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ROUGH MUSIC: LET'S PLAY PLURALISM

The cover of Luis Bunuel's autobiography, entitled *Mon dernier soupir* (1983), portrays Bunuel as a drummer, marching hypnotized forward in the midst of an obscure band of drummers whose faces express the constraints and pleasures of everyday life. Once every year, more than one thousand inhabitants of the Spanish village Calanda in the province of Aragon gather around the local church, take up their drums, form bands spontaneously, and start producing more or less arbitrary rhythms. This ritual jamming takes off at noon on Good Friday and ends exactly one day later on Easter Saturday. For twenty four hours and without pauses or orchestrated compositions, bands of drummers dwell through the streets of Calanda. When one band meets another band, they start duelling, until all drummers find themselves in agreement with a certain rhythm. After their encounter and mutual jamming, the bands move on and prepare themselves for the next battle. For Bunuel, born in Calanda, the drumming expresses his philosophy of life: life is rhythm - a hidden rhythm that penetrates everything that exists. Or as Karl Heinz Stockhausen observed, record any single tone, slow down the speed of the tape, and you will find rhythm.

Drumming also provides an opportunity to reveal this penetrative power. Rhythm and drumming, Bunuel argues, have nothing to do with reason or civilization. Rhythm is communication and communion at the same time, beyond reason, an indefinable flux of emotions, evoking a kind of trance or intoxication in which life is expressed and expresses itself, over and over again. In this sense, rhythm is a state of mind, a desire to oscillate with others and a desire to oscillate with the natural or urban habitat - like a pendulum, revealing a permanent interval, a nomadic state of in-between. For Bunuel, the greatest sensation of the Calanda drumming, is the moment when he closes his eyes and caresses the wall of a house, in order to experience the unity of nature and rhythm. At the same time, rhythm is also a state of the body, an ecstatic performance, a physical statement, a carnal desire to produce sound and noise. After many hours of drumming, the drums are soaked with blood, dripping down from the drummers' hands on the skins of their drums.

As a practice, music is situated in lived experience, in particular social relationships and locations that are a product of complex intersections of culture, class and gender. In Calanda, this dependency is illustrated by the fact that for weeks after the battles of the drums, local people are still talking, or better rapping, in a jerky way, obeying the rhythms of the drums that once dominated the village. The relationship between music and lived experience has perhaps never been so explicitly expressed as John Cage once did. In 1982, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, he attended a concert of Glenn Branca at an avant-garde festival in Chicago. Branca, the king of avant-garde noise, performed his fifth symphony. After the concert, Flemish musician Wim Mertens asked him what he thought of Branca's composition. Cage replied with another question: "Would you like to live in a society like that?"

Although 'music' is commonly treated as a vital aspect of civilization, however, rhythm, sound and noise - think of the Calanda drummers - are usually linked to the uncivilized.

In an early sixteenth century painting by Hieronymus Bosch - *Garden of Earthly Delights* [*De tuin der lusten*], hell is rendered through the din and chaos created by creatures playing fantastical and weird musical instruments which swallow-up and torture the bodies of the damned. If we take a close look at the painting, we'll notice that virtually everything can be exploited to produce rhythm, sound or noise. In contrast with highly sophisticated music, played by musical instruments like a violin or a clavichord, rhythm, sound and noise can be produced by virtually everyone. No complex mediation required, not bothered by moral and technical standards of 'High Culture', rhythm, sound and noise are immediate and intermediate expressions of 'low' and 'democratic' culture. It usually takes more than just one person to produce noise: noise is a social practice - it takes a band to produce a certain level of intensity or communion, and it takes a habitat to oscillate with. In an interview, the band A Tribe Called Quest observes: "If you wanna get the rhythm, you'll have to join a tribe".

