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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- Contents -- Chronology -- Part I: What Feral Children Tell Us -- 1 Nature and Nurture: Children without Human Parenting -- What Feral Children Might Tell Us -- Philosophies and Psychologies of the Intellect -- Peter and the Question: Prewired or Blank Blackboard? -- Victor Meets Dr. Itard -- Dr. Itard's Intentions -- Pinel's First Findings -- Teacher and Pupil: Itard and Victor Together -- Five Years Later -- What Itard Learns -- 2 Kaspar Hauser and the Wolf-Children -- Kaspar Hauser -- The Mystery -- Wooden Horses -- Kaspar at Home -- Feuerbach Visits Kaspar -- A Dangerous Thing -- Psychological Issues -- The Wolf-Children -- The Years in the Orphanage -- Kamala and Amala: Emotions and the Intellect -- Kamala's Socialization -- Five Children: What Is Learned? What Is Innate? -- Part II: Four Psychologies -- 3 Thinking about the Mind -- The First Psychology: The Mental Ladder -- The Second Psychology: Psychoanalysis and Little Hans -- The Third Psychology: Behaviorism and Clever Hans -- Myth as a Way to Understanding -- The Fourth Psychology: Phenomenology -- Five Children, Four Psychologies -- 4 The Psychology of Psychoanalysis:

Freud and Little Hans -- Little Hans -- Hans's Dream -- The Crumpled Giraffe -- Hans's Wish -- Anxiety: Hans and Victor Compared -- Freud's Analysis -- Hans's Mind and Body -- Hans's Life -- Psychoanalysis: Reliability and Validity -- 5 The Psychology of Experimentalism and Behaviorism: Clever Hans and Lady Wonder -- Berlin, 1904 -- Richmond, Virginia, 1924-1952 -- The Carrot and the Whip -- The September Commission -- The Mind's Hypotheses -- Oskar Pfungst's Hypothesis -- Hans's Senses -- Pfungst Watches von Osten -- Why Hans Was Clever -- To the Psychological Laboratory: Human Suggestion -- Freud, Pfungst, and Contradiction -- 6 Experimentation and the Experimenter: Clever Hans's Companions. About Mr. von Osten -- Rendich and Nora -- Hans's New Life -- At Elberfeld: Muhamed and Zarif -- Claparède's Visits -- Souls and Minds of the Animals -- Hans and Lady Wonder -- Dog and Chimp -- Experimentalism and Behaviorism: Reliability and Validity -- 7 The Psychology of Perceiving: Phenomenology and Ethology -- Laura Bridgman -- The Dog, Van -- Lubbock and Van -- Experiment and Control: Roger and "B.B.E. -- Enter Yerkes -- What Laura Did -- Perception in Time and Space -- Perception as Explanation -- Perception and the Animal Mind -- Buytendijk's Dog -- Reliability and Validity -- Peeking into the Future -- Part III: The Mental Ladder -- 8 Peter and Moses, Chimpanzees Who Write -- At the Keith Theatre -- Peter at the Psychological Clinic -- The Missing Link: Tools and Language -- The Man in the Cage -- At Fort Gorilla -- Garner's Problem -- Moses, the Captive -- Another Captive -- Moses and Aaron -- Husband and Wife -- And Garner -- 9 Exploiting the Missing Link -- Ontogeny and Phylogeny -- Measuring Mentation -- Peter's and Moses's Colleagues -- Animal Imitation -- The Puzzle Box -- Animal Mentation or Exploitation? -- Erecting the Primate Ladder -- Scheduling Reinforcement -- Unshackling of the Missing Link -- Part IV: People and Apes Communicating -- 10 Raising Human Babies with Chimps: Donald, Gua, and Viki -- Speech and Meaning -- Donald and Gua -- The Course of Development -- The Senses of Donald and Gua -- Play and Emotion -- Solving Problems -- Gua Speaks -- Retrospective -- Viki -- The Achievements -- 11 Human and Ape Communication: Washoe, Koko, and Nim -- The Chimp Family Expands -- Koko -- Rethinking Speech -- Nim -- Bruno and Nim -- Nim's Progress -- Nim's Achievement -- Nim Meets Washoe -- SAY WHAT NIM? -- 12 Language and Meaning: Sarah and Lana, Sherman and Austin, Kanzi and Ai -- Sarah -- Sarah's Intentions, Sarah's Lies. LANA and Lana -- Sherman and Austin -- Apes Teaching People -- Communication among Primates -- Part V: Principles and Myths -- 13 Feral Children and Clever Animals -- Possible Principles -- The Psychologies -- Human and Animal Communication -- Postlude -- Notes -- References -- Illustration Credits -- Text Credits -- Index -- A -- B -- C -- D -- E -- F -- G -- H -- I -- J -- K -- L -- M -- N -- O -- P -- R -- S -- T -- U -- V -- W -- Y -- Z.

## Sommario/riassunto

In this provocative book, Douglas Candland shows that as we begin to understand the way animals and non-speaking humans "think," we hold up a mirror of sorts to our own mental world, and gain profound insights into human nature. Weaving together diaries, contemporary newspaper accounts, and his own enlightening commentary, Candland brings to life a series of extraordinary stories. He begins with a look at past efforts to civilize feral children, such as the Wolf Girls of India found early this century huddled among wolf pups in a forest den (they were originally believed to be ghosts by superstitious villagers, who nearly shot them as they were being captured). It was hoped that the study of these children would help clarify the age-old nature/nurture

debate, but, as Candland shows, so much of the information "revealed" was really only a projection of beliefs previously held by the investigating scientists. Candland then turns to "clever animals," discussing the latest successes of teaching sign language to such precocious apes as Sarah, Sherman, Austin, and Koko. Throughout, Candland illuminates the boldest and most intriguing efforts yet to extend our world to that of our fellow creatures. And he shows that, in the end, our effort to "make contact" is a reflection of the way in which we as a species create and order our universe. Humans have long shown a wish to connect with the silent minds around them. In assembling and interpreting the compelling tales in this book, Candland offers us a new understanding not only of the animal kingdom, but of the very nature of humanity, and our place in the great chain of being.

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