

Vrijheidsspeech Lucas de Man

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THIS IS NOT A FREEDOM SPEECH

Hello Everybody and good afternoon

My name is Lucas De Man,

And I am from Belgium.

And I am the artistic director of the artgroup Company New heroes, Stichting Nieuwe Helden, and I am also the Host of both TV shows Kunstuur and Man en Kunst by the AVROTROS, NPO2.

But today I stand before you as Lucas,

the guy they asked

to give you a speech about freedom.

Or as people tend to say, A freedom speech.

I remember when I got the call to do this.

“Lucas. Lucas, Hi, this is someone with a name, Can you go, all the way to Tilburg and give the people there a freedom speech, please Lucas, please, go to Tilburg, and do a speech and do it in English because in Tilburg they are very international and so much in need of a Freedom Speech, so please Lucas Go GO GO, never call me....”

And now, I am here, In Tilburg, Talking to you in English

But I can assure you, This Will not be A freedom speech.

I repeat, This is **not** a freedom speech.

This is not a freedom speech

Because we don t know what freedom is.

At least we don't have one clear definition of what freedom is. Right?

Ok, Let's do a Quick scan here in the room.

Can you please tell what freedom is to you. Please. ASKS PUBLIC (WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS)

You see, different people, different opinions.

One word but with so many meanings.

One Word

And with So much Meaning.

I mean,

We fight for it, Right.

FREEDOM

We kill for it,

We start wars, and rape, and starve for it,

So Yeah, it's a pretty big deal, FREEDOM.

But the question, "What is freedom", There's no One answer

So I can only say

What it means to me.

And to me

Freedom means being human,

No, That s not, correct

Freedom means being allowed to be human.

That is freedom to me,

That I can be human, without restraints or fear of me being human.

And not only me, but all of us here

That we all, can be,

Human, without restraints or fear of being human.

JEEEEZES Lucas, That s some vague shit man. Pfff, have you been (doet weed rook gebaar) You know....

Explain yourself bro...

Ok, relax I will,

Chill

As I told you before

THIS IS NOT A FREEDOM SPEECH

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THIS IS JUST A REMINDER THAT ALL of us here, HAVE NO IDEA.

WHATSOEVER.

I mean, we have NO IDEA.

What is good? What is bad? What is Right? What is Wrong?

We don t know.

We might think we know, But in essence, If we really think about.

We don't.

Know.

Why we are here? What we HAVE TO DO? WHAT THE MEANING IS?

No idea, We just don't know.

And let's be honest.

We know that we don't know.

Right.

Deep down, All of us, know, that we don't know.

But we cannot deal with that. No.

We want to know!

Right.

We people we so badly want to know the answers to all the questions, Don't we, ooooooh we so badly want to know, why and how, and especially WHY! and we don't.

That is The Human DRAMA,

You don't know, and You know that You don't know BUT you really Want to know even though you know that you will never really know.

BAM. The HUMAN DRAMA.

And we hate it. Arrrrrrggg we hate not knowing so much.

But it's what makes us human.

KNOWING THAT WE DON'T KNOW THE ANSWERS MAKES US HUMAN.

It separates us from the animals.

Because An animal just doesn't know and That's it.

An Animal can eat, sleep, fuck, glow, feel even but it doesn't know why it is here, what is good or wrong and frankly it doesn't care.

An animal just doesn't know and that's cool.

So yeah we humans are animals, absolutely,

I mean, look at our instincts, our DNA, our urges and needs, domination, power, survival, it's all animal.

We are in nothing different from the animals

EXCEPT for the fact that we KNOW that we don't Know while animals just Don't know.

All the rest we are the same. People and animals are the same for 99%.

The only thing that makes us human is that we can ask the question WHY?

WHY!

WHY? WHY?

WHY Can we ask this question. LUCAS?

WHY if there are no final answers?

WHY? If we are thrown on this earth with enough knowledge to understand that we don't understand!

And WHY Do you call that freedom Lucas

WHY!!!!!!

Hey,

Chill

I told you before,

This is not a freedom speech, OK.

This is not a freedom speech!

THIS is not a freedom speech because we can't handle freedom.

We cannot handle freedom!

I mean, LOOK AT US,

People.

