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author:

Fabienne Liptay

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The essay deals with the political aesthetics of cinema with regard to the use of extras. It is argued that what is usually considered as aesthetic abundance or luxury, especially in the Hollywood historical epic, which relies heavily on the use of extras, should be re-addressed from a social perspective as lack or shortage. Given the etymological proximity that exists between statistics (Statistik) and extras (Statisten) in German, the author proposes to think of extras as being produced by operations of numbering and counting that are deeply entangled into the political history of establishing and maintaining social and state order. In this context, Peter Watkins's La Commune (Paris, 1871) (2000), a film about the Paris Commune, is discussed as critical engagement with the foundational practices of state order by challenging the statistical reasoning and thought that is so closely related to the figure of the extra.

Fabienne Liptay - Professor of film studies at the University of Zurich. Her research interests are the aesthetics and theory of film, the interrelations between the visual arts and media, exhibition practices and contexts of films, and concepts of aesthetic production. She is head of the research project "Exhibiting Film: Challenges of Format," funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Her publications include, as author: Telling Images: Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Films (Zurich: diaphanes, 2016); as co-editor: Immersion in the Visual Arts and Media (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015) and Artur Żmijewski: Kunst als Alibi (Zurich: diaphanes, 2017). She is also co-editor of the quarterly journal Film-Konzepte.

Just Numbers: Challenging Statistical Reasoning in Peter Watkins's "La Commune (Paris, 1871)"

In his book *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants* (2012), Georges Didi-Huberman puts forward the idea that a film is politically just only if it succeeds in making "*the image a common place* where the commonplace of images of the people used to reign."[1] The main protagonists of his book are deliberately not cinema's main protagonists, but rather the extras, the many who fill the picture at the margins and in the background, as soldiers, slaves, workers, ordinary people, passers-by, and even revolutionaries. Extras differ from actors precisely in that they *do not* act; they decorate the picture as living props. They are the numbers, the nameless and voiceless, the non-elected and undiscovered, the swept-away and fallen, the many who did not make it onto Schindler's list or Noah's Ark, who cheer the others from below and testify to their rescue or fame, while they themselves are forgotten. (Fig. 1) They are the miserable and the wretched of the earth, "the anonymous foot soldier," as Didi-Huberman writes, "who, among the hundreds or thousands of his fellows, is just there to figure the battle scene – from which the hero will emerge triumphant or will become the wounded hero – and has nothing to do but walk, pointing a bayonet, and pretend to fall down dead at the given moment."[2]



Fig. 1. Stanley Kubrick, Spartacus, 1960. Set photography of numbered extras figuring as corpses.

Frequently, the many extras who populate the screen have been described as an abundance, as a luxury on display which characterizes the Hollywood cinema of the classical era in particular, reflected not least in the enormous costs, the big budgets of grand genre films.[3] Regarding the Hollywood historical epic, Vivian Sobchack argues that "the genre formally repeats the surge, splendor, and extravagance, the human labor and capital cost entailed by its narrative's historical content in both its production process and its modes of representation. [...] History emerges in popular consciousness not so much from any particular accuracy or even specificity of detail and event as it does from a transcendence of accuracy and specificity enabled by a general and excessive parade and accumulation of detail and event."[4] In terms of a politics of aesthetics, however, these excesses of "surge and splendor" involving the human labor of hundreds of extras also expose a lack or shortage: a lack of social care, trade union organization, legal representation, adequate payment, and recognition through the granting of credits, to name but a few. Extras are the proletariat of the film industry. The exploitation of their labor, their bodies, and their precarious lives is quite well documented in socio-historical studies of Hollywood's studio system.[5]

The many are whom I shall discuss in the following. Resonating with the Polish *statystyka*, the word for "extras" in German is *Statisten*, introduced into theater jargon in the mid-eighteenth century to describe an insignificant and silent stage presence. *Statisten* are so-called because they are subject to the command to not act as someone else, namely the character of a play, but to populate the stage, to enact their actually inferior social standing

or status through their mute presence.[6] In an encyclopedia published by the theater of Leipzig in 1841, to cite just one reference, we are informed that extras "are simply people trained for their marches, processions, battles, people's assemblies, on command, without any will at all, just doing what they have been trained to do by the stage manager, and who are either soldiers (military extras) or people of the lower classes from the city (citizen extras)."[7]

