



# Neuropsychanalysis

An Interdisciplinary Journal for Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/rnpa20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rnpa20)

## The spirit of the drive in neuropsychanalysis

by Mark Kinet, London: Routledge, 2023, 186 pp., \$39.95 (paperback), ISBN: 9781032495446

Hessel Boerboom

To cite this article: Hessel Boerboom (03 Apr 2024): The spirit of the drive in neuropsychanalysis, Neuropsychanalysis, DOI: [10.1080/15294145.2024.2334385](https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2024.2334385)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2024.2334385>



Published online: 03 Apr 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## BOOK REVIEW

**The spirit of the drive in neuropsychanalysis**, by Mark Kinet, London: Routledge, 2023, 186 pp., \$39.95 (paperback), ISBN: 9781032495446

### Introduction

This book is the first in the Routledge Neuropsychanalysis series edited by Mark Solms. Mark Kinet is a well-known writer in the Dutch-speaking psychoanalytical community, who has published over 30 books. This book is an updated and expanded translation of an earlier Dutch book.

Kinet tells us how, out of his curious nature, he encountered neuropsychanalysis. First through his professional connection with Ariane Bazan, then reading and viewing YouTube videos of Mark Solms. As he tells us, he is neither an academic nor a neuropsychanalyst, but he has been working for more than thirty years as a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst. The book includes 21 chapters that are separated by short interludes associatively connected to the chapters. Two-thirds of the book are about his discovery of neuropsychanalysis, as explained by Solms. The last third of the book links Solms' neuropsychanalysis to the ideas of Bazan and, hence, to the ideas of Lacan.

### Summary

Kinet describes his discovery of neuropsychanalysis with a short personal introduction and in the following interlude we are introduced to Panksepp's seven emotional-instinctive systems that we share with all mammals through Bruce, the black Labrador that lives in Kinet's family. So, the groundwork is laid: our emotions are linked to our brain structures.

As Kinet is a trained psychiatrist, he was at first, as he tells us in the next chapter, skeptical of the contribution of neurology to his understanding of his patients, each a unique human being.

In the following chapters, we learn about neuroplasticity and the neurobiology of attachment, which is so important for our first memories. This leads to Freud's Project and Solms' "translation" in neuropsychanalytical terms, which describes that our memory helps to satisfy our needs. And so, we meet Panksepp and his affect taxonomy and the meaning of homeostasis. The scene is set for Solms' ground-breaking insight that the id is conscious. And then the most recent "addition" to the neuropsychanalytical model which is the free-energy principle and active inference as proposed by Friston. The last chapter in the first two-thirds concerns the clinical implications.

So far, Kinet is mostly in agreement with Solms, with small pointers to other perspectives and additions in the

first 13 chapters. In chapter 9, in which the taxonomy of Panksepp is introduced, Kinet adds two more drives: WANTING and LIKING, introduced by Berridge<sup>1</sup>, where WANTING seems similar to the Pankseppian SEEKING system, which is for Kinet the link to introduce the "Lacanian" chasm in psychoanalysis, as he says, "Feel free to call it a Grand Canyon Jacques Lacan has opened up by giving Freud's ideas a linguistic turn" (p. 106). Berridge's WANTING is akin to Lacan's *jouissance*. This linguistic turn is the theme of the last three chapters.

I will expand some more on this last third of the book as it introduces us to a less familiar part of neuropsychanalysis. As Kinet puts it, the mind that Solms describes is that of an infant, who has no language and no capacity to handle complex symbols. But humans are fundamentally language-using animals. And that makes a big difference.

We have at the start and at our core an analogic/semiotic/body language and our primary contact is through our skin. Our analogic language (shared with animals) operates at the level of the immediate, intuitive, and bodily perceptions where there are no verbal signs. Lacan calls this the imaginary order. It is the order made up by similarities.

