There is no media activism without a collective enunciation. In this sense, media activism, if taken seriously, is not simply defined by an aestheticisation of politics, but rather by a politicisation of aesthetics (Benjamin 2008). As Walter Benjamin famously noted, the integration of artistic expression into the capitalist order of mass production at the beginning of the 20th century did not abandon art per se, but rather extended its capacity. In particular new means of media production hold the promise of collective forms of enunciation, leaving the bourgois idea of an isolated artistic expression behind. Art in the age of its technical reproducability contains the potential of fostering social collectivities. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the instrumentalisation of political protest, trying to constrain it to a specific interest, and a true expression of resistance against class, gender, and racial inequalities within a society. A resistant act, therefore, has to transgress a coercive social situation, in order to expand its limiting boundaries. And in this context media play a fundamental role, because they transport social knowledge – in terms of images, values, categories, classifications and lifestyles.

In our post-media time (Guattari 2013), when media technologies are literally in the hands of everyone, Benjamin's considerations should particularly come into effect. But instead of a collective appropriation of digital technologies, in order to resist normative orders, we are witnessing an increasing isolation of its users. Every status update splits the potential collective in a myriad of singular individuals, and every individual in a myriad of data aspects (e.g. geolocations, timestamps, ‹friends›). Most importantly, the atomisation goes hand in hand with the installation of a new platform-capitalism, which is dependent on this data. First one must be ripped apart in order for reassembly according to the templates of corporate media. Hence, the decentralisation of the means of production, induced by the crumbling prices of network technolgies, is accompanied by the centralisation of the relations of production, thereby undermining the hope of an emancipatory use of media technologies. In such a paradoxical situation, it is essential to look back to the early days of network-building, when the terms of ‹possible futures› were still under negotiation, if we want to revise the critical potential of resistant media practices (Tactical Media Files).

Based on the legacy of tactical media, understood as a specific moment in the 1990s when activists, artists and media practioners managed to challenge – at least for a while – the confining norms of everday life, we can re-articulate former experiences in relation to media activism. The most convincing definition of tactical media comes from David Garcia and Geert Lovink: «Tactical media are what happens when the cheap ‹do it yourself› media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the in-

ternet) are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture» (Garcia/Lovink 1997). Thus the idea ultimately relied on the ability of subaltern groups to make use of media technologies, in order to broaden the field of cultural expression. An openly displayed dilletantism and the delight in messy situations was characteristic for this movement. For many activists this implied a liberating moment, because tactical media was seen as a cultural hybrid, which could not be reduced to a specific field (CAE 2001). In fact, it was a wild mix between art and theory, technology and politics, activism and media, which formed the basis to subvert the dominant form of cultural production, with its specialised insitutions, distinct codes, and symbolic capitals.

It is this resistance against the professionalisation and enclosure of the cultural sphere that still is of importance today (Holmes 2008). In this sense, tactical media practices did not disappear, but have become part of our every day life. In education, media, art and activism, people make use of digital technologies, in order to create, share and remix media content, and, in doing so, break with the dichotomy between creator and spectator. However, the value created by user-generated content is being skimmed by Internet-corporations which, at the same time, prevent atomized individuals to form political collectives (Hui/Halpin 2013). Hence, the legacy of tactical media is two-fold: On the one hand, we have to recall its various practices, in particular those that tried to go beyond mere hit-and-run interventions and to embrace the important challenge of building collective infrastructures. These media practices have taken advantage of the increasing fusion between urban and digital space, since the architectural form of the modern city is more and more overlaid by a variety of data streams. New «hybrid spaces» (Kluitenberg 2011), permeated by embodied encounters and media flows, provide a sphere of activity for aesthetic, political and social practices.

On the other hand, tactical media are deemed important if we want to challenge and transform the currently predominant network-model which favours technical connectivity over social collectivity. Today, the disourse around digital media tends towards a «technological solutionism» (Morozov 2014), thereby depriving socio-technical networks of their full potential to develop into new collectivities. The latent historical experience of tactical media can provide us with an alternative perspective as to how we can «reweave the imaginary threads that give radical-democratic movements a strong and paradoxical consistency: The resistance to arbitrary authority of course, but also solidarity across differences and the desire to create consensus not on the basis of tradition, but rather of invention, experimentation in reality and collective self-critique» (Holmes 2008, p. 219). Hence, the legacy of tactical media lies in the multiple and political usage of network technologies. Recollecting these memories helps us to rethink what techno-politics are and could be, by demonstrating that there always have been alternative ontologies, materialities and ideas in relation to media. Such a historical perspective challenges the status-quo of digital networks, in order to be able to break from the isolation of its users and to wage the battle for our collective mind and imagination.

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