustus, 750 years after the founding of the city on the Tiber, may have had doubts about the more fanciful aspects of the story.

More than a thousand years after the founding of Rome, we come on a tale of "...a baby boy, abandoned by his mother during the chaos of the Gothic wars in about AD 250, was found and suckled by a she-goat." When the survivors of the war returned to their homes, he was living with the goats. The returning survivors named him Aegisthus.⁷

This story is told by Procopius of Caesarea, a prominent Byzantine scholar, who lived during the time of Justinian in the 6th century AD, in his *History of the Wars; Books VI-VII, Gothic War (De Bello Gothico*, published originally around 551 AD). He states that he saw the child himself.⁷ However, the Fortean Times web page, source of the above quote, gives the date of the boy's abandonment at around AD 250.⁸

So the question arises: Which date is correct? Is Procopius passing on a story he heard as something he actually saw? Did the web source get the date wrong? Or do we have here something as simple as someone's typographical error making the date 250 AD when it should have been 520 AD? The several web sites that quote

this story, all cite the Fortean Times web site. None of them noted the discrepancy between the 250 AD date given and the dates of Procopius' life.

The 6th Century Gothic Wars, at the beginning of the period modern historians call the Dark Ages, certainly were dark on the subject of feral children. The only extant story prior to the 14th Century is the "Green Children of Woolpit", in Suffolk, chronicled by Ralph of Coggeshall and William of Newburgh in the late 12th century. This tale of temporary isolation mentions no animals, so falls outside the scope of this article.⁹

The next three examples appeared in Germany in the 14th century. All three children were described as being raised by wolves, and all were found between 1304 and 1344. The information, however, is incomplete and written centuries after the children lived. Two of the wolf boys were found in Hesse. Alexander Ross in his *Arcana Microcosmi*, published around 350 years later, in 1652, has this to say about the first wolf boy who was discovered in 1304:

In the Lantgrave of Hesse ... was found a boy who had been lost by his parents when he was a childe, who was bred among Wolves, and ran up and down with them upon all four for his prey. This boy was at last in Hunting taken and brought to the Landgrave, who much wondring at the sight, caused him to be bred among his servants, who in time left his Wolvish conditions, learned to walk upright like a man, and to speak, who confessed, that the wolves bred him and taught him to hunt for prey with them. This

story is rehearsed by Dresserus in his *Book of new and ancient Discipline, Hist. Med.* part. 1. c. ¹⁰

His source is Matthaues Dresserus (Matthieu Drescher) writing in 1577. The Feral Children web site also mentions an undated Benedictine chronicle, which may have been Dresserus' source. This certainly pushes this information into the area of hearsay.¹¹

The second wolf boy of Hesse had a much shorter and probably sadder existence than the first. He was located in 1341 at the age of seven. He fought his captors, running around on all fours and hiding from them, refusing to eat the food they gave him and died soon after. His story is told in the *Hessian Chronicles* by Wilhelm Dilich in 1608, so again there is a large time gap between the happening and the written record that has come down to us.¹²

The third medieval German wolf boy was found in Wetterau in the winter of 1344 and captured by nobles out deer hunting in a dense wood. The story goes that he had lived with the wolves for twelve years, and after his capture lived to about 80 years. No other information is given, so we don't know if he learned to speak, or to live as a human does.¹³

The records of medieval feral children remain scanty. One other wolf boy mentioned by Ross was discovered in the forests of Ardenne, France around 1500 after having been carried away by wolves and nourished by them. He writes that the wolf boy "could neither speak nor walk upright, nor eat any thing except raw flesh, till by a new education among other children, his

bestial nature was quite abolished.” No further information was given.¹⁴

We jump another century and discover that in the 17th century the reports are of children found with bears—one from Denmark, two from Lithuania, and from Ireland a tale of a boy living with wild sheep, eating grass and hay, and a second briefly told story of a boy living in late 16th century Bamberg, Germany, with cows. This last story is an anomaly in many ways. While he grew up with cattle in the mountains, running on all fours and fighting with dogs, he was eventually civilized and even married. It appears that he could not have been totally denied human companionship in his early youth.¹⁵

The bear boys follow the pattern of the wolf boys and other feral children we have seen. They run on all fours, eat what bears eat, and don't easily learn human languages. For example, Joseph Connor says the following about Joseph the Bear Boy of Lithuania found in the 1660s:

...his manners were altogether bestial; for he not only fed upon raw flesh, wild honey, crab-apples and such like dainties which bears are used to feat [*sic*] with, but also went ... upon all-four. ... he was not taught to go upright without a great deal of difficult [*sic*], and there was less hope of ever making him learn the Polish language, for he ... continued to express his mind in a ... bear-like tone.¹⁶

We have scant information available regarding the other two incidents of feral children found with bears, the Danish bear boy of around 1600 and the second Lithuanian bear boy discovered

in 1694; however, accounts of the second Lithuanian boy report that he did learn some speech and to walk upright.