Significantly, the term *Statisten* is derived from the Latin *status*, meaning "standing" in the sense of the general position of a person or a whole community and its members. The relation between *status* and *communitas* is crucial when one considers that the Latin *communitas*, originating from *munus*, meaning "gift," referred above all to the obligation to pay a tribute or debt – a fact Roberto Esposito highlights in his skeptical approach to existing concepts of community.[8] This included the obligation to pay taxes, which according to Roman law did not apply equally to all people. By the sixteenth century, a time when the word "status" and its derivatives informed notions of the State (with a capital "S"), it had acquired a somewhat different meaning. Until the French Revolution in 1789, and even later, "the 'State' primarily meant the position of being the superior or supreme political authority, and thence it came to be applied derivatively to the person or body enjoying that position."[9] The term "status," in the sense of "state," referred to the doctrine of state or political science that developed in connection with political history in Europe. It concerned the territory as well as the administrative apparatus, the fiscal system, the princely sovereign rights, and the rights and duties of the corporative or class society, as well as the representation of power. Statistics as a scientific discipline emerged in the mid-eighteenth century,

when Gottfried Achenwall, regarded as the founder of statistics and credited with naming it, published his academic lectures on "the newest political science" under the title *Abriß der neuesten Staatswissenschaft der vornehmsten europäischen Reiche und Republicken* in 1749.[10] It is precisely at this historical moment, with the advent of statistics, that the extras on the stage became known as *Statisten*. I consider it worthwhile to keep in mind this historical relation of extras and statistics, which originated in cameralistic or mercantilist political science in the age of absolutism, before becoming the science of recording and researching numerical data as a branch of applied mathematics.

In the decades following the French Revolution, statistics underwent significant changes. It expanded in scope beyond its focus on the description of the state to that of society, and saw the incorporation of administrative practices and "techniques of formalization centered on numbers," including "summaries, encoding, summing, calculations, and the creation of graphs and tables."[11] In this context, it is not surprising that the abovementioned theater encyclopedia, published in 1841, contains, above all, references to the administration, remuneration, numerical description, and recording of extras. However, as Alain Desrosières notes in *The Politics of Large Numbers* (1993), a seminal study of the history of statistics, it is impossible to separate the state from society:

> The state was constituted into particular forms of relationships between individuals. These forms were organized and codified to varying degrees and could therefore be objectified, mainly by means of statistics. From this point of view, the state was […] a particular ensemble of social ties that had solidified, and that individuals recognized as social 'things.'[12]

From this perspective, community results from a set of practices related to the description and management of the state as well as society – among them practices of numbering, calculating, and measuring that regulate the social, juridical, fiscal, and economic spheres. In transcending the singularities of individual or local situations, these practices create a common ground for the statistical description of the social world. We should bear in mind that one of the major political objectives and accomplishments of the French Revolution and the National Convention, its first government, was the creation of a space of common norms and standards. The unification of weights and measures and the introduction of the metric system paved the way for the universality of measurement in accordance with the universality of the rights of man: "All men are born and remain free and equal."[13] The practices of numbering, calculating, and measuring are deeply entangled in the political history of establishing and maintaining social and state order.[14] They are also highly ambivalent – they enact control and exercise power, yet ensure the equality of all men and guarantee the fairness of their social interaction.[15]

For Alain Badiou, numbering and counting constitute the basis of state sovereignty and control. In his major philosophical work *Being and Event* (1988), as well as in *Number and Numbers* (1990), which was published only two years later and can be considered an appendix of the former, Badiou develops the idea of the state as a political structure of order based on counting. Operations of counting, namely counting the multiple as one, establish a social connection between the elements of a society.[16] What is counted becomes an identifiable element of the state and is thus presented, but what is not only counted in a situation but by the "state of the situation" is also represented as part of its framework: "This means that it belongs to the situation (presentation), and that it is equally included in the situation (representation)."[17] Political forces or elements that are

presented but not represented, which belong to the count but are not included in it, are the potentiality of an upcoming event. The event, as Badiou understands it, breaks with the authority of the mathematical laws of being: "It is – not being – supernumerary."[18]

In Badiou's political reflection on historical situations in which an event interrupts the law of unity and the representation of the census, the Paris Commune (along with the French Revolution, May '68, Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique in musical composition, and Georg Cantor's revolutionary discovery of the uncountability of real numbers in set theory, which is the basis of Badiou's argument)[19] occupies a central position.[20] "What is, exactly, in terms of its manifest content, this beginning called March 18?," he asks. His answer reads: "the appearing of a worker-being – to this very day a social symptom, a brute force of uprisings and a theoretical threat – in the space of governmental and political capacity."[21] In the context of these thoughts, a photograph showing the numbered corpses of the last Communards shot by government troops against a wall at Père Lachaise cemetery on May 28, 1871, seems particularly striking (Fig. 2). It was taken by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, inventor of the fashionable carte-de-visite photograph,[22] who was commissioned by the police to document the Communards' defeat and execution after the government vanquished the Commune at the end of the "Bloody Week" of May 1871. In many respects, the Paris Commune of 1871 can be regarded as the first appearance of the proletariat in photography; the photographic image would become a site of their struggle for political representation, while at the same time



