Matter of Mind: A Neurologist's View of Brain-Behavior Relationships

by Kenneth M. Heilman, MD, 224 pp., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, \$55

Behavioral neurologists often find ourselves trying to explain just exactly what we do and why. I recall my mother's probing question when I told her about my vocation: "That's all very interesting, dear, but can you make a *living* at it?" From now on, all we have to do to answer these questions is hand over a copy of Kenneth Heilman's latest book, *Matter of Mind: A Neurologist's View of Brain-Behavior Relationships*.

Dr. Heilman's contributions to behavioral neurology are well recognized in the scores of scholarly articles and books he has authored. He has also trained numerous fellows and mentored (officially or unofficially) countless junior faculty. Despite such distinguished accomplishments, Dr. Heilman breaks new ground with *Matter of Mind*. Never before has someone of Heilman's stature written a book on behavioral neurology that is accessible and useful to virtually any interested reader. This book is different from Heilman's other scholarly works in that it is a brief personal introduction of the author's views on major areas of behavioral neurology. Eight chapters, each touching on one major cognitive domain, follow the introduction. Topics include language, emotion, attention, self-awareness, memory, praxis, sensory perception, and conation. Schematic diagrams summarize salient points from the text and serve to inform the connectionist model proposed therein. Most of the discussion is patient oriented, using actual patients (but false names) from Heilman's long career to illustrate how neurologic disease may present with cognitive problems and how these impairments affect patients and families in daily life.

The book is intended for a wide audience, including physicians, patients, families, and interested lay readers. Heilman provides comprehensible explanations of important cognitive phenomena that should be accessible to all readers, regardless of medical background. Equally remarkable is that almost all readers (including other behavioral neurologists) will come away from the book knowing more than when they started.

The writing style is breezy and conversational, almost a "fire-side chat" with the man who is arguably the dean of American cognitive neurology. The text is liberally sprinkled with anecdotes about famous figures Heilman has known and worked with, such as Norman Geschwind and Derek Denny-Brown. There are more

personal passages as well, which are welcome insights into Heilman's formative years and world views. Particularly memorable is the characteristic compassion with which he describes why he enjoys working in inner-city hospitals.

It would have been interesting for Heilman to comment on the fundamental philosophical question of mind-brain duality. Although he declares that he does not wish to enter this debate, the title of his book, the opening sentence of his preface ("The mind is the product of the brain's activities . . ."), and his arguments set forth in the text imply his position is more that of a reductionist. Yet in the last chapter, Heilman slips in this tantalizing statement: "It is unclear if frontal intelligence is learned or biologically endowed" (p. 203). His wish to avoid the quagmire of the mind-brain debate is quite practical, of course, since volumes have been filled in that discussion and this was not the chosen subject of his current work. Still, it would be interesting to know how he thinks about the matter. Perhaps that will be the subject of his next book.

Other, more routine criticisms will, of course, be raised. The text is not heavily referenced, and alternative theories are not discussed in detail. Purists may contend that some technical distinctions are not strictly observed, and empiricists may complain that the models proposed have not all been experimentally verified.

Any of these objections might be true, but all fall short of the mark: Heilman did not set out to produce a heavily referenced, comprehensive tome that reviews all data from all sources on all aspects of cognitive neurology. Rather, the subtitle explains clearly that this is one neurologist's view of the relationship between brain and behavior. Heilman wanted to write an accessible, readable book about a fascinating area of neurology that would be of use to a wide variety of people.

The book succeeds as a splendid, readable, and refreshing tour of Heilman's views, and as such is a lasting and meaningful contribution to the literature in this area. The book will be interesting and informative to anyone who wonders how the brain and mind interact. It provides insight not just into the discipline of behavioral neurology, but how this discipline intersects the lives of patients and families.

My suggestion: buy a copy for yourself. Then lend it to your mother.

Garrett Riggs, PhD, MD

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Corrections

A severe variant of childhood ataxia with central hypomyelination/vanishing white matter leukoencephalopathy related to EIF21B5 mutation

The correct title for this article should be "A severe variant of CACH/VWM leukoencephalopathy related to *EIF2B5* mutation." The Publisher apologizes for the incorrect title being published.

On page 1 of this article the following should have been stated: "The mutation results in a leucine substitution at the Valine (V309L)" not the opposite, a valine substitution at the leucine 309 (L309V). Identically, on page 2: "Replacement of valine 309 with leucine in this crucial domain of eIF2B may result . . . instead of leucine-309 with valine." The authors apologize for these errors.

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