The 18th century saw a number of cases of isolated children, which are outside the scope of this article as well as that of a bear girl in Fraumark, Slovakia in 1767 and a wolf boy of Kronstadt found in Brasov, Romania around 1780. In both cases they were practically dragged from their wild homes and taken to nearby towns to be civilized, but without success. The bear girl was locked in an asylum where she would eat only raw meat. *Wolf Children and Feral Man*, by Singh and Zingg contains a long discussion of the wolf boy of Kronstadt, who like others never learned to speak, would howl pitifully when he saw trees or mountains, and preferred raw meat, although he learned to eat human food including legumes after a time.¹⁷

As we come into the 19th century, we find that most of the stories available come from India and are about children raised by wolves or found with them. The feral children web site lists 11 cases in 19th century India of children found with or raised with wolves and one case in Texas of a girl raised with lobo wolves. Three other 19th century children were reported raised by or with animals: one each by bears in India, gazelles in Mauritania, North Africa and sheep in Greece. All of the Central and Western European cases are sad stories of children confined or isolated by humans. These stories include one of Clemens, a boy in the Netherlands as told in an 1863 article in *Anthropological Review* who was

...set to keep swine, and shut up
with them at night. The peasant,
his master, gave him scarcely

enough food to sustain life, and he used to suck the milch sow and eat herbage with the pigs. ... he would go on all fours in the garden, and seize and eat the vegetables ... He never lost his affection for pigs; and ... they would let him ride about on their backs. His pleasantest recollections and his favorite stories were about his life with them in his childhood.¹⁸

The article dates the account in the early 19th century, some forty or more years prior to the publication date. It is interesting to us because of the animal aspects of the story and the fact that it indicates that due to his being near humans as well as with the pigs he was able to speak as an adult and become a part of the human world, though it appears that given a choice he would have preferred to stay with the pigs.

The next half dozen examples of feral children are all from the 1840s in India. Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman tells their stories in *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude, in 1849-50*.¹⁹ These stories collected by General Sleeman all come from the same part of India and have a number of elements in common. The children, all boys, were taken from their parents at about three years of age (when age could be confirmed) and were between nine and twelve when found and removed from the wolves. None of them learned to speak more than a word or two of the local tongue though most of them could eventually respond to signs. They all preferred raw meat to other food although some learned to eat cooked or vegetarian food. Sleeman commented on their lack of cleanliness and their smell in almost all cases.

All of these wolf boys wished to return to their lupine parents in the jungle and tried very hard to do so. Although the “Second Sultanpur Wolf Boy”²⁰ died three years after he was “rescued”, the others survived, albeit one can’t really say that they thrived. Like Burroughs’ hero, they wanted very desperately to go back to the jungle and were apparently no longer suited to living with humans.

This quote from Sleeman’s book is of interest:

In all parts of India, the Hindoos [*sic*] have a notion that the family of a man who kills a wolf, or even wounds it, goes to utter ruin; and so also the village within the boundaries of which a wolf has been killed or wounded... Some Rajpoot families in Oude, where so many children are devoured by wolves, are getting over this prejudice.²¹

This attitude is demonstrated throughout the extracts from Sleeman’s book where children are taken from their wild homes, but the wolves with them are often not killed or otherwise hurt; apparently they have not completely gotten “over their prejudice.” When you consider the important role that both reincarnation and transmigration play in Hindu belief, it is no wonder that East Indians balked at killing wolves, particularly a local one who might have been someone’s grandfather. They might have even assumed that a person previously related to the child, now in the form of a wolf, “adopted” him.

There are common elements in all of these stories. Troopers find a boy running with a

mother wolf and her “whelps”. With the best of intentions, the troopers take the child forcibly from the she-wolf. They either dig him out of her den or grab him up and carry him back to live with humans, who usually only keep him for a short while before finding that this wolf child is too hard to raise and to deal with.

As with most of the feral children seen previously in this article, all of these children that Sleeman discusses learn little or no spoken language, but often can be directed by signs much as a dog can be taught to respond to hand signals. They almost always prefer raw meat to other food, and human captors find their smell repulsive. The boys pine for their lupine families and continually attempt to return to them.

We see a particularly interesting example of wolf/human interaction in the case of the child known as the First Lucknow Wolf Boy. The story of this boy followed the pattern above. After being taken from his wolf family by troopers and brought back to Bondee, he had several different caretakers, all of whom tried to civilize him without succeeding. After a time he was put in the care of a cashmere merchant’s servant, Janoo, who taught him to eat human food and to walk on two legs. When directed by signs, he could prepare a hookah, light it and bring it to Janoo. Then...

One night while the boy was lying under the tree, near Janoo, Janoo saw two wolves come up stealthily, and smell at the boy. They then touched him, and he got up; and instead of being frightened, the boy put his hands upon their heads, and they began to play

with him. They capered around him, and he threw straw and leaves at them. Janoo tried to drive them off ... but, after going a little distance, they returned, and began to play again with the boy. ... They came four or five times, and Janoo had no longer any fear of them; and he thinks that the first two that came must have been the two cubs with which the boy was first found, and they were prevented from seizing him by recognizing the smell. They licked his face with their tongues as he put his hands on their heads.²²

Janoo's master wanted him to get rid of the boy, but Janoo insisted on keeping him. However, whenever they passed a jungle area, the boy tried to escape. Janoo had to leave the boy behind for a few days while he went on business for his master, and when he returned, discovered that the boy had run off and was not found again.²²

Furthermore, in those cases in which parents found their missing child, the boy had little or no feeling for the parent and in several cases the parent rejected the child for this reason. The boys had all bonded so completely with the wolves who raised them, that they apparently had no memory of or caring for their birth parents.