Fig. 2. André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, Numbered corpses of Communards, May 1871. Black and white silver print. Musée Carnavalet, Histoire de Paris.

serving as a means of social control. However, the numbering of the dead bodies, the corpses from which all signs of political engagement and social life had been stripped away by the removal of their clothes, discredits this image politics of representation. "No names," just "numbers," as Jules Claretie, director of the Comédie-Française and staff-officer in the National Guard during the Paris Commune, described the scene in this photographic staging.[23] In this context, Georges Didi-Huberman reminds us that the *munus* in *communitas* also refers to the "spectacle" as a gift to those who pay funeral honors to the dead.[24] Historians of photography disagree on whether the numbering actually served the purpose of identification. What is evident, though, is that it effectively criminalized the body of the revolutionary by providing information and data that would inform later the practices of police photography,[25] such as those refined by Alphonse Bertillon. A French police officer and the son of a statistician, Bertillon employed photography in the service of anthropometry aimed at improving methods of criminal identification.

I am interested in considering Peter Watkins's film about the Paris Commune, originally produced for television and simply titled *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* (2000), as a critical engagement with the operations of counting as a foundational practice of state order through the figure of the extra (*Statist*), which is so intimately related to statistical reasoning and thought. Watkins's film recounts the events of the temporary assumption of power by the Central Committee of the National Guard, and the formation of a local council as an elected body of the people, the Paris Commune. Formed by revolutionaries during the Franco-German War of 1871, after the collapse of the Second Empire and the foundation of the Third Republic, the Commune's goal was to govern Paris according to socialist ideas, in opposition to the central government of Adolphe Thiers. The Communards sought to reorganize society according to liberal and humanist

principles, to represent the people, particularly the interests of the workers, and to improve living conditions through social reforms. They also attempted to forcibly defend the autonomy they had attained by ordering the arming of the people in order to overthrow the National Assembly of Versailles. The Paris Commune was characterized precisely by the attempt to transform the democratic principle of political representation into a principle of local self-government; to fill the city's empty assembly rooms and offices, abandoned by state power; and test entirely new forms of political organization beyond central and hierarchical rule.

The film's cast is made up of over 220 people from Paris and the banlieues, more than half of them amateurs, including *sans papiers*, illegal immigrants from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. In one of the film's intertitles, providing a commentary on the production process that is retrospectively inscribed in the narrative, we are informed that "precisely the active participation of these people in the making of the film is what frightens the world's media, and is probably one of the main reasons for the refusal of funding by the many TV channels requested to provide support..."[26] Here, it is worth noting the film's unfortunate production history. It was funded by the Franco-German television network La Sept ARTE, which eventually considered the film unsuitable for prime-time and only broadcast it once, on May 26, 2000, beginning in the late evening, while hardly anyone was watching. Unnoticed by the public and dismissed by the press, it was then shown as part of an exhibition about the Commune at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Watkins refused to make the cuts ARTE demanded, and ARTE did not release the film on videocassette as initially planned.[27]

Speculation about the possible reasons for the media's hesitant or even hostile attitude toward the film continues in the intertitled commentary: "What the media are particularly afraid of is that the little man on the little screen will be replaced by a multitude of people – by the public…"[28]

Watkins's critique is not limited to representation, but extends to processes of production and distribution, the division of labor, and the standardization of workflows in the film industry, which, since its establishment in the early twentieth century, has been modeled on the principles of scientific management drawn from manufacturing industries. Contrary to the usual practice by which actors are included in the production process only after the film script has been written, their characters and dialogues fully developed and sketched on paper, here, the protagonists were involved in developing their roles and writing their dialogues, their *parole*, from the very beginning.[29] Before filming, the protagonists spent sixteen months intensively studying the history of the Commune under the guidance of a team of historians and researchers. The film was then shot chronologically, according to historical events, and without a script, relying mainly on improvisation, over just thirteen days, in an abandoned factory in Montreuil, on the site of Georges Méliès's former studio (subsequently used as a workshop space and center for cultural action by Armand Gatti and his theater group La Parole errante). The labor of the collective negotiation of roles and representational spaces is manifested in the film's 345-minute running time. Eventually, the film becomes the sediment of its own production process, blurring the boundaries between fiction and documentary, between the staging of history and the improvisation of the present.

