

Krakauer and sacks readings essay sample



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In Jon Krakauer's Selections of *Into the Wild* and Oliver Sacks' *The Mind's Eye*, the writers research and write about the lives of individuals who seek and experience the world differently from the way many people do and who may even be said to confront a different reality. Krakauer's argument is one of Chris McCandless trying time to find himself and during that time he discovers the importance of interdependence. Sacks' argument is that the mind is a separate entity from the brain.

In *Into the Wild*, Krakauer retraces the journey of Chris McCandless into the Alaskan wilderness and his eventual fate. In *The Mind's Eye*, Sacks tells of three sight-deprived individuals living with their disabilities. In both works, the writers employ rhetorical strategies in order to describe and explain the way issues of identity are experienced by their research subjects, in other words, the main character. The writers employed these rhetorical strategies in order to make it possible for us to connect not only to new information, but to the people whose perspectives and sense of identity may differ significantly from our own.

In *Into the Wild*, Krakauer employs the rhetorical strategy of characterization. Characterization is the method used by a writer to develop a character. The method includes showing the character's appearance, displaying the character's actions, and revealing the character's thoughts. It is clear that McCandless' relationship with his parents is not good. When his father offered to buy him a new car he became enraged. He had a car and couldn't understand why his father would buy him a new one. He had instructed his family that he was not interested in giving or receiving gifts. Chris took the money that his family had left him for college and donated it to Oxfam which

gives food to the hungry. This is ironic because McCandless eventually died from starvation. Many people criticize for his foolish mistake on embarking on the trip unprepared. An example of this criticism comes from Ken Thomson, The kid didnt know what the hell he was doing up here (Krakauer 300).

McCandless went on the trip in order to find himself, but during the trip, he discovered the necessity for interdependence. McCandless on the other hand, went too far in the opposite direction. He tried to live entirely off the country and he tried to do it without bothering to master beforehand the full repertoire of crucial skills (Krakauer 303). This statement showed McCandless arrogance in thinking that he could find himself on his own. McCandless was able to learn that to survive by yourself, you need the help of others. And he was fully aware when he entered the bush that he had given himself a perilously slim margin for error. He knew precisely what was at stake (Krakauer 303). McCandless knew what he had to lose, but he knew that it was necessary to further himself. He knew the consequences, which is one of Krakauers claims, that McCandless was not completely ignorant. Krakauer wrote this work in the hopes that the readers would be able to connect with McCandless whose abstract life varied far from the average person. Andy Horowitz, one of McCandless friends at Woodson High School, stated that McCandless was born into the wrong century. He was looking for more adventure and freedom than todays society gives people (Krakauer 298).

In The Minds Eye, Sacks uses the rhetorical strategy of the constant barrage of questions causing the reader to think as well as pursue the answer to the <https://assignbuster.com/krakauer-and-sacks-readings-essay-sample/>

question. Sacks asks the question but to what extent are we our experiences, our reactions shaped, predetermined, by our brains, and to what extent do we shape our own brains (Sacks 474). One of Sacks claims is that loss of visual imagery is a prerequisite for the full development of the rest of the senses. He explains recent research into the flexibility of human brain functioning. He informs us that studies of the brains of deaf or blind people, who lost their hearing or vision after developing their auditory or visual brain centers, show that the brain has the amazing capacity to reorganize itself. Functions can be re-allocated so that visual processing activity shows up in the auditory cortex of deaf people, and auditory processing activity can be seen taking place in the visual cortex of blind people.

Moreover, documented differences exist among people in their preferred way to acquire information about objects and concepts. For example, some blind people are more instinctively visual but have developed their auditory and other sensory skills to a greater degree than they might have had their vision not deteriorated. Other people are more auditory and, because their vision is good, never fully develop their auditory, tactual, and other perceptual skills. An example of this is when Sacks questioned Amy, his colleague that had lost her hearing due to scarlet fever. He accidentally turned away from her and she replied I can no longer hear you. He replied, You mean you can no longer see me. She retorted this statement by saying You may call it seeing, but I experience it as hearing (Sacks 482). Although she was totally deaf she was able to construct the sound of speech in her

mind. Sacks clarifies that our ability to visualize comes from the brain's capacity to intermix its own functional abilities.

In both *Into the Wild*, and *The Mind's Eye*, the authors use the rhetorical strategy of pathos. Pathos is the rhetorical strategy of appealing to the heart, emotions, sympathy, passions, and sentimentality of the reader. Sacks explains with pathos what it is like for people to awaken from a coma after being “asleep” for years; trying to climb out of bed with a leg amputated while feeling that it is still attached to one's body; grabbing one's spouse by the head because of mistaking her for a hat; hearing music all the time, even when none is playing; and other similarly unusual experiences. Krakauer describes McCandless in full depth in the hopes that the reader will become attached to McCandless and be able to connect with him. Although people strive to be independent, like McCandless attempted, they still rely upon people; it is human nature. I guess I just can't help identifying with the guy. I hate to admit it, but not so many years ago it could easily have been me in the same kind of predicament (Krakauer 306).

Another rhetorical strategy that both authors use is the use of imagery. Imagery is language that evokes one or all of the five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and/or touching. Sacks constantly refers to the visualization of the brain (Sacks 480). Krakauer comments on the scenery that McCandless comes across in his journey. Imagery in Sacks work supports his argument of the loss of visual imagery is a prerequisite for the full development of the rest of the sentences. Imagery in Krakauer's work is used in the hopes that the reader will be able to see what McCandless sees, hear what McCandless hears, and so on. This use of imagery is a stepping
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stone from Krakauers use of pathos to appeal to the heart, emotions, sympathy, passions, sentimentality of the reader.

In Krakauers Selections of *Into the Wild* and *Sacks The Minds Eye*, the writers examine and write about the lives of individuals who seek and experience the world differently from the way many people do and who may even be said to confront a different reality. Krakauers argument is that of McCandless trying time to find himself and during that time he discovers the importance of interdependence. Sacks argument is that the mind is a separate entity from the brain. Krakauer and Sacks wrote these works in the hope that the reader will realize that there is a more vibrant world outside of the city. What normal people see is far from what extraordinary people see, whether it be visually (like Krakauer) or mentally (like Sacks).