

Book Reviews

EDWARD DUDLEY and MAXIMILIAN E. NOVAK (editors), *The wild man within. An image in Western thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism* [Pittsburgh], University of Pittsburgh, 1972, 8 vo., pp. xi, 333, illus., \$11.95.

The myth of the Wild Man began in antiquity and has existed ever since. He was thought to have been reared by animals and to have lived in isolation from man, having great physical strength and sexual potency, a covering of hair and aphasia. Individuals of this nature have occasionally been reported, such as that by Itard early in the nineteenth century, and no doubt the whole concept was based on reality. It was in fact Itard and others who demythologized the Wild Man, although vestigial remnants linger with us today in the form of the abominable snowman and King Kong.

When, in the sixteenth century primitive man from various parts of the world became better known, he was evaluated in terms of a complex set of attitudes that had grown up around the Wild Man concept and many conflicting feelings were thereby aroused. He was the ignoble savage on the one hand and on the other became the Noble Savage, serving as an ideal "of all that was admirable and uncorrupted in human nature", and upon which so-called civilized man should model himself. There is also the fascinating idea of the savage or beast within us, "the dog beneath the skin", which has been used to account even for varieties of skin sensation, although this aspect is not discussed here.

The Wild Man has played a role in politics, education, linguistics, anthropology, philosophy and literature, and the editors have prepared a diverse collection of essays to discuss these multifarious involvements. Each is a scholarly contribution, gracefully written and fully documented. For the historian of medicine, this is a fascinating topic of study, dealing with human nature, race and cultural attitudes. No one studying medicine or biology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can afford to be ignorant of it. Moreover the problems it raises are still with us, as evidenced by a recent polemic on the relationship between race and intelligence. This book is an excellent introduction to a problem which awaits further investigation from the medical, biological and anthropological viewpoints. It can be strongly recommended.

LUCIEN MALSON and JEAN ITARD, *Wolf children. The wild boy of Aveyron*, London, New Left Books, 1972, 8 vo., pp. 179, £2.50.

The object of this book is to present translations of two French contributions to the subject of wolf children. The first is an excellent and well-documented survey of the whole subject, with a consideration of the fifty-three genuine examples reported, from the fourteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Professor Malson claims that the majority of those described were hoaxes, and that in the case of the genuine ones the children were often mentally defective usually as a result of their isolation from human society.

The second part is a study by Itard published in 1801, with a follow-up report of 1807, which deal with the Wild Boy of Aveyron, who had been found in the forests of Central France. Itard was in charge of an institution for deaf mutes and he attempted to rehabilitate the boy, Victor. He devised a variety of methods of educating him and some of his work qualifies to be judged the first attempt at experimental