The film is replete with offers to read it as a critique of the measures of state power, including references to the legacies of the French colonial empire that are linked to the current situation of immigrants being denied legal status and civil rights. At the same time, its criticism and resistance is not directly aimed at the apparatus of the state but is enacted through an intervention into the institutions of the media. Marginalization and oppression are explicitly understood and presented as effects of processes of media standardization. They are attributed to what Watkins himself calls the "Monoform" of mass audiovisual media which, as I understand it, is equivalent to the notion of format in the way it regulates the content of the media, as well as its institutionalized practices and technologies of production and distribution.[30] Formats are delimitating and restricting because they regulate not only what is publicly shown and heard, but also how it is understood and experienced as an articulation of social reality. By probing "alternative audiovisual forms that could allow the public to interact in a more open and pluralistic manner,"[31] Watkins explicitly challenges the standardized schemes of media production, which predetermine not only the representation of historical events but also the way we relate to them from the present moment. What is at stake here is not simply the effort to oppose or overcome the habitualized routines or conventions of filmmaking in order to pave the way for formal innovation and the freedom of artistic expression; it is rather the effort to redescribe and rework, i.e. to work *with* and *against* the power schemes – the protocols or policies preceding these routines and conventions. The intricate logic of formats prevents the possibility of simply abolishing or discarding them; it is only possible to oppose or confront them from within, while remaining subjected to the hegemonic and marginalizing powers of standardization. Jean-Luc Godard expressed this futility poignantly in an interview included in the documentary *Le politique et le bonheur*, in which he speaks about *Tout va*

bien (1972), his film about a factory strike co-directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin, reflecting on failures to voice the concerns of the men and women of the working class. It is, despite all good intentions, impossible to make a film "in the service of" without risking it being "to the detriment of" the exploited and oppressed, for the simple reason that "the very way we direct," the technologies that are used and the practices that are employed in making the film, are conditioned by the regulating forces that commonly silence or suppress their voices. "Who can answer when he's had his mouth sewn shut?"[32] This is in resonance with Gayatri Spivak's concern in the question "Can the subaltern speak?,"[33] to which the answer, which Spivak performs in its impossibilty, is that she cannot because the order of discourse, since it is based on silencing, does not allow her to express her opinion and will. Any artwork or film dealing with this problem will have to begin with the conditions of speaking, to reflect or rework its very own technologies and practices, which prevent people from speaking for themselves.

It is in this context that we understand why Watkins invents an anachronistic media environment consisting of two competing channels covering the events: on one side, the official, state-owned Versailles TV, characterized by studio news with expert guests; on the other, the revolutionaries' Commune TV, offering live coverage from the streets. This recourse to the standardized forms and formats of news reporting and documentation is a critique of the institutional framework of television, which prevents alternative modes of communication, interaction, and the establishment of a public sphere on the basis of communal practice. Within this staged media environment, the actors' performances become an effort to redistribute representational power: Who speaks? Who is seen and heard? Who broadcasts? The actors' own experiences and thoughts increasingly permeate their characters' dialogues; in speaking their lines, they also voice their real-life social situations. The

film's structure connects the layers of time by creating analogies, anachronisms, interruptions, leaps, and short circuits between past and present. Toward the end of the film, contemporary scenes emerge from the historical plot that reverse the relationship between frontstage and backstage by having the actors, dressed in costume, reflect on the film as a site of or space for the negotiation of positions and relations in a collective process. After the completion of the film, a group of participants founded the collective Le Rebond pour la Commune to continue the participatory process of social experimentation and critical debate.[34] This collective, a non-hierarchical association which still exists today, is committed to organizing public events, talks, and discussions, and to diffusing the film through alternative networks outside official distribution channels. Members of the collective recorded the film the night it was broadcast on television so they could organize public screenings before the distributor, Doriane Films, released the film on video. Le Rebond is also a member of the Co-errances co-operative, in which publishers work with film and cultural producers to promote the autonomous production and distribution of media content. In this context, Watkins speaks of a transgression of the film's image space, its extension into the social and political sphere, while retrospectively conceding his failure or unwillingness as a director to fully abandon the hierarchical structures of film production:

> The more conscious I was of the liberating forces I was unleashing, the more conscious I was of the hierarchical practices – and personal control – I was maintaining.[35]

Geoff Bowie's portrait of the director, *The Universal Clock – The Resistance of Peter Watkins* (2011), offers further insights into the process of making the film.[36] There is a significant moment in which one of the participants, a young girl in costume on the set, responds to questions concerning her appearance in

the film. She says that her character has no name, referring to her role as "Catholic orphan no. 10." This episode sits uncomfortably within the overall narrative of participatory production, framed by the fiery speech of Armand Gatti, who, in a call to revolutionary action, recommends the project to the assembled cast as an "adventure" in which they "are not merely extras" but "active participants in an ongoing battle." The documentary concludes with behind-the-scenes footage showing the staging of the Communards' defeat, their collective shooting by Assembly artillery fire, which is conducted in a particular manner by using historical photographs of the corpses in their coffins, each assigned a number. Shooting by numbers, in the double sense of the phrase, is employed here as an operation of restoring control and power, by which Watkins (as the film's director) deliberately acts as the representant of authoritarian power. In his role on the set he constantly glides between the person who offers the tools and technologies to fight against a system of limiting and oppressing forces, and the person who, as director, represents the same system and so unleashes the opposing forces that in turn are directed against him.

