

Week 4 Presentation: The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat & The Astonishing Hypothesis

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Introduction:

This presentation explores Oliver Sacks' classic tales of neurological deficits, highlighting the fragility and complexity of visual perception, alongside Francis Crick's search for the neural correlates of consciousness.

Brainstorming Questions: 1. **The Glove Problem:** In Sacks' book, Dr. P could describe a glove as “a continuous surface enfolded on itself” but couldn’t recognize it as a glove. Explain, as if you were talking to, your grandma that “seeing” isn’t just about eyes working, but about the brain connecting the picture to the meaning—like having a book with all the letters but no definitions.

2. **The Soul in the Neurons:** Francis Crick looked for the “soul” in brain cells. Explain, as if you were talking to, a child how a bunch of tiny electric sparks in our head can create the feeling of “me” being here right now, just like a billion Lego bricks can make a whole castle.
3. **Face Blindness:** Dr. P sometimes patted fire hydrants thinking they were children. Explain, as if you were talking to, your aunt what “Prosopagnosia” is. Tell her that the part of the brain that recognizes *who* someone is is different from the part that recognizes *what* an object is.

Recommended Readings:

- Sacks, O. (1985). *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat: And Other Clinical Tales*. Summit Books.

- Crick, F. (1994). *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*. Scribner.