Sound is the product of a multiple single, a collective singularity. When Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young started making songs together in the sixties, they all were despiritualised by bad experiences with former bands they were in, like The Byrds, The Hollies and Buffalo Springfield. They swore never to be a member of a band again. However, as David Crosby paradoxically argued, "I had a vision of a specific sound and in order to produce that sound I needed a band" - the individual as a band. This intimate relationship between band and sound is the central theme of Jim Jarmush' last film, recently shown at the Rotterdam Film Festival. His film, *The Year of the Horse*, is not a documentary on Neil Young, but an investigation of the particular sound of Crazy Horse. All interviews with the members of the band - Neil Young, Poncho Sampedro, Billy Talbot and Ralph Molina - are collections of data, and further, reflections on their sound systems, in order to construct an archaeology of the Horse-sound. Throughout the film, this archaeology is illustrated with visual data, shots from live performances that provide marvellous images of the multiple single that the Horse is: through and by this sound, the members form one individual, desperately in need of each others bass lines, beats, riffs and solo's, just as a human body needs its senses, organs and limbs. Take out the bass or the drums, and the Horse-sound disappears. But the most thrilling aspect of the documentary lies in the carnal and erotic performance of the band. Young, Sampedro, Talbot and Molina play so close together, that they can feel each other's warmth, smell each other's bodies, and surf on each other's physical movements. Not once in this film, they widen the gap between each other. After an hour of watching them play, you really start seeing one sound system, one entity, one multiple single, one collective identity.

It is not surprising that Joe Carducci - in his chaotic book *Rock and the Pop Narcotic. Testament for the Electric Church* (1990), values this multiple single or the band as the most important aspect of rock music. Rock music, he insists, is band music: the band is the artist, the artist is the band. This notion thrives on a deep consciousness of the necessity of physical and musical interaction in order to produce sound. As Carducci observes:

"Bands can play damn hot once the players get to know one another during a lengthy tour or evening... Rock is the place where rhythm and melody battle it out most intensively, and in doing so, they create something more. In rock, melody is present and its whiff of mood still distinctive, however, here its is pushed along by an explicit physical, even carnal rhythm arrangement. The whole of music then can be said to be a

more complete metaphor for the actual human condition: we are higher aspirations, pushed along by carnal drives".

Secondly, bands tour, hang out and meet a lot of different people and a lot of different tribes. This process also advances a specific in-between-ness of any multiple single. Bands are nomads, wandering tribes, always on the road, from club to club, from city to village. In this sense, the individual as a band is a nomad too, changing perspectives when different social, geographical or musical situations require different opinions or attitudes. In a tour diary, called *Jamming Trough the Gaps of the Spectacle* (1996) - written by Freek Kallenberg, guitar player of the Amsterdam band Mauser FK, the appeal of physical and psychic nomadism is explicitly expressed. After a few weeks of touring through France, he remarks:

"Touring is a marvellous and healing experience. Living like nomads implies a radical break with daily, sedentary life that is completely governed by fear. You can't compare this wandering and travelling with the annual visit to your sunny holiday resorts. If you ask me, touring is the remedy for fear and xenophobia".

Perhaps two striking, twentieth century examples of the individual as a band are Leadbelly and the Melvins. In 1935, Alan and John Lomax succeeded in their attempts to liberate Huddie Ledbetter from the Angola State Prison at Louisiana. They took the musical genius, as Leadbelly was, to New York and organized a concert for a white, pre-yuppie audience. The crowd went mad: never before they had seen a man who personalized a whole band. Leadbelly was dressed in blue and yellow work shirts, he wore a red bandanna around his neck, on his head perched a small brimmed hat, and he was armed with an old Stella twelve-string guitar, painted green and partly held together with string. He played the loudest sound ever heard and his big voice carried easily across the room, high and clear, honed in an age before microphones or sound systems. He constantly used his feet and chair, in order to produce a furious rhythm, and liked to shout out loud, in order to inject a dosage of noise into his lyrics, often rearrangements or samples of nineteenth century black workers' and slackers' songs. Leadbelly was a great band indeed.