Look at how, since the beginning of mankind, we have been searching and searching for meaning, and answers and look how far we got!

1. Religion: Still a mess. There are all kinds of different Gods and they are all called The One God,

there are so many books, and stories, websites, and Truths and Subtruths, and people killing and discriminating each other because "their god or story is more TRUE than the other one" and pffff...

It's a mess, it has been for centuries now, and I don't see it being cleared or solved any time soon.

2. Then, Politics. An Even Bigger Mess.

There used to be like 1 all knowing King or Queen who said, this Why and How and all the rest, shut up. It wasn't perfect but it was, you know, a clear deal. Your place was fixed. There was nothing much you could do about it. He knows, we don't. Done.

But Then, Shit hit the fan, big time, Especially with democracy, PFFFF DEMOCRACY, arrrg

Now Everybody could know, or at least say they do, but nobody did, so you get all these different people saying different things and all these different parties, I mean like Holland alone has what, 500

different parties? All with their own little truths and stories and promises and they all claim to represent us.

While funny enough most politicians somehow all look the same. Funny he, so many different parties and they still look alike.

But they all claim to be different and to fight for the people and a better world and they don't. Most of them don't. They fight for themselves and for all who helps them to get power.

And "the people" feel lost, they feel like nobody represents them, or hears or sees them.

They feel like their voice is wordless.

The People have lost their faith in the system and so now, we are destroying democracy by giving the power to Populism.

And I understand that. I truly understand why many people all over the world start to choose for leaders who claim to know it and the rest should just follow them and it will be all alright.

Ahh how wonderful would it be if we had just 1 man or woman who knew it. Then we could say, you know what and how and why. So you just tell us what to do and we will all be better.

That would be SO COOL. Right, to have this 1 person who knows.

But sadly, at the moment, almost every populist leader in the world is mainly not helping his people. But only himself and those around him.

The biggest problem is that our whole democratic system is not being ruled by people or politicians but by a bigger force called the Market.

Which we all want to protect at any cost. I hear in the news more about protecting and helping economics and markets than about protecting and helping people.

3. So maybe the market knows? Lets look at it.

I mean after all it's a **FREE** market. Right. That's what we call it,

"The Free Market".

I love that term, Free Market, because it is so so very misleading. It is so totally not free.

But It sounds great though.

A free market.

It sounds like **freedom** is very important here.

But how much freedom does the free market give? And to whom?

When you look at it. When you just look at it, without knowing shit about it, Or when you are like, blind.

Than you can still see that The Free Market gives no answers other than that most money and power goes to a few.

The more free the market gets, the less people that get any of it.

But The free market tells us that we can all become gods one day if try hard enough. That we all can be saved and with enough money and success we will KNOW and be complete.

I mean, just like any other religion the market gives us stories and gods to believe in and look up to.

But where religions often also have a message of caring for the other or togetherness or equality, the free market goes for appraising individualism, greed, and creating a division between those who can and those who cannot follow.

The group of those who cannot follow is growing since the seventies and continues to grow excessively in the present. It feel like,

The more free the market gets the less people that can profit from it.

A free market is not Free because it is not for every one, it is only for those who can.

A free market doesn't give answers to the big questions of life, it uses our searching for those answers to gain control and stay in control. And it can stay easily in control because it gives us the promise of success. And we love that promise. Because it tell us that once you have success, you no longer have to be afraid any more.

And that is, a beautiful lie.

Even with all the success in the world, you still don t know.

4. So maybe computers know? Maybe they have an answer? Well, yeah they do. Its 42.

Did you hear that story? A while ago know, some very smart people built a super computer with only one purpose, to calculate the answer to the question, *what is the meaning of life*.

So For years the computer calculated and worked and used power, and more power, and more. And they had to built extra processors and extra generators and cooling systems around it to make sure it wouldn't break down, and then, after 7 years of calculating non stop. The computer came up with the answer: The meaning of life is 42.

And that s it. Now we know, and life goes on.

So religion, politics, money, computers, they don t know, But they are fighting, saying, and swearing as if they do.

5. Just like science did, for a long time. And when I was a kid, I didn't like science. Because for me it was just as with religion, and politics, and so that they bragged about how they would discover the Truth, The Truth and Nothing But The Truth.