We can see the spiritual sister of the First Lucknow Wolf Boy in another similar case half a world away in the wilds of Texas. The tale of the Lobo Girl of Devil's River has many points in common with the Lucknow Wolf Boy's story, the

main one being the unwillingness of both to be bound by human customs.

The Lobo Girl was born to Mollie and John Dent, trappers at Beaver Lake in Texas in 1835. Lightning killed her father, and her mother apparently died in childbirth. When the people whose help the father had sought arrived at the Dents' cabin, they found the child gone and the tracks of lobo wolves in the vicinity. They assumed she had been killed and eaten.

But ten years later there were several sightings of a girl hunting with a pack of lobo wolves. The feral children web site states that the

... hunt was mounted, and after three days the Lobo Girl of Devil's River was caught after fighting wildly to keep her freedom. She was taken to a ranch ... and locked in. Her howling attracted answering cries from wolves far and wide, and a large pack of wolves rushed the corrals, attacking the goats, cows and horses. Shooting started, and in the confusion the girl managed to remove the board nailed over the window and make her escape.²³

Seven years later in 1852 frontiersmen surveying for a new route to El Paso saw the Lobo Girl "suckling two wolf cubs on a sand bar in the river." She ran off carrying them and was never seen again. At that time she was around seventeen years old.²⁴

One has to wonder what happened to the Lobo Girl in the years after this last sighting. We can only hope that she lived out her days with the wolf family who raised her, just as we would

want to see the Wolf Boy of Lucknow who escaped back to his jungles find his own true lupine family again.

Our next sightings appear in the late 1850s in the aftermath of the East Indian Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 to 1858.²⁵ Between 1858 and 1900 there are five more cases of wolf boys in India, as well as a girl found with bears. While far away from India, a boy living with sheep in Greece in 1891 and a second boy with gazelles in Mauritania in Western Africa in 1900 are also discovered.

The five stories of boys found with wolves follow the same pattern as before. The story of the Third Sultanpur Wolf Boy found in 1860 is discussed in a letter to *The Field* in 1895 about 35 years after; it follows the usual pattern of these stories with one major difference. The child, discovered with the wolf cubs, is taken from the den and adapted successfully to human society. H. Ross, the writer of the letter admits he is told this and did not see it happen, but it was verified so he had no reason to disbelieve it. He goes on to say that

As regards the child, I saw him when he was just brought in, ...and until I left He seemed to be about four years old, and sat up like a dog, both arms straight down in front of him, with his hands flattened out on the ground, and his legs drawn up under him like a dog; he moved by hops something like a monkey, but never stood. up on his legs, and always kept his hands on the ground. He gave vent to snarls and sounds, not actual barks like a dog, but something between a bark and a grunt. He would not touch

cooked food, but ate raw meat ravenously. The police officer took charge of him, and gradually broke him in to taking milk, then milk and bread, and so on. He certainly was not an idiot, for, **after being tamed, he was sent to school, and eventually taken into the police force** [emphasis added]. Everyone at the time considered it a clear case of a wolf-child.²⁶

This boy stands out because he crossed the barrier between the lupine world and the human. Mr. Ross doesn't mention that he learned to speak, but one assumes that it is a given in this case. We are left to wonder if the boy had language before he lived with the wolves. Since he later joined the police force, it seems evident that the force became his pack, his replacement for his lupine brothers and sisters.

The other four late 19th century feral children did not fare so well. None of them learned speech or were assimilated into human society, and all had the characteristics of wolves that we have seen previously. The Shajehanpur wolf boy,²⁷ found in 1858 in the aftermath of the Sepoy Rebellion, lived for years in a hut without human speech or integration into human society.

Dina Sanichar,²⁸ having been removed from the wolves' cave when he was about six years old, was taken in by the Sekandra orphanage, lived till 1895 and never learned to speak. During his time at the orphanage, he befriended the Second Sekandra Wolf Boy,²⁹ who arrived in 1872, age 10, and lived only four months after his arrival. The last 19th century wolf boy, the Batispur Wolf Boy³⁰ was found in 1893 at the age of 14. The

Calcutta Times report at the time of his discovery is the only one we have, and we cannot know what happened to him later.

The last 19th century reports move away from wolves. There is the brief story of Skiron from Greece mentioned by Singh and Zingg in *Wolf Children and Feral Man*.³¹ Around 1891 Skiron's father died. His mother left him with someone and returned to her homeland; he lived with the sheep for four years on "milk from the sheep in the summer and acorns and roots in the winter."³² He later found a home with a shepherd, and nothing else is known about him.