Another, late twentieth century example, are the Melvins: an abstract and post-modern rock band that creates songs, or better, ironic collages, distilled out of a demand of thirty years of rock music. Their investigation of the history of live rock music, discharges into sampled rock compositions that carry them far beyond any style or genre. In 1992, the band members - King Buzzo, Dale Crover and Joe Preston - produced three solo albums in which they play all instruments by themselves. Not only were the albums released on the same day, they all produced the same characteristic Melvins-sound. This sound proves to be a state of mind, an ideology. Two years ago, Amsterdam radio pirate Marc Hurkmans, produced a Melvins special for his Radio Outcast show. This program was a remarkable event: Hurkmans interpreted this Melvins ideology by cutting the songs into pieces, in order to create new collages. He also added new sounds, piano samples and infused the new compositions with his own voice. By de-encoding and re-encoding the Melvins, Hurkmans created another band - himself, just as a techno dj presents his mix as if he were a band.

Leaving the twentieth century, many of us realize that our individuality is rather an assemblage than a fixed identity, that we are compositions of desire. In order to create,

we have to make a mix out of our passions, that is, out of our thoughts, our beats, bass lines, riffs and solo's. For many young artists, life itself is envisaged and experienced as a collage or a mix. I consider this notion to be an utopian position: maybe one day, we will overcome the meaningless subdivision of music into styles and genres, into lifestyles and commodities, into high and low culture, into white and black music, in order to re-encode the most precious expression of all arts: music. Perhaps this is why the notions of the band and the mix have such a romantic appeal to us today.

In the beginning of this century, French philosopher Henri Bergson used this idea to confront bourgeois philosophy - with its inherent subjectivity and fixed identities, with another philosophy, the philosophy of the in-between: the human body, Bergson explained, should be looked at as an orchestra: the mind orchestrates the instruments of the body, making it possible to create a multitude of social and cultural compositions. When grateful students wanted to honour the philosopher for his life long efforts, Bergson remarked: "Hey, I'm not a dancer!" Today, the reverse seems plausible: a philosopher might say: "Hey, I'm not a philosopher, I'm a dancer".

No more than a stones throw away from him, another Parisian philosopher, Han Ryner, outlined his 'philosophy of rhythm'. He denounced individualism and intellectualism as illusions, for any experience is caused by rhythm, that is, by an oscillating tension between 'me and the other'. In his novel *Le Crime d'Obeir* [*The Crime of Obedience*] (1900), he attacks the emptiness of dominant narratives in science and the arts, and depicts them as textual prostitution. For Ryner, art is rhythm and rhythm is art: a consciousness of the intermediate relationship between the micro and macrocosmic world. In order to express this rhythmic mode of existence, he used all possible genres to formulate his ideas: he wrote scientific and philosophical tracts, novels, poems, plays, dialogues, rants and biographies. Freedom, Ryner argues, is a performance: act as if you were free.

These philosophical ideas have found their way in lived experiences of twentieth century practices of cultural radicalism: in Dada, in Surrealism, in Situationism, in Provo, in the schizo-analysis of Gilles Deleuze, and in Luther Blisset's Neoism. In youth culture since the sixties, the notion of a multiple single has always been stressed. Take a look for instance at the names of bands: The Band, The Flock, Blue Oyster Cult, the Anti Group, The Herd, The Pod, the Boo-Yaa Tribe, Bad Company, The Pack, the Gang of Four, the Wu Tang Clan, Dub Syndicate, Osdorp Posse... all of them bear witness to the notion of a multiple single. The same idea is also illustrated by the first chapter of Ann Powers' anthology *Rock She Wrote. Women Write About Rock, Pop and Rap* (1995), which is entitled 'I Am The Band'.