But then, one of the greatest scientist of the last 50 years, Stephen Hawkins officially discovered that there is no one Truth, no one beginning, no one time, even no one universe.

He showed that the element of uncertainty (which is the essence of quantum physics) is key in trying to understand the beginning of the universe.

Hawkins spent his whole life looking for 1 theory that explains it all and he discovered that "All" is way more than we thought it was.

From black holes to anti matter, to virtual time and virtual particles to parallel universes to many possible beginnings of the beginning of everything, YES. Hawkins calculated that there is no 1 beginning of everything. That there is no 1 universe, but different parallel universes that are happening at the same time. He discovered that there are particles in the universe and so also in our body that we can not even see because they are virtual. Not because our microscopes aren't big enough, no because they only exist in virtual space. (whaaaaaat?, yeah. I know)

He calculated and scientifically proofed that there is no 1 Truth and that we will never ever really KNOW.

BAM That was a total shock in science land.

It was like a black hole exploding. This discovery meant that we can figure a lot and we should, like find remedies for diseases, and solve the plastic soup in the ocean and make better weapons to kill people with different opinions and so on. Yeah. but we will never know the Big Answers. Never. Ever.

YES!

FREEDOM.

FREEEEEDOOOOOMMMMM.

The fact that we don't know, is what binds us as humans.

All the differences in believe, or politics, or race or status are overcome by the fact that nobody knows.

That is what makes us human.

That we doubt, that we question, that we don't agree, that we have so many different stories to cover the same thing. That we keep doing things against logic, against a system, against what others see as the right thing to do, or the right path to follow.

As long as enough people go against the right thing to do, and go of the right path to follow, we remain free.

We are the only creature on earth that can, at any time, ask WHY?

Even though nobody really knows.

And that's what makes so many people so afraid, and these days more than ever.

Look at burn outs and stress, I have to be the best me I can be but I don't know when or what the best me is me so I have the constant feeling of doing enough of not being enough. The constant feeling of failing.

Look at discrimination, you are less than me because... Because why? Because I need to feel superior to somebody different than me because otherwise It would mean that I am like the rest. Searching, insecure, full of fear and with my own failures and question I cannot solve.

Look at wars. We own this land, get out. We are from here.

Actually, nobody owns "the land". It was there way before us.

People just claimed land or borders because they wanted to hold on to them but its all fictional. It I decided somewhere in history by people but you can not claim it in the bigger picture of things.

We kill and evict and attack each other because it is much easier to hate the other than to deal with the hate you have towards yourself.

The hate that comes from fear.

the fear that comes from the fact that you have no answers.

And that you are not better or worse than the other who also has no answers.

Which is amazing Right. You are no better or worse than the rest of the people. No matter how much money, or power, or knowledge you have. We are all equal in the not knowing. We are all equal in being HUMAN.

It's an amazing feeling IF you can deal with it, but Its fear and torture if you can't.

FREEDOM. Is knowing that you don t know and not being afraid of it.

(Houdt Bord boven zijn hoofd.)

And I know this is not easy. Pffff Its hell.

Everyday waking up and not knowing.

Ans starting your day and having to deal with all those opinions and issues of others.

This is true, and this is good and he is wrong, and we know better, and we have more and so on.... All the time.

ARRRRGGGG

I understand. It isn't easy to be free, to be human and accept that you don t know, and that nobody does.

It is do difficult to openly doubt when everybody Yells I KNOW IT in your ears all the time. I KNOW IT, YOU DON T BUT I KNOW IT. I KNOW IT. pfff

BUT Freedom is not an insight that you have one day and then pwieeeuw all goes easy from there: No more afraid, no more influenced by others, no more pain, NO sorry.

It doesn t work like that. Freedom means a lot of work every day.

And it is threatened every day. By religion, By Politics, By Science (still) but especially by ourselves.

We are the biggest threat to freedom because we can't handle the not knowing. We need truths, stories, frameworks anything to hold on to because Freedom is so hard, and frightening and it makes us feel alone.

It makes us feel alone. And useless, and small.

Freedom makes us feel small and alone.

So yeah, I understand that we more and more stop fighting FOR freedom and more and more AGAINST it.

I understand that we rather to give our freedom away than to feel alone, to feel insecure, to feel small.

Because that is what we are doing these days more than ever.

