

Topic: Book Review:

Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat

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A Book Review on Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat

The *Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* is a book by Oliver Sack a renowned neurologist that contains twenty stories which generally originate and reflect on his patients. The author uses this book to present to us most of the cases that he had to deal with while practicing as a neurologist and which had the most influence and unforgettable scenarios in his life as a practicing physician. Most of the patients that he dealt with were either suffering from cerebral palsy, coordination disorders, Tourette's or a number of disorders that could be related to the neurons. When an individual hears the title of the book for the first time, the title may seem humorous, but this is not the case when one grabs the book and reads the contents contained in it. A core factor that presents itself in all the stories presented in this book is very clear. The author shares his experiences with the readers aiming at dispelling the deep rooted prejudice people have towards individuals who may seem to look different from them. Sacks tries to incorporate one crucial and significant fact in his practice and life, the issue of respecting other individuals no matter the shortcomings they have in life. It is from this principle that I believe sack got his motivation to write the book.

The book and the stories in it are of people who can not be able to converse properly, people who can not comprehend the world they are in and the things that are around them. To the author, these people are not to be considered weird, but they should be segregated and be called nut cases, but they should be considered as individuals whose lives are

complicated due to moral and spiritual problems. The author stresses on the fact that despite the numerous complications the people may be suffering from, we should try to understand and comprehend and care for them and we should treat them as our equals, people who have the same rights as each and every normal citizen. All this can be borrowed from the way the author treat them; he does not treat them arrogantly, the humanity he uses characterizes the author's personality especially when his writing is looked at. Apart from the writer's personality that tends to stand out, the rich language he uses and the simple terms used makes a layman to comprehend what is being communicated. The author has spared us a lot of scientific jargons which if used could make it difficult for people not in the medicine field to understand what is being passed across. In addition to this, scientific explanations and illustrations have been used together with philosophic literal devices.

The book by Oliver Sacks derives its title from the first story in the book ***“The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat”*** is an essay about a man who was suffering from visual impairs referred to as agnosia. This meant that the man was in a position of seeing and perceiving objects but was not in a position of processing and identifying what they were clearly. The author describes this man an individual who in a number of times would be seen conversing and patting fire hydrants as if he was talking to children who would be found in his home streets. In addition to this, the man was able to recognize pictures from his brother not because he was able to see and recognize his face, but only because of the odd looking tooth the brother had. This is an indication that the presence of a unique and disguising figure on a person or an object would help the man recognize and know specific people and objects.

The story of the lost sailor in the deficit part of the book shows how the sailor remembers his life when he was seventeen years old but only for his memory to hit a halt. The sailor is portrayed to possess the scientific knowledge of a high school smart graduate. In addition to his, he has talents in science and mathematics, however, his short term memory was far much defective. There is a story of a sixty year old C. P lady who was not in the capacity to use her fore limbs at all. However, when these lady strikes the age of sixty, her hands starts functioning. There is a section on excesses where emphases on people suffering from Tourette syndrome are presented. These people portray symptoms of being in possessive of too much energy, violent grimaces and tics, nervousness, voices, adornment and curses. The author tells of a man known as Thompson whose memory disappeared and could not recall a thing only to reinvent a thousand nights a start talking non stop. Finally, the last section of the book is on the world of retards. The author argues that these people are capable of keeping and maintaining mental densities that are even, however the abilities are kind of retarded too.

The stories the author presents in the book are every fascinating and riveting. However, the background and profession of the author made him use a number of terms and words that a reader without such a background would not comprehend easily. The neurology terminologies employed by the author needed a lot of energy to maintain the pose and avoid the temptations of dozing off while reading the book. This is not to refute the fact that the book is written well, but it is to show how much explanations would be necessary for the non neurologists to comprehend what is being communicated in the book. However, all in all, the work done by Sack can be termed to as splendid especially by those who want to understand the neurology discipline.