Our last Indian feral child in the 19th century is different in many respects from those discussed previously. This child, the Jalpalguri Bear-Girl, was according to a newspaper article published five years later, found "... by some coolies ... in the den of a bear. It is presumed that she was brought there ... and when very young was nursed by her bear-mother."³³ This article goes on to detail the girl's ursine behavior:

...she was a strange combination of a bear and a man, she was ferocious like a bear, and attempted to bite and scratch men when she saw them. In her locomotion she used her legs as well as her hands and moved like a bear. She growled at intervals like a bear and ate and drank as a bear; in short, all her habits were like those of a bear, while by her features no one could fail to recognize her as a human being.³⁴

The people that discovered her took her to a hospital in Jalpalguri where she stayed three

years and “learnt to walk, eat, and drink like a human being, and showed certain emotions which were peculiar to man. The hospital authorities retained her about three years, and afterwards thinking her an incurable discharged her.”³⁵ She apparently roamed the streets for about two years getting her food where she could and sleeping outdoors at night. Five years after she was removed from the bears, the missionary who took her off the streets, with the help of the *Unity and the Minister* newspaper (organ of the New Dispensation Church of the late Babu Chunder Sen) eventually found her a home at the ...Das Asram, a philanthropic institution of Calcutta ... where she is now taken care of. ... By contact with society she is now generally acquiring human habits. It has been pronounced by medical men that she will gradually regain her humanity.³⁶

Since this article was written at the time the events happened and once again there is no follow-up, we can only hope that she did “regain her humanity”.

The last 19th century feral child is even more of an anomaly in many ways than the ones previously discussed. His home was Mauritania in Western Africa, and he survived by living with gazelles. The Feral Children web site does not give a source for this story, but says that around 1900 a boy, whose mother put him out to wet-nurse with her tame gazelles because she was unable to feed him, went with the gazelle he was tethered to when it wandered off “to follow a herd of wild gazelles. Eventually the herd became ac-

customed to the gazelle and her strange companion, and the Mauritanian Gazelle Boy lived with the herd for some years before he was eventually captured.”³⁷ After a long time the boy learned to speak and became a hunter. The story ends with the boy dying of grief because he realizes he has killed his gazelle wet nurse. Needless to say we have no way of knowing the truth of any part of this tale which the Feral Children website calls “a likely story.”

As we move forward into the 20th century, we find that until the 30s all of the stories of feral children found with animals are still from India,. From this time and place we also find our only stories of feral children and big cats, The Leopard Boy of Dihungi found in 1915 and the briefly mentioned Indian panther child from 1920. All we know of the latter is that he was a Hindu boy returned to his parents after being nurtured by a panther.³⁸

There is more information about the Leopard Boy of Dihungi. He was stolen, while his mother worked in the fields, by a leopardess that had two of her cubs killed by local villagers. A sportsman killed the mother leopard three years later. Subsequently the villagers found the boy and two living cubs in her den and returned the boy to his parents. The report does not say how old the Leopard Boy was when he was stolen or if he ever learned to speak. When first rescued, the boy could run very quickly on all fours, had an acute sense of smell and ripped apart and devoured any fowl he could find. Stuart Baker, who visited the Leopard Boy and wrote the story for the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, said that the boy had learned to walk like a

human when he saw him five years after he was taken from his leopard mother.³⁹

Our next feral child is Goongi, a girl who was found in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Researchers believe her to be non-speaking because her name meant “dumb” in the local tongue. The Feral Children web site says: “She exhibited characteristics common to feral children: she was supposedly covered with hair, and ran on all fours.”⁴⁰ They take their information from *Jim Corbett’s India*. It is that author’s suggestion that she was brought up by bears because she ate what bears ate, had great climbing ability and also had deep scratches on her body that could have been made by bears.⁴¹

Except for one “Jackal Girl”⁴², the feral children of the first part of the 20th century were found with wolves. Little is known about three of these, all boys, who follow the usual pattern of lack of speech and animal habits. Two of them were found in wolves’ dens but in both cases preferred to eat roots and plants and not raw meat, which suggests that they might have been isolated children who found unused dens to live in.⁴³ The history of the third, the Satna Wolf Boy, indicates that he was carried off by wolves as a baby and rescued years afterward as told by a Mr. C.H. Burnett who stated that “he couldn’t speak and ‘had very peculiar habits’.”⁴⁴

Now we come to two of the most famous Wolf Children: Amala and Kamala, who are the primary reason for Singh and Zingg’s book, *Wolf Children and Feral Man*, which is based on diaries Singh kept when they were in his care. There is far too much material to go into detail here, but the interested reader will find complete excerpts from this book on the Feral Children web site.⁴⁵

Amala lived only a short time after they were taken from the wolves' den and the mother wolf killed, while Kamala lived for nine years more in Singh's care before succumbing to typhoid.

In these nine years he had far more success in socializing Kamala than is found in any previous case that we have on record. The work was hard and slow. After perhaps a half-dozen years with Singh, Kamala had a vocabulary of about 40 Hindi words, not always completely pronounced and could make short sentences. Singh was able to get Kamala to walk, eat and sleep as the other children in his orphanage did, but at the time of her death he was still far from seeing her become socialized. As with almost all the other feral children, she could be neither fully wolf or fully human.⁴⁶

In the middle part of the 20th century we find a potpourri of parental animals for feral children. Several children lived with monkeys and apes⁴⁷ (the first recorded instances of these); a bear mothered a girl in Turkey⁴⁸; two more boys were discovered with gazelles, and several more wolf boys^{49, 50} turned up. From 1945 we have our only instance of a boy who lived for ten years with ostriches in North Africa before hunters found him and brought him home. It is said that he lived on grass while he was with them.⁵¹