To really understand the importance of this notion we must consider the downfall of *Leviathan* or the Hobbesian myth in our century. There are a few good reasons here to distinct the band from music in general, as commonly expressed in high culture. Since the seventeenth century music has become more and more synonymous with harmony and civilization. In a dramatic speed, music devolved into a cultural practice that excluded dissonance, intensity and tonal diversity. Despite the fact that there are more than thirteen hundred discernible pitches available to melodic consciousness, yet only a very small faction of them are officially allowed. Not even the eighty-eight tones of the piano really come into play, considering the repetition of the dominant octave structure in contemporary music. Contrary to the assertion of most major Western theorists of

tonal harmonics, tonality was not destined by a physical order of sounds. It is almost impossible to find a tone that is fixed at the same pitch in our natural or cultural environment. Tonality and tonal chords have the desire to dominate its fellow tones. Tonal music, as opposed to rhythm, sound and noise, produces not only unity but also illusion: the illusion of harmony, the illusion of community. Tonal music, as some theorists argue, is an ideology that accompanies the Western Enlightenment Project. Harmony is good - dissonance is evil. Harmony is civilisation - dissonance is barbarism. In classical music for instance, any movement away from the tonic is experienced as tension, any returning to the tonic is celebrated as a homecoming, a resolution. As John Zerzan observes in his essay *Tonality and the Totality* (1994):

"All tonal music moves toward resolution in the cadence or close, with the tonic chord ruling all other harmonic combinations, drawing them to itself, and embodying authority, stability, repose. Supramusically, a nostalgically painful attitude of wandering and returning runs through the whole course of bourgeois culture, and is ably expressed by the very movement basic to tonality".

It took the system of tonality several centuries to suppress earlier rhythmic possibilities and to narrow the great inner variety of rhythm, sound and noise to a schematic alternation of 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' music. The rise of tonality coincided with the coming to power of symmetrical, linear and mathematical thinking. The stressing of tonality and intellectualised systems of notations implied not only the banning of a great variety of occidental musical influences, but also the banning of irregular and oriental tunes in folk songs and melodies. In early nineteenth century England for instance, academic harmonic patterns were imposed on surviving folk melodies. (Some musical rebels, like William Blake and Bela Bartok for instance, exactly did the reverse thing, that is, infusing heterodox folk melodies into their own compositions.) In the same way, the German working class movement around the turn of the century, imposed new socialist lyrics and harmonic patterns on surviving eighteenth and nineteenth century war and battle melodies.

The medieval conception of music on the other hand, based on a decentralized and localized character, proved to be relatively tolerant of varying world views, musical perspectives and cultural practices. Irregular tunes or occidental and oriental melodies were not considered as basically destructive of its social foundations. The growing concern for a central tonality in the seventeenth century thrived on Descartes. With his mathematical, mechanistic rationalism and his specific attention to musical structure, Descartes advanced the new tonal system with the same enthusiasm as he put his scientific philosophy in the service of central government and civilization. In 1651 Thomas Hobbes published his famous book *Leviathan* which expresses the ideal of an ordered rational scientific thinking within the framework of an controllable, rational and central state. As a whole, *Leviathan* breathes the fear of the band in the widest possible sense: the fear of collectives and tribes, the fear of nature and primitivism, the fear of 'wild' and undisciplined people, the fear of polyphony and dissonance, the fear of non-linear thinking, the fear of passion and desire. According to Hobbes, individuals should discipline their desires and sacrifice their singularity for the sake of uniformity, a central state and universal laws. In other words, the idea expressed, is that harmony and civilisation are cool, a huge leap into a promising future, whilst non-civilized, primitive and polyphonic life is only nasty, brutish and short, and therefore degenerated and pathetic. This ideal of the harmonic state parallels the growing importance of the

'concert' in the history of music: the word concert is derived from the Latin 'concertare', which is an agreement reached with dissonant elements. The concert is the civilized event par excellence: a well-harmonized and specialized ensemble, creating an unbridgeable chasm between participants and spectators, situated within a hierarchical and authoritarian context, and led by a single conductor. It is not surprising that Rousseau considered harmony or homophony as a symptom of Europe's cultural decay. Music came to be thought of as a uniquely privileged medium: the composer was given the status of philosopher.

