

We Are All Rebels!

By Ole Bouman

The human organism succumbs quickly to the agitators of disease. Healthy systems are infiltrated by the foreign, a battleground of the existing ecology, to create new, sometimes evil ones. They are disturbances that reconfigure reality.

If we continue the pathology analogy, today's culture is overpopulated with bacteria, viruses, molds and toxins. In fact, aren't we all agitators that threaten today in favor of... of anything, as long as it is not today? Call it tomorrow, if that isn't too linear.

Little today is held in lower esteem than the status quo. We all rebel against the norm. This is the society of the spectacle, the culture of the kick. These are super-, no, ultra-modern times, in which change is no longer a means to an end, but a goal in itself.

Take venture capital. Capital is no longer satisfied with daring IPOs or creative hotbeds. It now wants to dynamize the very ways in which it is organized. Hedge funds move money faster than the economy can anticipate and react. To be successful, capital fabricates rumors and relies on expectations. Yield is critically dependent on the inflation of rhetoric.

Take 'contemporary' art. The embodiment of 'perpetual change'. Leaning on 150 years of avant-gardism, it still feeds itself on the language of the new. Beyond shock, repression, inhibition and taboo, contemporary art has expanded its definition to co-opt any subject from which it might benefit. If something has lost its meaning, at least you can call it art.

The story repeats itself in other fields: from advertising to journalism, from architecture to design, from science to religion. Agitation is an attribute, a formula for success. Without it, you simply will not have existed. With it, you can at least postpone your own oblivion.

The last effective means of agitation may be terrorism. Or conservatism. (Fully in the spirit of our age, they make use of the techniques of bacteria, viruses, molds and toxins to an excessive degree. Weapons, stupidity, decay and media, all bound together in an unholy pact.) And to maintain the analogy until the very end, the agitation of the global body: the *rubor* of the permanent red alert, the *calor* of global warming, the *turgor* of the cliché and overblown rhetoric and finally... finally, the *dolor* of the casualties. Death. Status quo inert. Nothing changes, really.

Unless, we dynamize the dynamite. Perhaps the most effective form of agitation today is not to change the order of things, but to change the order of change. Here we enter other fields of action. The *rigor* of staying focussed on the ideals behind change. The *stupor* of defying expectations. The *humor* of ridiculing yourself and your own identity, specialisms and hobby horses. Don't change the course of history. Just change the course of change. ✕