Verbal, digital language refers to Lacan's symbolic order. It is made up by signifiers that name the world. It is the order based on differences. Being in the symbolic order means, according to Lacan, that there are three lost and longed for objects: the Thing, belonging to the Real; the small object *a*, belonging to the Imaginary, and the phallus, belonging to the Symbolic. The first two are relics of the pre-oedipal mother-child fusion. Their loss is the object of the drive. The third object, the phallus, refers to an oedipal lack in a triangular relationship. A central notion to Lacan's view of the human mind is that we enjoy seeking these lost objects and not finding what we want, which refers to "*jouissance*" (enjoyment) or to Berridge's LIKING.

Children learn their mother language as an essential part of their socializing, becoming a member of their culture. Words modify and influence the "body language." According to Lacan, language has four functions: (1) it contributes to identity acquisitions (I am the son of ... , the friend of ...), (2) it contributes to cognitive and emotional communication, (3) it is necessary for self-awareness, and (4) it gradually contributes to an increasing mastery of drives, affect, and trauma. But the words we learn never conform precisely to the objects we seek to satisfy our needs. There is an unbridgeable gap between nature (our bodily felt needs) and culture (the language in which we live).

Three registers structure the human mind, which are: the order of language, in neurological terms related to the neocortical structures; the order of the body image related to the limbic structures; and finally, the order of the real related to the noumenal of the drive.

Another important distinction related to the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic is that between needs, demands, and desires. The needs are biologically given. A baby is unable to satisfy their needs on their own and needs the help of the big Other. The presence of this big Other becomes a requirement in itself, which is a demand for love that is never ultimately satisfied, resulting in a desire, which is the inevitable residual.

This is where we are introduced to the views of Bazan, whom Kinet calls a figurehead of Lacanian neuropsychanalysis. At this point, the importance of language is clear, and we are next introduced to the concepts of the signifier and the signified. The former denotes the sound of the word and the latter the meaning of that sound. According to Bazan, the unconscious is formed by signifiers that have phonemic and motoric materiality. They resemble Solms' predictions. If words and ideas are repressed (the prediction is repressed, so the need is unresolved) they produce phantoms. Symptoms are the result of the linguistic unconscious playing with signifiers.

The ability to use a symbolic language creates an unnatural world to live in. In nature, an apple is just an object that you can pluck and eat. But the signifier "apple" cannot be plucked or eaten. The apple I hold in my hand is not identical to the apple I have in my mind, with all the connotations that concept has. The meaning of the signifier "apple" is both subjective and context dependent. In itself, the signifier is ambiguous, but its use strips it of its ambiguity. There is always a gap between the Thing (the real apple) and the signifier (word, image) we attach to it. The concept of this gap is a pointer to a lack (we can never have the apple, in all its meaning, that the signifier points to) which is essential for Lacanian thinking.

When an action/motor program leads to decreasing the tension of a need, our body feels pleasure. This experience is stored in our memory to be repeated whenever we encounter the tension of the need. The dopaminergic

limbic system is a historicizing system. But the link between the reaction and the result might be broken. Then, the action in itself can remain pleasurable, leading to what we call neurotic, compulsive behavior. The need is not satisfied, but the drive is. This is the difference between LIKING and WANTING, in Kinet's view. LIKING/pleasure provides the hedonic value we attribute to objects, while WANTING/jouissance relates to the bodily motor actions associated with the earlier satisfaction of a need, but now constituting the drive. So, pleasure and enjoyment (jouissance) are distinct aspects of drive gratification in which enjoyment corresponds to the Pankseppian dopaminergic SEEKING system (WANTING), and pleasure to the Berridgean opioid LIKING system.

## Conclusion

I am sure that my summary of these Bazanian/Lacanian thoughts leaves more questions than answers. Kinet shows that the phenomenon of (human) language indeed complicates the theoretical model of Solms. As such, it is a good introduction to both further research and further reading. The language of neuropsychanalysis helps us to better understand the language of psychoanalysts like Lacan. A good choice to open the "neuropsychanalysis series."

## Note

1. Kinet capitalizes these drives, like Panksepp did.

Hessel Boerboom

 hessel@romboer.nl  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6242-4122>

4122

© 2024 Hessel Boerboom

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2024.2334385>