Now that religion, Politics, Science and Money give us no clear answers, we give away our freedom to a new and bigger god,

Algorithms.

This is Not a freedom speech

This is not a freedom speech

This is fighting to be allowed to be HUMAN in a world that will be ruled by algorithms.

Who here knows what an algorithm is? (ASKS PUBLIC)

The dictionary says: "An Algorithm is an unambiguous specification of how to solve a class of problems. Algorithms are use to calculate, process data and automate different tasks."

In simple words they are everywhere and they decide more and more on and about our lives. Facebook is an algorithm with a website around It, so is google, the biggest company in the world. The whole stockmarket is run by algorithms. Work evaluations are done by algorithms. But these are things we all know.

What we don't know is how deep our lives are already determined by them and how much more it will be the next 5 to 10 years. The way we eat, sleep, feel, fuck, work, vote it will all be measured, calculated, analysed and determined by algorithms and we don t care. We just don t care. We give them our freedom willingly.

And I know that the optimists will say. Yeah but an algorithm can t create art.

Well they can. There is a famous algorithm that is writing classical music that has been awarded on many festivals by professionals who couldn't tell it was written by an algorithm.

Yeah, other say, but algorithms can never decipher emotions. Wrong again. Already today by analysing the tone of voice or the expression of the face, algorithms can decide how to address you best on the phone or in video chats and they score better then human receptionists or standard interviewers do.

Yeah, but algorithms will never know what is inside our brain, because our thoughts are unique. Well actually we people are quite predictable and measurable in our thoughts and behaviour as it turns out.

Facebook e.g did a personality test amongst 300 users. They had to fill out a questionnaire about themselves. Their friends and loved ones also had to do this questionnaire and so did the algorithm of Facebook. Let me tell you immediately, Facebook always scored better than the friends and loved ones and often better than the person him or herself. Better than the person himself, yes, because he or she who forget events that happened or mixed things up, while Facebook just knows.

Algorithms can use all the data from the past and the present to analyse its next move and most important,

it can teach itself to learn and to do better and to make decisions on its own.

Yes, Algorithms in the beginning were made by humans but now they make and teach and develop themselves.

We people love to give more and more power to algorithms because they don't doubt, they don't hesitate, they always know and they never ask WHY on a deeper level.

YES. FREEDOM

Google decides for us. Yes

Facebook knows for us. HURRAAAYY

It feels like freedom because you can let go of control and doubt and being vulnerable.

YEAAAHH.

But the big danger is that if we give more power to the algorithms we will lose ourselves as humans. We will become little systems controlled by strong decisive algorithms. And then all freedom of us, formerly known as humans will be gone.

The bio scientists say that people are already algorithms and have always been. They say that we are not original or unique but that everything is already fixed in the brain and that is just a matter of deciphering the code that we call people and we are done.

It's all fixed in the brain.

And in a way I say Yes. Why maybe we are, for 99% I say. We are.

I mean look at us, people, it is so easy to crack our brains and manipulate us. We are so predictable and we have so little free will it is almost ridiculous.

SO Yeah people are algorithms except for one thing.

We are HUMANS.

We know that we don't know while algorithms just know.

We can ask Why? Without getting an answer.

We can doubt and feel insecure,

While algorithms never do.

And look, Maybe it is easier, to give away control, to stop the human race and become part of the bigger Algorithm, the Big A, maybe. And maybe in 50 or a 100 years time it will be that most people are more humanoids than humans.

But as long as we are still humans, I fight for my freedom to be HUMAN, My freedom to not know.

This is not a freedom speech

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But I do have a dream.

I have a dream that one day, people will unite to rise up and fight for their right to not know, their right to doubt and to be insecure.

That people will fight to defend their right to be surprised by things that no one predicted or analysed or calculated but that just happened.

I have a dream that we will fight for the right to love, and create, and dance, and believe in stories with no other reason than because we don't know.

And that one day we will face our fears and share them together. That we will say, hey, I also don't know, just like you. Lets meet and not know together. No matter Race, Believe, Gender or Status.

I have a dream, that before we are no longer humans, we go for the most HUMAN we have ever been.

Lets stand up and lets all not know together.

FREEDOM!!!!!!

This is not a freedom speech, But I am glad You listened. Thank You.