Following Sobchack's argument that the historical epic does not merely represent its historical content but performatively produces it through repetition, through the use of human labor and capital cost, we can understand Watkins's film as an attempt to engage with the history of the Paris Commune through its production process. By reworking the labor of extras, the film formally repeats the human labor involved in its narrative's historical content, both in its production process and its modes of representation. (Fig. 3–4)



Fig. 3. Peter Watkins, La Commune (Paris, 1871), 2000. Film still.

The result of this, however, is neither a display of surge and splendor, nor of lack and shortage, but an approximation of what the members of the Paris Commune, almost all of whom belonged to the proletariat, called "communal luxury." Coined by Eugène Pottier in the "Manifesto of the Artists' Association of the Paris Commune," the term describes a common prosperity that includes the distribution of "beauty," of aesthetic experience, in public space beyond the private salons. As Kristin Ross has pointed out in her study on the political imaginary of the Paris Commune, the idea of communal luxury "countered any notion of the sharing of misery with a distinctly different kind of world: one where everyone, instead, would have his or her share of the best."[37]

The notion of "communal luxury" poses a theoretical challenge as it abolishes the distinction between abundance and shortage that commonly characterizes the political aesthetics of extra work.



Fig. 4. Peter Watkins, La Commune (Paris, 1871), 2000. Film still.

The aspiration to create spaces that allow the people to share their thoughts and ideas itself becomes a measure against statistical reasoning, against the recounting of history in terms of dates, counts, and numbers. To Ross, even Badiou's critique of the "tyranny of number"[38] and the reduction of the people to statistics remains subject to its logic by making the Communards' actions "empirical data marshaled in support of verifying the given theory,"[39] while reminding us elsewhere in her writing that an understanding of "democracy" in quantitative terms, be it as the power of the many or the few, dismisses its original meaning as "the capacity of ordinary people to discover modes of action for realizing common concerns."[40] As this capacity belongs to neither the many nor the few but to anyone, it is "free from the law of number."[41] Therefore, in her

book, moving through a smaller-scaled or finer-grained field of history as lived experience, she is less concerned with explicating or defining the idea of "communal luxury"; it is not so much the central issue of the book than its governing or guiding principle in the production of political thought. In this sense, her account of the events through their voicing by the Communards themselves is less narrative than it is dramatic in setting the stage for the historical figures of the revolution to enter while letting "communal luxury" emerge as the practice, and not the result of, political thinking in action. There is an implicitly theatrical or performative momentum at play in the production and distribution of "communal luxury" through shared aesthetic experience. In suspending the division between manual labor and artistic work, this experience, as Ross notes, was explicitly aimed against the "powerful institutional reiteration of the division of labor" that organized the field of artistic education and production according to economic principles of skill and specialization.[42] In this field the extras are confined to unskilled labor and thus excluded from the realm of artistic expression that remains reserved for qualified personnel at all levels, from the supporting cast to the leading actors.

Ross wrote her book under the influence of the protests and movements of 2011, which seemed to her to share central concerns with the Paris Commune.[43] While recognizing the singularity of the historical events, which makes any simple comparison with the present difficult, the Commune still appears to her simultaneously as "the figuration of a possible future,"[44] a model for the invention and exploration of communal cooperation and association, which opposes forms of state organization, regardless of whether capitalist or socialist. Rather than treating the Commune as a historical precedent or instructive example, she considers it a newly available "resource" or "archive" for present political thought and action.[45] We might therefore understand the recourse of contemporary filmmakers

and artists to the Paris Commune less as the re-enactment of historical events on the stage of present politics than as an opening of this archive of a possible communal future. Other projects besides Watkins's have emerged from this, such as Zoe Beloff's *The Days of the Commune* (2012), which brings together a heterogeneous cast of performers and activists to stage, in New York City public space, Brecht's play of the same name from 1947 in the context of the Occupy Wall Street movement.[46] Albeit different in their artistic approaches, these projects are equally indebted to the idea of using this archive for collective creation, in order to explore the potential of political communities.

