

Fault lines, **Freud in the Netherlands**
100 years of psychoanalysis in the Netherlands 1917-2017

Mission Statement
Interdisciplinary, socially urgent, innovative

1. The psychological person

The Breukvlakken (Fault Lines) Foundation aims to show the broader public the extent of Sigmund Freud's influence on today's society. The year 2017 was chosen because 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of Freud's influence reaching the Netherlands at an institutional level when in 1917 the Dutch Society of Psychoanalysis was established.

People still underestimate the influence of Freud's thoughts. He discovered the importance of feeling, and the treatment of patients with the 'talking cure' for unconscious feelings. His ideas have had sweeping economic, cultural and financial effects that went well beyond the boundaries of psychology and psychiatry.

Not only were people's feelings misused as a result of ideologies such as Nazism and communism. Also, large commercial entities, particularly in the United States, discovered how to exploit the feelings of the general public and how to use these feelings to maximize their profits. All large international companies have used, and are still using, the theories developed by Freud by engaging psychoanalysts to generate data to generate financial gain. New fields of expertise sprung up such as public relations, marketing and advertising. By employing focus groups, big corporations could establish what consumers felt about their products rather than what they thought about them. Nowadays such focus groups are also applied in the world of politics.

In around 1900, Freud's discovery of the unconscious led to the concept of the psychological person – i.e. someone who longed for justice, knowledge and freedom, including sexual freedom. As a result of totalitarian regimes and two world wars, this psychological person developed into a more humanitarian being, through the establishment of trades unions, the formulation of human rights and the increasingly democratic society.

At the start of the 20th century, no one could have foreseen what the effects of the end of feudalism and patriarchy after the First World War would be. Just as we do not yet know what the effects will be now that the whole world, in varying degrees and often in a distorted way, is aware of the wealth of the west and also of the

psychological person previously unknown to the non-Western world.

Nowadays an increasing number of Europeans, particularly young people, (the Netherlands has the highest percentage of young people undergoing psychological treatment) have problems with the fact that they are being economically used, as selling machines or consumers. The impact [SH1] of this phenomenon is huge; they form an attractive group of supporters for populist parties.

All over the world, incompetent and corrupt governments terrorize their people, or terrorist groups emerge spreading fear and destruction. This results in unprecedented migration flows of both refugees and migrant workers and causes traumatization of millions of people.

The effects of the above are already evident and, bearing in mind the psychological effects of both world wars, will increase in scope and intensity. A lack of awareness of the psychological knowledge in this field and the difference between "haves and have not's" means there are dangers. These dangers include vacuums where populist ideologies and the misuse of religion by terrorists are able to gain power.

Technological and economic progress, including migration, has made communication between different parts of the world easier, but have also increased tension in relationships. This is a paradox where we must learn to discover that the differences between people are much smaller than we think they are. In fact, although coming from different cultures, we are all psychological people, with the same feelings, desires and dreams and we have to find a way to live together in one world. Finding and developing a common language for these feelings and desires is necessary to be able to communicate about this.

2. From societal suffering to individual suffering Freud as an innovative philosophical thinker

The term mission statement, as used earlier on in this text, does not come from the world of psychoanalysis. What would Freud have thought about this term? He was somewhat ambivalent in his views on America and would probably have avoided this term. Psychoanalysis has little in common with the vocabulary from which the term mission statement originates. It is not just a term that can be interpreted and used in any way you like. Freud and Lacan were hesitant when it came to unbridled semantics. According to Lacan, language forms part of the symbolic order. It shows us the way, structures our existence and marks any changes that occur.

These few comments above form the beginning of the story the Breukvlakken project wishes to convey to others and ourselves. From the outset, the tone of the

story should be a critical one; it should be a form of cultural criticism. That is the choice we make. Freud has been important for the development of psychotherapy, but has also made a significant contribution to philosophical thought. Together with Marx and Nietzsche, he is responsible for the paradigm shift in the thinking of the Western society and our vision of society. This paradigm shift plays a central role in the Breukvlakken program.

The psychoanalytical community in the Netherlands has paid little attention to this up to now. This is in stark contrast to our neighbors (France and Belgium) where psychoanalytical thought appears to play a far from negligible role in the intellectual debate. A role that extends beyond opinions on professional practice. This situation may well be changing, particularly amongst the younger generation. This is why it is important to incorporate this group into our program.

This also reinforces our aim to develop a program for a wider audience. Psychoanalysis is not just a subject for experts; it also has a role as an intervening reflex on the institutions and the mechanism of human culture and social machinery. We want to incorporate that theme in the program using Lacanian psychoanalysis. In his criticism on the modern concept of subject as a breeding ground for the dominant ego-psychology, Lacan brought a surprisingly new dimension to psychoanalytical thought with concepts such as the imaginary, the symbolic and the real.

We want our program to offer a platform to analysts who follow this new line of thought in the Netherlands and Belgium, such as Paul Verhaeghe, Marc de Kesel, Antoine Mooij and Jim van Os. Freud's 'Civilization and Its Discontents' can act as a starting point, possibly bringing in some of his contemporaries, such as Huizinga and (the recently reinstated) Ortega Y Gasset. The cause of their discontentment is different, but shows a clear relationship with political, religious, social and ethical issues. Verhaeghe carried out research into the modern identity as individualization of the neoliberal market model. De Kesel studied the constitutive finiteness and the limitations of the subject. Mooij introduced Lacan to the Netherlands and made a brilliant endorsement 'for psychoanalytical ideology as an inalienable element of modern thought'

In contrast to, or as substantiation for, the critical function, part three of Adam Curtis' documentary series 'the Century of the Self' is particularly interesting. In this, Freud's nephew underscores 'the contentment of culture', but primarily of a culture in which the unconscious longing for more and newer is constantly manipulated. We want to work on making this more visible and on enhancing awareness.

Breukvlakken Foundation
Amsterdam, 25 September 2015