In all these cases there is little or no mention of the children learning to speak. While some of them learned to walk on two feet, they tended to drop back to four to run. As with all the stories we have heard previously, they behaved like their parental animals and ate what these animals preferred. This 1930s report of one of the "monkey children" illustrates the pattern. In the 1930s, "Assicia ... moved around on all fours, on

knees and fingertips, with ankles bent, scratched herself in the manner of a monkey, and uttered quivering cries... her favourite food was bananas.”⁵²

The boys that ran with gazelles, one in Syria (1946) and one in of the Sahara Desert Mauritania were both as fleet as the animals they were found with. Both were reported racing beside jeeps at speeds up to 50 kilometers per hour. One report said that the Syrian gazelle boy could run at 50 **miles** per hour.⁵³ The Feral Children web site says “at first the Syrian Authorities wanted to study him and refused to let American doctors or French doctors take him for study. When the funds weren't forthcoming, the young man was left to live in the streets.” There are a number of stories of gazelle boys from Syria, and while the *Foretean Times* and Feral Children web site suggest that some are fabrications (referencing *Pursuit* ⁵⁴), some prove to be real.

According to the *Foretean Times*, Jean-Claude Auger, a Basque anthropologist saw the Saharan Gazelle Boy while traveling in the Spanish Sahara in 1960. He patiently waited for the herd and won the animals' and the boy's confidence. Auger stayed with the herd for some time and wrote:

The boy walked on all fours, but occasionally assumed an upright gait, suggesting to Auger that he was abandoned or lost at about seven or eight months, having already learnt to stand. He habitually twitched his muscles, scalp, nose and ears, much like the rest of the herd, in response to the slightest noise. Even in deepest sleep he

seemed constantly alert, raising his head at unusual noises, however faint, and sniffing around him like the gazelles.⁵⁵

Auger came back two years later with companions who “chased the boy in a jeep to see how fast he could run. This frightened him off altogether, though he reached a speed of 32-34mph (52-54km/h), with continuous leaps of about 13ft (4m). Olympic sprinters can reach only 25mph (40km/h) in short bursts.”⁵⁶ While several attempts were later made to capture him, none were successful. There are no photographs, so once again we are left to wonder if the story is true or a fabrication.

The Turkish Bear Girl and the two wolf boys, Djuma from Turkmenistan and Ramu, the Second Lucknow Wolf Boy from India, all follow the pattern we have observed throughout this article. They fight their captors, don't learn civilized ways, and all three of these hapless children ended up in mental hospitals. Ramu spent fourteen years in the Lucknow hospital, dying there in 1968. The others were still in the hospitals they had been placed in when last heard from. Ramu lapped milk from a glass, chewed bones, and “when taken on an outing to the zoo became very excited by the wolves.”⁵⁷ Djuma had learned a few disjointed words. Nothing was said about the others learning to speak.

In the last third of the 20th century, two-thirds of the thirty feral children on listed were confined, isolated or hoaxes. As we examine the documents concerning the remaining children that were said to have lived with animals we see that this is a time of change. Wild animals are

disappearing from the picture, and more domesticated ones are taking their place. We have our last record of a wolf child, Shamdeo in India, in 1972, and in 1984 and 1998 our first and second cases of children living with dogs. Seven children were found with monkeys, and one with goats, Daniel from the Andes, who lived with them for eight years, drinking their milk and eating roots and berries.⁵⁸

Shamdeo, whom we could call the Last Sultanpur Wolf Boy, followed the pattern of the other East Indian wolf children. He was found with five wolf cubs, fought his human captors, preferred wolf food and never learned human speech. When last seen he was living in Mother Teresa's Mission of Charity orphanage.⁵⁹

Four of the five children found with monkeys exhibited all of the usual feral child traits as well. None of these learned to talk, and they appear in many cases to have ended up with the monkeys because of unrest in their countries, which is also part of the feral child pattern as we have seen throughout this article.^{60 61}

The fifth monkey child, John Ssebunya, is one of the anomalies we find occasionally while sifting through these stories. He left his home at the age of four, escaping his father who had just killed his mother, and was accepted by a troop of monkeys living in his part of Uganda. James Butler, producer/director of a BBC documentary about John, goes into great detail about John and his life with the monkeys. In a letter to Feral Children he relates that John **told him** that he

...came across a group of monkeys. He says he was able to eat crops that the monkeys raided from the fields and that he went

into the fields and stole food as well. There is no proof that the monkeys fed him — primatologists would regard this as very unlikely but are quite happy to accept that the monkeys stole more food than they needed and dropped some on the ground and John picked it up from the ground and ate it.

John identified the mokes as *Cercopithecus Aethiops* (the common African Grey or Green Vervet Monkey). This is very significant as this is one of the very few species of mammal that lives in social groups *and will accept and tolerate a lone individual of another species of monkey living alongside their group* [emphasis Mr. Butler's]. Other monkeys and apes will not do this...

What stands out in this quote, of course, is that John was able to give such detail to James Butler. Unlike most, he was old enough when he left his family to still be reacclimatized into human society when he was found. According to the Feral Children web not only did John learn to talk but to sing as well, and tours with the Pearl of Africa Children's Choir.⁶³ Further on in the letter, Mr. Butler states that "... these findings are **not** evidence that the Tarzan myth is true (although they may show how the myth could arise apocryphally from a basis in fact)."⁶²

Ivan Mishukov from Russia is the last feral child from the 20th century. The boy had lost his family in the chaos surrounding the collapse of the Russian economy in 1998 and "earned the trust of a pack of wild dogs by offering them scraps from

the food he managed to beg, and in return for the food, they provided him with protection from the winter temperatures on the streets of Reutova, west of Moscow, which can reach 30 below zero (Celsius).” Ivan was quickly reintegrated into society after he was taken from the dog pack because he could speak before he was with them.⁶⁴

We come finally to the three remaining feral children found with animals, those in the 21st century. These three were all were found with dogs, one each in Russia, Romania and Chile.