What efforts are required in order to enable the people to speak, to empower those who, as extras, are by definition confined to silent presence to raise their voices? How can one transform the labor of extras into a collective experience according to the principles of association and cooperation, to work against the institutional division of labor, outside the centralizing organization of institutional space? The promise of "communal luxury" as expressed by the Commune serves here as a trajectory in the search for possibilities of articulation, of addressing concerns not through the content of speech, but through acts of speaking, of sharing thoughts and intellectual resources. The image emerging from this process, however, never fully becomes "*a common place* where the commonplace of images of the people used to reign."[47] Instead, we find a site of contestation and conflict, of struggling and opposing forces, of experimentation and play. In short, we find crisis as the potentiality of community.

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https://crisisandcommunitas.com/

1 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants: L'Œil de l'histoire, 4* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2012), quoted in the pre-published excerpt: "People Exposed, People as Extras," trans. Shane Lillisnotes, *Radical Philosophy* 156 (July/August 2009), 22. Another version of this excerpt with the same title is included in an exhibition catalog by the Argos art center: *Actors & Extras*, eds. Paul Willemsen and Thomas Trummer (Brussels and Munich: Argos Centre for Art & Media and Siemens Arts Program, 2009), 37–50.

2 Ibid., 20.

3 The English word "extras" hints at this economic dimension of the supernumeraries, "the fact that these are extra workers, as well as at the extra costs involved in film production." Hedwig Saxenhuber, "'Battles of Troy,' 'A Movie,' and 'Remote Resemblances,' – A Gaze Deeply into the Collective Imaginative Space of the Cinema and Examination of Its Material Make-up," in: *Extra Work: Krassimir Terziev. Taking the Figure of the Extra in Cinema Production as Metaphor*, ed. Jean Baptiste Joly (Stuttgart: Merz & Solitude, 2008), 14.

4 Vivian Sobchack, "'Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* 29 (Winter 1990), 24–49.

5 Cf. Kerry Segrave, *Extras of Early Hollywood: A History of the Crowd, 1913–1945* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2013); Anthony Slide, *Hollywood Unknowns: A History of Extras, Bit Players, and Stand-ins* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012). On the history of the industrial organization of labor by actors and extras, particularly in Hollywood, see: *Combined Convention Proceedings National Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Operators of the United States and Canada: A Record of All Conventions Held since the Inception of the Organization, July 1893* (New York: Musicians' Press, 1926); Robert Osborne Baker, *The International Alliance of Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators of the United States and Canada* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1933); Alfred Harding, *Revolt of the Actors* (New York: W. Morrow & Co., 1929); Murray Ross, *Stars and Strikes: Unionization of Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941); Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911–1941* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 318–361 (chapter "Union Success in the Movie Industry").

6 "Statisten," in: *Theater-Lexikon: Theoretisch-Praktisches Handbuch für Vorstände, Mitglieder und Freunde des deutschen Theaters*, eds. Philipp Jakob Düringer and Heinrich Ludwig Barthels (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1841), 1010.

7 "Comparsen," in: *Theater-Lexikon*, op. cit., 220 (trans. by the author).

8 Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 4–8.

9 R. K. Pruthi, *The Political Theory* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005), 110.

10 Gottfried Achenwall, *Abriß der neuesten Staatswissenschaft der vornehmsten europäischen Reiche und Republicken zum Gebrauch in seinen Academischen Vorlesungen* (Göttingen: Joh. Wilhelm Schmidt, Univ. Buchhandl., 1749), http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/achenwall_staatswissenschaft_1749.

11 Alain Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers: A History of Statistical Reasoning*, trans. Camille Naish (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 147.

12 Ibid.

13 On the history of measures and their standardization in the course of the French Revolution and the abolition of feudalism, see the seminal study by Witold Kula, *Measures and Men*, trans. Richard Szreter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 161–264.

14 On the relationship between statistics and state control, see, e.g., Ian Hacking, "How Should We Do the History of Statistics?," in: *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 181–195. On the history of statistics, see also: Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Stephen M. Stigler, *The History of Statistics: The Measurement of Uncertainty before 1900* (Cambridge, MA, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986); Anders Hald, *A History of Probability and Statistics and Their Applications before 1750* (Hoboken: Wiley, 1990); Anders Hald, *A History of Mathematical Statistics from 1750 to 1930* (New York: Wiley, 1998).

15 On this ambivalence of state measures aimed at social engineering and their failures throughout the twentieth century, see: James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

16 Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), 23–30.

