

QUOTATION

STIMULUS OVERSELECTIVITY IN THE WILD BOY OF AVEYRON

It was evident that my pupil, far from having conceived a wrong idea of the meaning of the symbols, had only made too rigorous an application of them. He had taken my lessons too literally and as I had limited myself to giving him the nomenclature of certain things in his room he was convinced that these were the only things to which it was applicable. Thus every book which was not the one he had in his room was not a book for Victor, and before he could decide to give it the same name it was necessary that an exact resemblance should establish a visible identity between the one and the other. This is a very different procedure in nomenclature from that of children, who, when beginning to speak, give to particular terms the value of general ones but keep the restricted meaning of the particular term.

From: Itard, J. (1962). The wild boy of Aveyron (G. and M. Humphrey, Trans.), p. 75. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts. (Original work published 1801 and 1806).

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