According to the feral children site, Axel Rivas, the Chilean dog boy, was “...thrown out of his home by abusive parents when he was five years old, and was then placed in a children's home. He ... escaped in 1998, at the age of eight,” and lived with dogs in a cave suckling on a bitch for part of his food. He was captured again and escaped again after begging to be allowed to go back to the dogs that he said were his family.⁶⁵ No further reports are given, so we do not know if he stayed with the dogs or was rescued again.

The second 21st century dog boy is Traian Caldara, a Romanian and also a victim of family brutality who left home at the age of four to escape his violent father. He was found three years later and eventually returned to his mother and her family. He was in poor health when located, with rickets and other signs of malnutrition. The doctors who cared for him thought he had been with dogs because of his animalistic behavior patterns. His caretakers nicknamed him Mowgli, and for that reason he was called “the Wolf Boy.” He was written up in a number of news stories that appeared from February 14 through 22, 2002 after he was found and in a lengthy follow up article in the April 14th *Daily Telegraph*, when his mother took him

home. We have nothing after that. Considering that he must have had speech when he left home at four, there is a very good chance that he is integrating into human society at the current time.⁶⁶

The last feral child raised by animals is Andrei Tolstyuk found in Russia in 2004 at age seven. He was first abandoned at three months when his mother left home; his alcoholic father then left him as well, and he somehow survived in the care of the family's guard dog reverting to a totally feral state. After examination by doctors, he was moved to a local orphan's shelter where he struck up a friendship with an orphan girl with whom he communicated with signs. The doctors were hopeful that he could be integrated into society, but if everything we have seen so far is correct, this will probably not happen since it is unlikely that he will learn to speak.⁶⁷

We only had twenty cases of feral children of all kinds prior to the 19th century. Of those, eight were isolated and the other twelve, or 60%, were with animals. The Feral Children website found twenty-three cases in the 19th century, fifteen of which lived with animals, or a little over 65%. In the 20th century there were 58 reported cases of feral children, only twenty-eight of which were connected to animals, a drop to a little over 48%, and as we noted earlier, by the time we got to the last third of the 20th century, only one-third of the feral children cases were connected to animals. In the first six years of the 21st century there have been eighteen cases of feral children reported, only three of which were connected to animals—all dogs, that the children went to when their parents were not there for them. This is a drop to fewer than 17%.

We no doubt saw more total cases in recent centuries just because of better newsgathering. The decreasing numbers of children raised by animals is not remarkable either considering the drop in wild areas and animals available to children. We would continue to hope that one day we will see a similar drop in children confined or isolated by the people who are supposed to love and care for them.

John McCrone, in his book *The Myth of Irrationality: the Science of the Mind from Plato to Star Trek*,⁶⁸ discusses feral children including Kamala and others from this article. This book goes to the heart of the question, “What makes a feral child different from a ‘civilized’ one?” and is worth reading by anyone pursuing this interest. To quote the web page devoted to this book, it “...presents a compelling case for a new psychological model of the human mind, one based on the division and interaction between a hard-wired evolved half and a language-oriented learned half.”⁶⁹ His suggestion is that without language and the continual monologue going on within our minds we cannot form societies, bind time with written history, or develop civilizations at all. We are what we think, and thought is based in that internal monologue.⁷⁰

If a child is brought up with wolves, monkeys or other animals, and is taken in by them before it learns human language, the internal monologue (if such exists in animals) will probably consist of barks, growls, yips or other noises that are the language of the animals. Those few children we have found throughout history who are anomalies either spent part of their time when very young with humans, as did Clemens, the boy living with his family’s pigs in the early 19th cen-

tury, or were taken in by animals after they were three or four years old and had learned language as with John Ssebunya of Uganda and two of the 21st century dog boys. The rest were caught in a halfway world, not allowed to be animal and unable to be human. Tarzan was indeed lucky that Kala, a member of that obscure band of *Australopithecus robustus* that Burroughs called Mangani, rescued him.

End Notes

- ¹ Phillip Jose Farmer. *Tarzan Alive: A Definitive Biography of Lord Greystoke*, Popular Library, NY, NY, 1972, page 25
- ² Peter Hobson. *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2004.
- ³ Jonah Weston. *Wild Child: The Story of Feral Children*, Optomen TV, 2002, an interesting documentary on isolated children and also how all children learn language. This film is often shown on the Learning Channel [TLC], and deals with several modern feral children, including Genie, a 20th century child tied down and isolated by her parents for 13 years. It is not available in VHS or DVD at the present time.
- ⁴ See <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/children.php> for this complete list or <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/children.php?tp=0> for their page with just those feral children raised by animals and information about this process.
- ⁵ For more information on Romulus see Plutarch's *Life of Romulus* and online in Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_and_Remus
- ⁶ See <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/02/14/world/printable674077.shtml> for more about Andreas Carandini's discoveries of the early Roman palace dating back to Romulus' era.
- ⁷ For the story of Aegistus and much more about feral children see the Fortean Times web site and their article at http://www.forteanimes.com/articles/.161_feralkids.shtml.
- ⁸ For more on Procopius (late 5th Century CE, – c. 565 CE) see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procopius> and <http://www.vortigernstudies.org.uk/artsou/procop.htm>.