17 Ibid., 99.

18 Ibid., 178.

19 Cf. Daniel W. Smith, "Mathematics and the Theory of Multiplicities: Badiou and Deleuze Revisited," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (2003), 411–449; Ray Brassier, "Badiou's Materialist Epistemology of Mathematics," *Angelaki* 10, no. 2 (2005), 135–150; B. Madison Mount, "The Cantorian Revolution: Alain Badiou and the Philosophy of Set Theory," *Polygraph* 17 (2005), 41–91; Zachary Fraser, "The Law of the Subject: Alain Badiou, Luitzen Brouwer and the Kripkean Analyses of Forcing and the Heyting Calculus," *Cosmos and History* 2, nos. 1–2 (2006), 94–133; Oliver Feltham, *Alain Badiou: Live Theory* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008); Sam Gillespie, *The Mathematics of Novelty: Badiou's Minimalist Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re.press, 2008); Christopher Norris, *Badiou's Being and Event: A Reader's Guide* (London and New York: Continuum, 2009); Burhanuddin Baki, *Badiou's Being and Event and the Mathematics of Set Theory* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); Arno Schubbach, "The State of a Situation and Badiou's Mathematics," in: *Badiou and the State*, ed. Dominik Finkelde (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017), 127–150.

20 See: Alain Badiou, "Logic of the Site," trans. Steve Corcoran and Bruno Bosteels, *Diacritics* 33, nos. 3–4 (Autumn–Winter 2003), 141–150; Alain Badiou, "The Paris Commune: A Political Declaration on Politics," in: *Polemics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (London: Verso, 2006), 257–290; Alain Badiou, "The Paris Commune: A Political Declaration on Politics," in: *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. David Macey and Steve Corcoran (London: Verso, 2010), 168–228. On the Paris Commune as an example of the event in Badiou's philosophy, see: Keith Bassett, "Thinking the Event: Badiou's Philosophy of the Event and the Example of the Paris Commune," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008), 895–910.

21 Badiou, "The Paris Commune: A Political Declaration on Politics" (2006), 276.

22 See: Anne McCauley, *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte-de-visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985); Sylvie Aubenas, "Le petit monde de Disdéri: Un fonds d'atelier du Second Empire," *Études photographiques* 3 (November 1997), http://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/93.

23 Jules Claretie quoted in: Marc Gottlieb, *The Deaths of Henri Regnault* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 152. On photography and the Paris Commune, see: Gen Doy, "The Camera Against the Paris Commune," in: *Photography/Politics: One*, eds. Terry Dennett and Jo Spence (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1979), 12–21; Donald English, *Political Uses of Photography in the Third French Republic* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 69–70; André Rouillé, "Les images photographiques du monde de travail sous le Second Empire," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 54 (September 1984), 41; Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 67; Christine Lapostolle, "Plus vrai que le vrai: Stratégie photographique et Commune de Paris," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 73 (1988), 67–76; Christine Lapostolle, "La Commune de la barricade à la ruine," *Recherches photographiques* 6 (1989), 20 –28; Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "Moving Pictures: Photography, Narrative, and the Paris Commune of 1871," in: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, eds. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995), 253–278; Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "Revolution at a Standstill: Photography and the Paris Commune of 1871," *Yale French Studies* 101 (2001), 54–78.

24 Didi-Huberman, *Peuples exposés, peuples figurants*, 99.

25 See: Christian Phéline, *L'image accusatrice* (Paris: Cahiers de la photographie, 1985); Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986), 1–64.

26 "La participation active des comédiens à la réalisation de ce film constitue précisément ce qui fait peur aux médias mondiaux, et représente probablement l'une des raisons premières des refus de financement de la part des nombreuses chaînes de TV sollicitées pour apporter un soutien…" (trans. by the author).

27 Cf. the afterword to the publication that reissues Peter Watkins's website in book form: Rebond pour La Commune, "Le Censure n'est plus ce qu'elle était: De *La Bombe* (1965) à *La Commune* (1999)," in: Peter Watkins, *Media Crisis*, trans. Patrick Watkins (Paris: Les Éditions l'échappée, 2015), 197.

28 "Ce don't les medias ont particulièrement peur, est de voir le petit homme du petit écran remplacé par une multitude de gens – par le public…" (trans. by the author).

