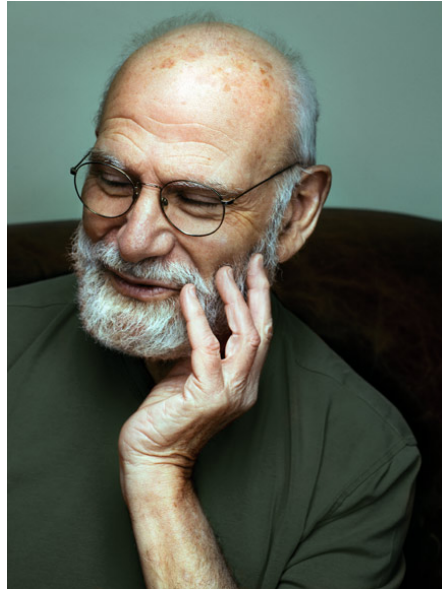


Book Review : The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat



Author: Dr. Oliver Sacks

“If a man has lost a leg or an eye, he knows he has lost a leg or an eye; but if he has lost a self-himself- he cannot know it, because he is no longer there to know it .”

– Dr. OLIVER SACKS , The Man Who Mistook his Wife for A Hat

'He had moved from realism to the abstract. This was not the artist but the pathology.'

Mind is so much different than our brain, the brain is a physical entity while the mind is the power that decides. Our mind is the deciding factor behind our development, mind is consciousness, sub consciousness, self consciousness and everything that makes us human. Psychology and neurology has always tried to find answers about the human mind and its relation to the brain. Oliver Sacks, a well known neurologist, in such a similar attempt wrote this book *'The Man who mistook his wife for a Hat'*. This is not a fiction but a nonfiction compilation of various stories about the patients he came across during his practice. Each story is about a different pathology and a different manifestation. This book attempts at combining the physical and the psychical because these are a part of one and should never be considered as disconnected. The stories have been written as case histories and include detailed information required to understand the condition of the patient.

' Classical fables have archetypal figures—heroes, victims, martyrs, warriors. Neurological patients are all of these—and in the strange tales told here they are also something more.'

The book is divided into four parts describing the different neurological symptoms- Losses, Excesses, Transports and The world of the Simple. The first part, losses discusses nine cases where a patient has some or the other neurological impairment or deficit. This includes the first story of the

man who mistook his wife for a hat, on which the book has been named. It includes cases from visual agnosia, amnesia, to aphasia. In the next part, excesses of mind are discussed through five case histories, these stories describe how people started behaving in an exaggerated way. The third part, transports include cases showing reminiscence, altered perception, imagination, and dreams. It contains six stories. The last part, the world of the simple, is about the simpletons, people who have very low IQ or mental development but an extraordinary understanding of art. This section includes four stories. This section gives a very important message that mentally ill patients should not be considered inferior based on their comparison to the default normal people because they also hold immense talents and abilities.

I recommend this book for all the people interested in understanding the working of the brain and human psychology. It is a great mix of information, curiosity and novelty. The theme of the book is sad because it describes lives that have lost essence due to some or the other mental pathology. But still the book incites hope because Oliver Sacks and other neurologists tend to find a solution in the end. The book is a heavy read as it is filled with information, details and analysis even though the base of the book is story telling. It is not a book to enjoy in leisure but a great read if you are interested in the world of psychology. The author has beautifully described the imperfectness of the human mind along with its great power. The book also expresses the immense compassion of doctors towards their patients and their conditions.

New York Times has addressed Oliver Sacks as "one of the great clinical writers of the twentieth century". His writing style is very descriptive and binding. This book holds the power to push you into the deep realization of a life with mental disorders. It puts the mad man into a new light, a light where he could be seen as a person of extraordinary capabilities. It

evokes empathy and respect for the patients who would have remained mere cases for all of us, if not described so vividly in the book. It is a medical story book of all sorts. It gives you knowledge and curiosity, I personally consider this book to be an appetizer of neurology and psychology. This is a great read if you are looking for some intellectual and emotional enlightenment.

Other notable books by Oliver sacks include *Musicophilia*, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, *Seeing Voices*, *The Island of the Colourblind*, *Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood* and *Awakenings*.

Featured

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Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Sacks

<https://www.amazon.in/Man-Who-Mistook-His-Wife/dp/1447275403>
