



THE SYSTEM



1. Childhood and Awakening

I'm not writing this to be understood.
I'm writing this because I've finally started to understand it myself.

From a young age, I knew I was different.
Not different in a way that draws attention.
No loud behavior.
No label anyone could name.

I was quiet.
In thought.
Dreaming, without reason.
Not to escape,
but because in silence I saw things others didn't.

And that wasn't understood.
Dreaming became "absent."
My slowness became "not paying attention."

And so the label came.
Not because I did anything wrong,
but because I didn't fit.

First "too playful."
Then "hard to place."
Eventually, "not suitable."

No one said it.
But much later I understood.

Some children don't grow by the calendar.
They're not behind.
They move differently.

But systems don't see that.
They measure speed, not depth.
They measure outcome, not potential.

And those who fall outside the tempo
are slowly pushed out of sight.

2. The Collision with the System

In the Netherlands, children take a test in primary school.
The Cito test.
It decides not just your level,
but which doors will open for you
and to what high school you will go.

They call it "advice."
But in practice, it selects.
What you show in that moment becomes truth.
What you haven't shown yet doesn't count.

That's the logic behind the basic system.
You're not prepared to think or explore.
You're trained to score.
Preprogrammed.
Even in primary school.

You're measured by performance.
And if you don't perform as expected at that exact moment,
there's usually no question.
No time.
No curiosity.
You're quietly downgraded.

The classroom isn't a space for development.
It's a sorting room.
A meat inspection line.

After primary school, you move on.
Around age twelve, you leave the base.
You enter the next layer.

And the system continues exactly where it left off.

That's where my story picks up again.
I was twelve, and I went to a secondary school I had longed to attend.
But my tempo was different.
My way of thinking less direct,
but deeper.

And that has no value in a system built on group averages,
flow percentages,
and manageability.

My presence became a problem.
Not because I disrupted anything,
but because I didn't move fast enough.

I slowed the rhythm.
But my thinking was already more complex than most of my peers.
I asked questions that weren't part of the curriculum.
I saw connections that weren't welcomed.

And slowly, I began to influence what others noticed.
What my classmates and friends started to see.
Not loudly.
Not rebelliously.
Just by thinking.
By sharing.
By joking.

And that is exactly what the system cannot allow.
When a child awakens too soon
and doesn't fit the frame.

My mentor wanted me gone.
Because the system teaches them to select early.

My parents were called in.

The school gave their advice.
Transfer to another school.

No extra test.
No investigation.
No care.

The mentor wanted me out.

And so the protocol did what it always does.
What doesn't fit must be removed.

I was demoted.
Transferred.
My development stalled.
Crushed.

I ended up at another school.
At a lower level.
From level 4 to level 2.
And I stayed there for the rest of my education.

Unmotivated.
I never studied.
I simply passed through it.

3. The Architecture of the System

Now I am 36.
And I understand what I couldn't back then.

It wasn't the mentor.
It wasn't one school.
They simply followed the system
just as they were taught to do.

The problem lies in the design.
The blueprint of the whole.
The structure we've built in the Netherlands.
The government.
The state.
They are the system.

The Dutch education system is not built for development.
It is built for filtering.
Not for growth,
but for control.
Not to shape human beings,
but to produce usable participants.

Through selection.
Through inspection.
Through silent rejection.

And for that production, a certain profile is preferred.
Predictable.

Compliant.
Functional within structure.

Anyone outside that frame
is a risk.

Children who think differently.
Who dream deeply.
Who move slowly in a way the system doesn't understand.

Because they ask questions.
They connect things.
They think for themselves.

And they might be critical,
but not in the way school has prescribed.

Not the kind of "critical thinking" that fits a rubric.
Not the kind of criticism that gets a grade.

But real thought.
Layered.
Independent.
Rooted.

Because thinking for yourself goes far beyond what the textbook allows.
It means recognizing propaganda.
Seeing through framing.
Asking questions no lesson ever dares to raise.

This goes far beyond school philosophy.
It's not a safe little chat about Plato or Descartes,
wrapped up in a tidy summary.

It's the kind of question
that doesn't end in a test
but in a discomforting realization:

That the system itself
is the problem.

And that kind of awareness doesn't fit.

So these children are quietly phased out.
Underestimated.
Misinterpreted.
Placed low.
Not to help them grow,
but to teach them to fall in line.

And if that doesn't work,
they get a label.
Difficult.
Disruptive.
Special needs.

Some get medication.
Others just disappear.

Not for lack of intelligence,
but for lack of space.

They are removed
before they even begin.

Like in a chick-sorting machine,
where the wrong ones
slip off the line
and into the shredder.

Not out of cruelty.
Not even out of intent.
But because the machine was built that way.

Systemic.
Mechanical.

And now we've reached the next level.
And the system applauds it.

How popular is it to have a label?
How often do you hear
"I have ADHD"
or
"I need Ritalin or I just can't function"

As if it's cool.
As if it's part of who you are.

It's encouraged.
You're validated if you submit.
But in truth,
you've been subdued.

Or worse,
you allow your child to be subdued.
Not for who they are,
but for who the system will allow them to be.

Not a natural being,
but an accepted version of difference.

Even deviation is now institutionalized.
As long as it's managed,
medicated,
contained.

What used to be resistance
is now identity.
But only within the bounds of control.

The system distances itself from you
not because it fails,
but because it functions.

A child who learns to think too early
becomes a threat later on.

Not just to school,
but to the entire structure.

Because that structure depends on obedience.
Behavioral norms.
Coded compliance.

So it blocks them.
Not openly.
Not loudly.
But structurally.
Silently.
Irreversibly.

4. The Obedient Society

The Netherlands doesn't produce thinkers.
It produces structure and control.
And within that framework,
education is the first factory.

Children are not shaped into themselves.
They are trained for participation.
Like dogs taught to obey.
Not because they understand what they're doing,
but because they know what happens if they don't.

They learn to obey the tempo,
the judgment,
the protocol.

They learn to deviate
only within the allowed margins.
No further.

Those who ask real questions
are slowed down
or removed.

Those who don't fit
are redefined
as problems.

And those who keep deviating
slowly disappear into the margins.
Not visibly.
Not dramatically.
Just quietly.

And so society gets exactly what it asked for.
People who believe that following is normal.
That obedience is a virtue.
That adaptation is the path to success.

The well-known phrase every Dutch child learns:
“Just act normal,
that’s crazy enough.”

The ultimate slave sentence.
No room for uniqueness.
Only for manageable variation.

Everyone must be the same.
Live the same.
Eat the same.
Follow the same life path:

Be born.
Be shaped and structured.
Fulfill your assigned role.
And feed the system along the way.

With your mortgage.
Your new children.
Your taxes.
Your vote in a democracy
with no real variation.

Until the end.
Dying on schedule.

So that a small group can benefit.

Because this system was not an accident.
It was designed.
Deliberately.
Slowly.
Over many years.
Refined again and again.

And in the meantime,
you’re made to feel smart.
Free.
And even superior to other nations.

That’s what you were taught.

But you are not free.
You are not autonomous.
You are nothing more
than a trained piece of meat.

5. The Realization

The system exists.
But anything that was designed
can be rejected.

Awareness can be rediscovered.
Freedom can be reclaimed.

Not outside you.
But within.

Ask yourself:
Is this what you want for yourself?
Is this what you want for your own children?

A future with no future.
A life on schedule.
An identity traded for good behavior.
A world where difference has no place
except to be corrected.

You are not living for yourself.
You are living so that
a small group
can hold power.

But until when?
And how far?

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