(Jussi Parikka invited me to write a short statement for his Network Politics website. Here it is. Jussi's question I tried to answer: What is network politics? Contributors so far: Alexander Galloway, Eugene Tacker, Katrien Jacobs, Greg Elmer and Tiziana Terranova.)

"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Audre Lorde

Talkin' about Web 2.0 it is no longer interesting stating the obvious. Yes, strong organization forms, firmly rooted in real life, over-determine weak online commitments. We are bored with the slacktivism of the millions. Following market predictions we will soon have to design the interfaces where locality and virtuality intertwine (or else others will do it for us). The secret of making society is allocated in the aesthetics of radical osmosis. As Malcolm Gladwell already expressed it, the revolution will not twitterized. Instead, we will have to take up our autonomous responsibility and sculpture the Social ourselves. The inner voice whispers: we ought not make ourselves too dependent on the biases of some Harvard geeks to define how revolutionary dynamics can come into being–or are subsumed, as Facebook exemplifies. In the age of networked digital exchanges the social is even more fluid than it ever was. No longer God-given, the protocols of human collaboration are up for grabs. This task is no longer exclusively in the hands of the Church, the village, the clan–or the (Leninist) Party for that matter. Show your Social Design!

This brings the discussion to the question which values exactly should be translated, and transformed, into software. We are not all 'friends'. This is another truism of the outgoing Web 2.0 era. But then how would we describe contemporary relationships? It should be possible to go beyond the friend-foe distinction. Let's dream up unlikely relations, spontaneous encounters (and how to solidify them) and technologies that actively derail everyday routines. Smart mobs were way too innocent. 4chan has radical elements in its very concept but gets so easily stuck in old school voyeurism. What is missing is the 'sweet stranger' element, beyond the object strategies that Jean Baudrillard described and its touching opposite humanist values. What's out there are random encounters with a cause. Networks are not just replicates of old ties. They bear the potential of something other, of becoming society. Let's leave the remediation age behind us and start to fool around with dangerous social design.

Cyber cascades a la Avaaz.org create blimps in mass awareness but fail to raise resilience. The trouble with current media activist strategies in the age

of social networking is not so much their ability to scale up, which they seem to manage quite well, but the absence of a painful set back in the encounter with the Powers to Be. Resistance means struggle with the risk of defeat as a real option–and this sounds profoundly uncool. There is nothing sexy about saying no. Protesting is party time and provides jobs for event managers. PR experts of the contemporary reformist movements, with Tony Blair as their guru, claim the moral high ground in their insistence to remain positive. Militant fighters that defend rights, attack the system and fight back are portrayed as 20th century losers. In the past hacktivist strategies have embodied certain elements of such radical negativity, with tactical media as its gay and playful counterpart. In is in this light of the refusal that we could go back to the 1950s literature on the user as rebel (Camus) and outsider (Ward). The protesting user is neither the perfect e-citizen nor a pathological, brain damaged while multi-tasking loner. Games provide us with a plentitude of subcultural figures and identities. Yet, going post-pop, how would we define the aesthetics of online protest?