This strive towards static social and intellectual harmony, as also expressed in *Leviathan* and notated systems of music, coincided with huge explosions of social protest and popular rebellion. In pre-industrial riots, participants often make use of a great variety of unorthodox instruments in order to produce music, that is, polyphonic music: rhythm, sound and noise. If homophonic music was judged as a reaching out for God, heaven, mind and harmony, polyphonic noise should be considered its counterpart, as sound and rhythms evoked by the spirit of Satan, hell, body and chaos. In his extremely physical, torturous and tumultuous vision of hell, Hieronymus Bosch pictures his *Garden of Earthly Delight* as the ultimate counter-concert in which everything that can produce a particular sound is included. Till far in the twentieth century, pre-industrial peoples often resorted to, what is called in England 'rough music', in Germany 'Katzenmusik' and in The Netherlands 'ketelmuziek'. Rough music can be defined as a symbolic vocabulary in which noise plays a major part. Noise, polyphonic sounds, and unarticulated drumming, do not only challenge the ideology of harmony and uniformity (in other words, communication), but also celebrate the cultural polyphony of everyday life (in other words, communion). The use of prefixes like rough, cats and kettles implies a social practice in which official culture is de-encoded and popular culture is re-encoded. As a social force, rough music could be used to re-establish community in order to escape or confront the illusions and constraints of society.

Ten years ago I was involved in a historical investigation of a particular case of rough music in a small village in Noord-Brabant. In 1930 a group of twenty farmers formed a band and armed themselves with instruments like wine casks, pickle barrels, metal pipes, lamp chimneys and cow bells. By creating polyphonic noise - a privilege of the poor, they alarmed the local community that an important event was about to happen. The tribe had planned a noisy march to the residence of the wealthy owner of a shoe factory, in order to make him leave the village for terrorizing and humiliating his wife, a farmer's daughter. As the band reached the house they were welcomed by a crowd of fifteen hundred poor and exploited locals (of a population of six thousand inhabitants!) that was cheering and answered them by making noise too - for that matter, this fury manifested itself on a Monday, on 'blue Monday': traditionally, a night to get drunk. A small band protest was transformed into a spontaneous street rave that dominated the village for four days. The crowd sang songs, made a lot of noise, damaged public property, fought the police, destroyed the windows of the shoe factories, and forced the boss to leave the village. As a journalist remarked in a regional newspaper, the word 'bastards' appeared to be the most popular chorus that accompanied this festival of rough music. Rough music was used to de-encode existing social and economical relations and was immediately recognized by the local community. Or as Bunuel remarks: "In a world so badly made, as ours is, there is only one road - rebellion".

As a social text or a symbolic vocabulary, rough music changed its form and content in the course of the twentieth century. As a social practice, rough music lives on in the annual Carnival, though completely mutilated and domesticated. And further, local communities are rapidly vanishing in an all evading global industrial and market economy that values consumerism above anything else. Music has dissolved in mass consumerism and as a commodity it is available for everyone on this planet, that is, as long as you are able to pay for it. As Beck sings in 'Pay No Mind': "Give the finger to the rock & roll singer, as he dances upon your pay check". Notwithstanding the fact that music is divided in many different categories and lifestyles - from classical to jazz, from hip-hop to jungle, however, the music industry is still the ultimate purveyor of harmony and order. Or as Richard Norton puts it in *Tonality in Western Culture* (1984):

"It is the tonality of the church, school, office, parade, convention, cafeteria, workplace, airport, airplane, automobile, truck, tractor, lounge, lobby, bar, gym, brothel, bank, and elevator. Afraid of being without it on foot, humans are presently strapping it to their bodies in order to walk to it, run to it, work to it, and relax to it. It is everywhere. It is music and it writes the songs".

Following Rousseau, critical theorists like Theodor Adorno and John Zerzan have expressed a deep pessimism regarding this downfall of music in Western culture. They do not believe that music is a powerful force, able to change lived experiences and able to change social and cultural relationships. Although Adorno had set his hopes on atonal music, as composed by Arnold Schoenberg, and Zerzan judged contemporary rock music as a revolution, compared to earlier pop music in the sense of lyrics, tempo and volume, however, they both agree that tonality aids and abets the daily oppression of consumers in an repressed society.

