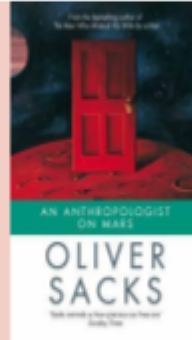


“An Anthropologist on Mars” - Oliver Sacks

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“...while one may be horrified by the ravages of developmental disorder or disease, one may sometimes see them as creative too—for if they destroy particular paths, particular ways of doing things, they may force the nervous system into making other paths and ways, force on it an unexpected growth and evolution.”

In his novel “An Anthropologist on Mars”, the neurologist Oliver Sacks approaches several neurological conditions from the lens of an anthropologist. The result is a nuanced, multidisciplinary and comprehensive representation of these neurological deficits. The author ensures an informative and rewarding reading experience that caters to both professionals looking to delve into the lives of patients, and to the layman who may otherwise find neurological jargon and the gravity of neurological deficits overwhelming.

Sacks effortlessly provides a human face to textbook definitions of several disorders such as Tourette’s syndrome, Cerebral achromatopsia, Autism Spectrum Disorder and deficits in memory, along with the case of an older adult who has been blind his entire life and finally gains the ability to see. In addition to a particularly sensitive portrayal of the emotions that may arise from a sudden change in neural functioning, each essay is layered with an easy to follow scientific perspective of the inner workings of the brain, coupled with historical understanding of the condition. In this way, the author provides a simultaneous ride through not only time but also the mind, allowing for a thorough and illuminating perspective of brain functioning and abnormalities.

Though each essay allows for an in depth understanding of a particular aspect of neurological function, Slacks provides a uniting theory binding all these separate conditions by highlighting the brain's proficiency at being plastic, at adapting to its strengths and weakness, at not only improvising, but also giving a person the ability to flourish in life. The author also maintains that each individual's understanding and adaptation to their neural condition is unique but nonetheless bears the ability to evolve. In that sense, Oliver Sacks' "An Anthropologist on Mars" is a must read for its ability to broaden virtually every prospective reader's perspective without being an overwhelming venture.