- 9 Glyn Maxwell. *Wolfpit: The Tale of the Green Children of Suffolk*, ARC Publications, 1997-09-1, <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/pager.php?df=keightley> for Ralph of Coggeshall's version of the story.
- 10 Alexander Ross. *Arcana Microcosmi*, London, 1652, Tho. Newcomb, printer, Book 2, chapter 4, pages 112 to 116, <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/pager.php?df=ross1652>.
- 11 Matthaeus Dresserus (Matthieu Drescher). *De Disciplina Nova Et Veteri, Tam Domestica, quam scholastica : ad consolandum erudiendumq[ue] parentes, praeceptores, ac liberos*, Basel, 1577.
- 12 Wilhelm Dilich and Johan Carl Unckel. *Hessische Chronica [Hessian Chronicles]*, Frankfurt, 1608, II, page 187 quoted on <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/listbooks.php?bk=dilich1608>
- 13 Ross.
- 14 Ross.
- 15 Philipus (Philip) Camerarius. *Operae Horarum Subcisivarum Sive Meditationes Historicae*, Frankfurt, 1609, P. Kopffij (printer) pt 1 page 343ff as recapped in English on <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=bandberg>
- 16 For detailed information about Joseph the Bear Boy of Lithuania see *The History of Poland in Several Letters to persons of Quality, giving an account of the antient and present state of that kingdom, historical, geographical, physical, political and ecclesiastical ... : with sculptures, and a new map after the best geographers : with several letters relating to physick*, Bernard Connor (O'Connor), London, 1698, Dan. Brown & A. Roper page 342ff to be found at <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/pager.php?df=connor1698>
- 17 Rev. J. A. L. Singh, and Professor Robert M. Zingg *Wolf-Children and Feral Man*, Harper, 1942. Out of print, ex-

cerpted on the Feral Children website at <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=karonstadt>. Those wishing to buy a second hand copy can find one on line at Amazon Books or through <http://www.abebooks.com>.

- 18 E. Burnet Tylor. "Wild Men and Beast Children", *Anthropological Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May, 1863), pp. 21-32, <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=clemens>.
- 19 W. H. Sleeman. *A Journey Through The Kingdom of Oude, in 1849-50*, Richard Bentley, London, 1858 and New Delhi, 1995. Extracts at <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/pager.php?df=sleeman1858> and other URLs cited. Sleeman tells the stories of the following children: The Hasunpur wolf boy (1841), Bankipur wolf boy and First Sultanpur wolf boy (both 1843), the First Lucknow wolf boy (1844), the Second Sultanpur wolf boy (1848) and the Chupra wolf boy (1849). Because they bear so many similarities, this article is dealing in detail with only the First Lucknow Wolf Boy.
- 20 Sleeman as extracted at <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=sultanpur2> for the story of the second wolf boy of Sultanpur.
- 21 Sleeman again via <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=sultanpur2>.
- 22 Sleeman. For the complete story of the First Lucknow Wolf Boy see <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=lucknow>
- 23 Barry Lopez. *Of Wolves and Men*, Scribner 1979-09-01, and J. Frank Dobie. *Straight Texas (Publications of the Texas Folklore Society #13)*, University of Texas Press, 2000-04, pages 79-86. <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=elipe>.

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<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=eli>
eipe.

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27 *Lippincott's Magazine*, LXI, 1898, pg. 121, and H.D. Willock. Letter, *The Field*, Jan. 11, 1896, no 2246 pp 36-7,
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28 Singh and Zingg. See also Valentine Ball. *Jungle Life in India, or the Journeys and Journals of an Indian Geologist*, London, 1880; republished as *Tribal and Peasant Life in Nineteenth Century India*, and also George Chauncey Ferris. *Sanichar, the Wolf-Boy of India*, New York, 1902.

29 Singh and Zingg, Ball, Ferris, and
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=sekandra>

30 *Indian Mirror* (of Calcutta), Sunday, February 19, 1893 as quoted in detail at
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=atsipur>

31 Singh and Zingg.

32
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=rikkala>

- 33 *Amrita Bazar Patrika [Daily English News]*. December 14, 1892, as quoted in detail in <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=jalpaiguri>.
- 34 *Amrita Bazar Patrika [Daily English News]*.
- 35 *Amrita Bazar Patrika [Daily English News]*.
- 36 *Amrita Bazar Patrika [Daily English News]*.
- 37
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=mauritania>
- 38 André Demaison. *Le Livre des Enfants Sauvages*, André Bonne, Paris 1953
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=panther>.
- 39 E.C. Stuart Baker. "The Power of Scent in Wild Animals" *The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, Vol. 27, July 1920, pgs. 112-118, also reproduced in Singh and Zingg's *Wolf Children and Feral Man*, and discussed at <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=dihungi>.
- 40
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=gonggi>
- 41 Jim Corbett and R.E. Hawkins. *Jim Corbett's India*, Oxford University Press, USA, 1987-03-01.
- 42 At <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=jackal> there is a brief mention of a European girl rescued from jackals in Cooch Bahar, India in 1923. No reference is cited and the web site states that she "longed to return to the jungle, and died within a few months."