Raised in a musical culture in which radio, concerts, records and tapes have convinced me that life is a precious 'mixtum compositum', a composition of desires, worthwhile to live for, it is hard for me to accept their points of view. To me, rough music still provides an inspiring concept: the idea of deconstruction and reconstruction - music as a social practice of de-encoding official culture and re-encoding popular culture. However, I partially share this critical pessimism. I do agree that the music industry in general is the supplier of illusionary harmony and illusionary community; I do agree that punk music or gangster rap are merely accommodations to consumerist lifestyles; I do agree that ambient and new age music refuse to confront themselves with the anxieties of our highly urban landscape; I do agree that most rock shows have become a bore and that the dogma's of beats and dance have reduced raves to empty events, resembling the jukebox music of James Last or Burt Bacharach; I do agree that so called 'world music' is a new kind of colonialism and that most classical music should be considered museum pieces.

On the other hand, if we define rough music as a symbolic vocabulary, suited to de-encode cultural practices and to re-encode lived experiences, there are also reasons to be optimistic about recent developments. The first development I would like to stress is the rise of syncretic studio's like Wordsound, Axiom, On-U-Sound and Tricky's studio in Bristol: temporary autonomous zones that tear down all the fences between 'high' and 'low' culture, between styles and genres, between 'authentic' and 'superficial' music, between 'first' and 'third' world musical influences, and between bands and singer-songwriters. In this systematic process of de-encoding, new experiences and social

practices are re-encoded and celebrated. Musicians like Sun Ra, Bill Laswell, John Zorn, MC Solaar, Tricky, Adrian Sherwood and Mark Stewart, have granted us the freedom and means to construct our own intercultural narratives. Consider for instance the all boundaries breaking *Axiom Collections I & II*, produced by Bill Laswell - absolute land-marks that close the gates of the twentieth century.

A second development is found in the advance of electronic music and the increasing access to cheap means of sound production, like the computer and the sampler. Here it is the dj who personalizes the band pre-eminently: the dj is an assemblage machine, deconstructing data and reconstructing a new urban fabric of sound, which expresses not modernist synthesis or harmony, but primitive syncretism or polyphony. An exciting example is found in dj Spooky's *Songs of a Dead Dreamer* (1996) - a dizzying trip through our urban macrocosm, revealing both discontent and pleasure, harmony and disorder, wildness and sweetness, in order not to withdraw yourself from every day life, but to make you see, hear, feel and think more clearly. Or as Spooky puts it ironically on the sleeve: "Think! It is not illegal yet." What I personally like about techno, is the return of the instrumental. Since the mid-seventies, instrumentals are banned from radio stations, as commercial culture demands pretty girls and well dressed guys. It is not only video that killed the radio star, it is also radio that killed the instrumental. Even today, maybe with the exception of VPRO-radio, dj's still feel uncomfortable with instrumental music, and it is not surprising that the best techno is found on pirate radio stations, like radio Tonka in The Hague. In an era in which it has become more and more difficult to distinct bands like De Dijk or The Scene from the rock songs of Heineken commercials, instrumental music is a relief.

A third development is practiced by cross over or fusion bands that make use of, in principle, all available data, in order to establish songs or soundscapes that escape any possible identification or musical categorization - in other words, forget rock, forget jazz, forget classical, let's play! Bands like Shockheaded Peters, the Melvins, Ween, Paelinkx, and Trespassers W, crush all thinkable boundaries and create new visons and socio-cultural practices. For me, one of the most enlightening records of the nineties is *Mudbird Shivers* (1995) by the Amsterdam band The Ex - an amazing somersault through a variety of styles and influences, breaking down the walls in your domesticated brain, and providing an unique opportunity to rearrange the world. Listen for instance to 'Only If You Want 3' - lyrically inspired by Roland Topor's short story *Dada's Anniversary* and quotes by Emma Goldman, and musically built up, in the typical stammering Ex-way, around samples of word monger genius Han Buhrs.

