**A Matter of Freedom**

Freedom. It's been almost 80 years since the Netherlands was liberated from the political oppressor. Dutch people live in a democracy, where we can go where we want and make our own choices. But does that mean that we are really free? Freedom is not free, according to Shiv Khera. Freedom implies responsibility, says Kant. Your freedom sooner or later will meet the limits of another person’s freedom, says John Stuart Mill. There are also voices that say that your freedom was made possible only by the oppression of another. And just because you might feel free, it doesn't mean the struggle for freedom is over. ‘’None of us are free until all of us are free’’, said Maya Angelou. And how free are we really, if we are chained to our work and cannot live without technology? Capitalism holds us in a tight grip and its power seems inescapable. Freedom therefore also means lack of liberty. Freedom then, as should be clear, comes with many dilemmas.

*Freedom to choose*

Our struggle for freedom used to be a collective desire to escape oppression, authority and moralizing norms. Now when we think of freedom, we refer more to the ability to make individual choices that shape our lives. We choose our own study path and career, our partners, our political preference and what we are going to have for dinner. That there is an option to choose from arises from our increasing wealth and complexity of possibilities. But while more and more people get a wider range of opportunities to choose from, this does not apply to everyone in the world and not even within our society. The meritocracy, the society in which everyone's socio-economic position is determined on the basis of his or her individual merits, turns out to be a fairy tale. It’s no surprise that inequality of opportunity is a major theme in education. Would it be possible to create freedom for all people in society, to such an extent that everyone is offered the same choices?

*Freedom to speak*

‘’Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental rights in Dutch law. You can say and think what you want. But there are limits to that freedom of expression. One of those limits is that expressions may never incite discrimination or insult another population group," the Dutch ministry writes. Meanwhile, extreme right-wing movements are growing in Telegram groups, and are increasingly expressing themselves in the public space. "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist.", said James Baldwin. Disagreeing and criticizing each other is not wrong, but attacking each other's right to exist is a worrying development that ultimately leads to exclusion. Philosopher Karl Popper calls this the paradox of tolerance: if a society is tolerant without limits, its tolerant character will disappear under the influence of the intolerant. Freedom of speech leads to lack of freedom. Can we take the freedom to speak to make a powerful counter sound against increasingly loud intolerant voices?

*Technology and freedom*

“If the service is free, you are the product,” is the one-liner that describes the business model of companies such as Facebook and Google. We can hardly function without these companies, to which we willingly sell our data. We've even come to love our phones and laptops. Philosopher Herbert Marcuse believes that society is in the grip of technological rationality. We are locked in a treadmill of production and consumption. Mass media, advertisements and the latest gadgets keep us entertained so that we don't resist the daily grind. Marcuse argues for freeing ourselves from consumerism so that imagination, playfulness and art can have free rein again.

Our dependence on technology turns us humans into products with little space for freedom. Could the same technology that holds us in a tight, loving grip help us setting us free? Perhaps there is radical potential in embracing the glitch. According to curator Legacy Russel, the glitch is no longer "an error, a mistake, a failure to function," but decodes, unravels, and ultimately ruptures our conceptions of the digital world. The glitch represents the constant metamorphosis; the ability to swim against the current, and question the system. The glitch stands as the first step towards a freedom built on error and protest. The glitch shows how the error can be a revolution. Perhaps it is precisely through our beloved technology that we can break free from the chains of freedom.