- 43 See <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=maiwana> for more about the Maiwana Wolf Boy and <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=jhansi> for the Feral Children web site's discussion of the Jhansi Wolf Boy. Information for both of these children was taken from Singh and Zingg's book cited in Endnote 28 above.
- 44 J.H. Hutton address to the Folk Lore Society later published as "Wolf-Children", by J. H. Hutton and J. P. van den Brand de Cleverskerk, in *Folklore*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1940), pp. 9-31. Also <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=atna>.
- 45 At <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/pager.php?df=singh> the reader will find 41 web pages of extracts from Singh's diaries having specifically to do with Kamala and Amala.
- 46 John McCrone. *The Myth of Irrationality: The Science of the Mind from Plato to Star Trek*, (Carroll & Graf Pub., 1994-08) See <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/listbooks.php?bk=irrationality> for Amazon customer reviews of this book and more information about it.
- 47 André Demaison [endnote 38] discusses both Assicia, the Liberian Monkey Girl [<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=assicia>] and The Monkey Boy from Casamance in Guinea-Bissau [<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=casamance>].
- 48 *American Weekly*, September 5, 1937 and *Sunday Dispatch* [sic], July 31, 1938 for <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=turkey>.
- 49 *Agence France Presse*, February 8, 1954, originally wrote the story of Ramu, the second Lucknow wolf boy, next seen in India's national newspaper, *The Hindu*, of February 10, 1954 (reprinted on February 10, 2004, and at

<http://www.hindu.com/2004/02/10/stories/2004021001470902.htm>) and then in the *Illustrated London News*, “Ramu: the Wolf Boy of Lucknow”, February 27, 1954, and finally in the *Sunday Express* of April 21, 1968. See <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=ramu>.

- 50 *Daily Mirror*, April 17, 1962 as quoted in http://www.forteanimes.com/articles/161_feralkids.shtml; also see <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=djuma>.
- 51 Several web sites tell this story including http://www.forteanimes.com/articles/161_feralkids.shtml and <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch= Idi>. No articles dated at the time this event took place could be found, but see Mitch Case, “No more babies for Mkombozi”, *The Decatur Daily*, May 17, 2005, Decatur, AL, which article recaps the ostrich boy story and a number of others discussed in this article: <http://www.decaturdaily.com/decaturdaily/columnists/mitchchase/050517.shtml>
- 52 André Demaison.
[<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=assiac>]
- 53 <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=gazelle> which uses *Pursuit*, #3, April 1970. Stories of Gazelle boys in Syria were written up by a number of newspapers, pooh-poohed by *Time Magazine*, in “Triumph of Civilization”, September 9, 1946, [<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,855406,00.html>] and “Gazelle Talk”, October 7, 1946 [<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,778833,00.html>] and have been checked out by the Fortean Times [Endnote 7] as well.
- 54 *Pursuit*, #3, April 1970, Pg. 31

- 55 Fortean Times [see Endnote 7] web site whose source is Jean-Claude Auger (writing under the pseudonym Jean-Claude Armen). 'Un Enfant-Gazelle au Sahara Occidental' in *Notes Africaines* No.98 (April 1963, pp.58-61) and in *L'Enfant Sauvage du Grand Désert* (1971), which appeared in English as *Gazelle Boy* (Universe Books, NY, and Bodley Head, 1974).
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<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=amu>
- 58 *The Sun*, London, March 5, 1990, and *The Fortean Times*, 59:20
- 59 Bruce Chatwin, article in the *Sunday Times Magazine*, 1978-7-30, compiled in his book *What Am I Doing Here?*, Penguin (Non-Classics), 1990-08-01. See also C.Y. Gopinath, *Sunday Magazin* (Calcutta), March 4, 1979.
- 60 Fortean Times [Endnote 7, "161 Wild Things"] quoting Sunday Mirror, June 26, 1973; *INFO Journal*, No.11, Summer 1973 [Tissa of Sri Lanka]; Harlan Lane & Richard Pillard: *The Wild Boy of Burundi* (New York 1978); *Fortean Times*, 25:9. [The Burundi Monkey Boy]; and *FT*, 49:12 [Robert of Uganda].
- 61 <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=bello> [Bello, the Nigerian Chimp Boy].
- 62 See
<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/showchild.php?ch=sebutnya> for a letter from James Butler, the producer/director of *The Boy Who Lived with Monkeys*, a video presentation for BBC, written by PJ Blumenthal; see also Chris Brooke, "The Boy Who Was Raised by Monkeys", *Daily Mail*, September 23, 1999; Sally Magnusson, "Taming the Monkey Boy", *The Scotsman*, October 17, 1999; Daniel Thomas Cook, *Symbolic Childhood (Popular Culture & Everyday Life*, Peter Lang Publishing, 2002-06, page 65-85; and Michael Newton,

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- 68 McCrone.
- 69 <http://www.feralchildren.com/en/listbooks.php?tp=3>.
This reference also includes information regarding most
of the other books listed in my endnotes.
- 70 McCrone.