These kinds of developments imply, what I would like to call, the fall of *Leviathan* or the decline of the Hobbesian myth. Instead of clinging desperately to harmony or a specific style, an adventurous, inclusive plunge into the unknown supersedes the fear, produced by our excluding and xenophobic society. Or as Bill Laswell remarks: "Everything must go. Act against the empire of lies". In the sixties, bands became, it is true, aware of their multiple singularity, however, this notion did not always effect their music. In accordance with the rise of consumerism - that is, with the growing power of record companies and commercial radio stations, they usually preferred or were forced to play styles: rock, punk, reggae, jazz, hip hop, etcetera.

It may be or may not be a coincidence - let's call it a spurious relationship, but in 1965 and 1966 two conferences on band societies and tribal societies were held in Ottawa

and Chicago. It was here that eminent anthropologists, like Marshall Sahlins and Richard Lee, completed almost a reversal of the traditional Hobbesian anthropology. Their works on band societies, like those of the Pygmies and the !Kung Bushmen, proved that primitive life was not at all nasty, brutish and short, and that the Hobbesian prejudice had to be reconsidered. The most intriguing aspect of their conclusions was, that most hunter-gatherers live an affluent life, even in arid deserts like the Kalahari. If foraging life could be affluent there, it might work everywhere. We civilized, in contrast, find it very difficult to sustain an affluent lifestyle, modelled as we are by an economy of scarcity, by wage slavery and a sociology of fear. A band is more than just a band - a band can also be judged as a basic multiple single, the germ of new urban band societies, creating new modes of production and consumption, and replacing sedentary fear and passive withdrawal by nomadic adventure and active participation.

The fall of the Hobbesian myth not only has an impact on the anthropological field, but also on philosophy - think of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: part three of their magnum opus, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972), deals in particular with savages, primitivism and barbarism; it also has an impact on the new histories of tribes and band societies - and it has to be said: long time prevailing methods of historical research, inspired by Hobbesian ideologies like liberalism and Marxism, never showed any interest in primitive societies; it effects politics - think of the authors of publishing houses like Autonomedia, Semiotexte, AK Press and Verso. And last but not least, it effects the world of arts. At the last Documenta at Kassel, Germany, for instance, curator Catherine David showed interest in hunters-gatherers and band societies. The Documenta reader, *Politics/Poetics* (1997), contains fragments by Pierre Clastres, an anthropologist heavily influenced by the anti-Hobbesian revolt and by the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. At the Documenta, I not only witnessed photo exhibitions of Papua's and Amazon Indians, but also a remarkable documentary by Marc Pataut on a hidden band society in Paris. His documentary provides an encounter with Le Cornillon: a former industrial zone of the Paris region, squeezed between a canal and a highway. Since June 1995, constructors are building a future soccer stadium here, as France will be the host of the World Championship this year. The construction revealed the presence of an urban band society, now dispersed. Pataut lived with them for one and a half year and tried, by making photo's, to focus on a collective narrative, on popular culture. He depicted this narrative as a statement against the official narrative, as exploited by politicians, journalists and architects. As a member of Ne Pas Plier (Do Not Bend) - which is a band of artists and writers that creates and distributes materials on social and political themes - he plays rough music, by de-encoding the official discourse and re-encoding a popular discourse.

In present time, rough music - or as some like to call it, illbient - has found new ways of expression. Today's sampler or bass guitar are yesterday's pickle barrel or metal tube - however, still privileges of the poor, the uneducated and the consumers, stimulating them to create a variety of sounds, indifferently to the official history of music, or consciously attacking the dogma's of harmony and of, what once was called, high culture. Perhaps new generations will succeed in tearing down the walls of harmony and tonality, in order to envision a society that supersedes all grammars of domination and exclusion. Smashing your guitar on stage or dancing intoxicated till you are completely exhausted, might not be enough. For us artists, musicians and writers, it is time to play rough music, that is, to denounce all categorization, specialization and the narrowing division of labour, culture and music. If you think this is a plea for

amateurism, you might be right, for amateur is derived from the Latin 'amatore', which means lover. And what is wrong with that? So let's play pluralism, multiplicity and polyphony. To paraphrase an earlier quote: if you want to get the rhythm, be a band.

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