29 Cf. the interview with Peter Watkins by Frédéric Bas, "Chacun devait écrire des dialogues," *Cahiers du cinema* 546 (May 2000), 11. On the democratic process of production, cf. Michael Wayne, "The Tragedy of History: Peter Watkins's *La Commune*," *Third Text* 16, no. 1 (2002), 57–69; Michaela Pöschl, "'… beyond the limitations of the rectangular frame': *La Commune*, DV, 345 Min., Peter Watkins, 1999," trans. Aileen Derieg, *Differences & Representations* 10 (2003), https://transversal.at/transversal/1003/poschl/en#_ftnref11; Roxanne Panchasi, "If the Revolution Had Been Televised: The Productive Anachronisms of Peter Watkins's *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*," *Rethinking History* 10, no. 4 (December 2006), 553–571; Antoine de Baecque, "The Watkins Way: History in Common," in: *Camera Historica: The Century in Cinema*, trans. Ninon Vinsonneau and Jonathan Magidoff (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 192–200; Gabriel Levine, "Speech Across the Barricades: The Democratic Art of Peter Watkins's *La Commune (Paris 1871)*," *Public* 37 (Spring 2008), 120–129; Isabelle Marinone, "Une opposition aux mass media audiovisuels: *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*, une démarche alternative," in: *L'insurrection médiatique: Médias, histoire et documentaire dans le cinéma de Peter Watkins*, eds. Sébastien Denis and Jean-Pierre Bertin-Maghit (Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2010), 49–61; François Bovier and Cédric Fluckiger, "Le langage de l'action politique dans *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* de Peter Watkins: 'selmaire' et utopie," *Décadrages* 2 (2012), 92–109, https://doi.org/10.4000/decadrages.256.

30 Cf. Watkins, *Media Crisis*, 28–38. On the concept of format, see in this context, e.g., Jonathan Sterne, "Format Theory," in: *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 1–31.

31 Peter Watkins, "The Media Crisis: A Perspective by Peter Watkins," *Tate*, September 2012, https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/peter-watkins-films-1964-99/media-crisis-perspective-peter-watkins.

32 Jean-Luc Godard in *La politique et le bonheur: Georges Kiejman* (1972), quoted after the English subtitles on the Criterion Collection DVD of *Tout va bien*, released in 2005. On this topic, see also: Hito Steyerl, "Können Zeugen sprechen? Zur Philosophie des Interviews," in: *Die Farbe der Wahrheit: Dokumentarismen im Kunstfeld* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2008), 18–26, published in an English translation as "Can Witnesses Speak? On the Philosophy of the Interview," trans. Aileen Derieg, *transversal texts*, May 2008, https://transversal.at/transversal/0408/steyerl/en.

33 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in: *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 271–313.

34 Cf. the website of Le Rebond pour la Commune, http://www.lerebond.org. For brief information on the activities of the collective, see also the appendix "Rebond pour la Commune" to Watkins, *Media Crisis*, 193–194. For testimonies of members of the association who acted in the film, see: François Bovier and Sylvain Portmann, "Entretien avec plusieurs membres de l'association Rebond pour la Commune," Geneva (Villa Baron), June 17, 2012, *Décadrages*, https://www.decadrages.ch/entretien-avec-rebond-pour-la-commune.

35 Peter Watkins, "*La Commune (de Paris, 1871)*," filmmaker's website, http://pwatkins.mnsi.net/commune.htm.

36 *The Universal Clock: The Resistance of Peter Watkins* (2001), directed by Geoff Bowie and produced by the National Film Board of Canada, https://www.nfb.ca/film/universal_clock_resistance_peter_watkins/.

37 Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2015), 65.

38 Alain Badiou, *Peut-on penser la politique?* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985), 68.

39 Kristin Ross in an interview with Jerome Roos, "The Survival of the Paris Commune," March 18, 2016, *Roar* no. 1 (Spring 2016), https://roarmag.org/magazine/kristin-ross-survival-paris-commune/.

40 Kristin Ross, "Democracy for Sale," in: Giorgio Agamben et al., *Democracy in What State?*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 89. Ross is indebted here to Jacques Rancière's thoughts on Joseph Jacotot's method of intellectual emancipation, and indeed translated his essay *Le Maître ignorant* (1987): Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

41 Ibid.

42 Ross, *Communal Luxury*, 48.

43 Cf. ibid., 2–4.

44 Kristin Ross in an interview with Joseph Confavreux, "Penser la Commune 'comme autre mesure de la richesse sociale'," *Mediapart*, January 31, 2015, https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/culture-idees/310115/penser-la-commune-comme-autre-mesure-de-la-richesse-sociale, published in English as "The Contemporary Relevance of the Paris Commune," trans. John Merrick, *Verso*, May 14, 2015, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1991-kristin-ross-the-contemporary-relevance-of-the-paris-commune.

45 Kristin Ross in an interview with Manu Goswami, "The Meaning of the Paris Commune," *Jacobin*, April 5, 2015, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/05/kristin-ross-communal-luxury-paris-commune/.

46 Bertolt Brecht, *Die Tage der Kommune* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966).

47 Didi-Huberman, "People Exposed, People as Extras," 22.

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