ARCHIVE AS HISTORY: GODARD, GÉRICAULT, HIRSCHHORN AND THE COSTA CONCORDIA

by

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Abstract
Opening to mixed reviews at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010, Jean-Luc Godard’s *Film Socialisme* explores the intertwined relationships between gold and late capitalism, nationhood and sovereignty, consolidation of wealth and austere economic policies. The 2007-2008 economic crisis and subsequent recession provoked a response from Godard and provided an imperative for the film. Employing the ocean as a metaphor for capitalism, Godard stages the first half of the film on a cruise ship. Overlooking a night-time sea of blackness and white-tipped choppy waves, the prescient narrator announces from the outer-deck, “What is opening up before us resembles an impossible story… we’re facing a sort of zero.” Portending the disaster that occurred on January 13, 2012, the ship Godard elected to film on was the doomed Costa Concordia.

This thesis also resembles an impossible story, an archival collision of sorts. In considering art historian Carrie Lambert-Beatty’s notion of *parafiction*—an artistic space of examination where fiction blurs with non-fiction—the grounding of the Costa Concordia provides a metaphor for the possibility of doing history at a time of both economic crisis and catastrophe. By examining the relationship between temporality and fiction within the archive, this thesis considers how artists account for crisis through the construction of an archive that also forms the basis of a historical record.

I argue that three otherwise discrete artists, Jean-Luc Godard, Thomas Hirschhorn and Théodore Géricault, provide a framework that constructs a history, one out of many possible histories, of both the Costa Concordia catastrophe of 2012 and the economic crisis—a crisis of liquidity—of 2007-2008. Through a breakdown between fact and fiction *within* the
archive, these three artists provide a dramatic reformulation of the possibility of producing history at this moment of crisis. The archive is the point zero of history to which we must continually return.
Preface
This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Jeff O’Brien.

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Introduction
Opening to mixed reviews at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010, Jean-Luc Godard’s Film Socialisme explores the intertwined relationships between gold and late capitalism, nationhood and sovereignty, consolidation of wealth and austere economic policies. The 2007-2008 economic crisis and subsequent recession provoked a response from Godard and provided an imperative for the film. Employing the ocean as a metaphor for capitalism, Godard stages the first half of the film on a cruise ship. Overlooking a night-time sea of blackness and white-tipped choppy waves, the prescient narrator announces from the outer-deck, “What is opening up before us resembles an impossible story… we’re facing a sort of zero.” Portending the disaster that occurred on January 13, 2012, the ship Godard elected to film on was the doomed Costa Concordia.

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I argue that three otherwise discrete artists, Jean-Luc Godard, Thomas Hirschhorn and Théodore Géricault, provide a framework that constructs a history, one out of many possible histories, of both the Costa Concordia catastrophe of 2012 and the economic crisis—a crisis
of liquidity—of 2007-2008. Through a breakdown between fact and fiction within the archive, these three artists provide a dramatic reformulation of the possibility of producing history at this moment of crisis. The archive is the point zero of history to which we must continually return.

Departing from Civitavecchia, Italy, on January 13, 2012, the cruise ship Costa Concordia ran aground after striking Isola del Giglio at 21:42 or 21:45, two hours after departure. The precise time of collision is unknown due to poor records. Thirty-two passengers perished in the disaster, while five crewmembers were convicted of criminal negligence. The captain, Francesco Schettino, is currently on trial for manslaughter and faces up to twenty years in prison for performing what is called a “salute”, whereby a captain navigates a ship close to shore for the entertainment of both himself and passengers. Eight months later, in the fall of 2012, Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn exhibited *Concordia, Concordia*, an archival reconstruction of the interior of the ship post-disaster at the Gladstone Gallery in New York.¹ Life-jackets were strewn on the floor to acknowledge each body that perished, tables were mounted on the right-most wall to mark the orientation where the ship lay until refloated on September 16, 2013, discarded pages of Karl Marx’s 1867 text *Das Kapital* were littered about the floor, connecting shipwreck to capitalism (Figure 1). A print of Théodore Géricault’s monumental history painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819) was on the ceiling of the installation. Géricault constructed this work as an act of reportage and

¹ *Concordia, Concordia* was exhibited from September 14 to October 20, 2012 at the Gladstone Gallery in New York City. This was the only time the installation was shown as it did not travel afterwards. The opening night was eight months to the day after the grounding of the Costa Concordia.
testimonial to the grounding of the French frigate Méduse on July 5, 1816 and conducted a study consisting of numerous archival examinations, interviews with survivors and comprehensive studio preparations including the construction of a model raft. The painting, however, contains striking fictions.

This thesis thus asks: what is the role of fiction within the archive, considering the diffuse, atemporal sequence of events that inform and constitute the archive itself and what is the relationship between temporality and fiction within the archive?
1 “Des choses comme ça”

1.1 “Loro” and “el oro”

Godard’s *Film Socialisme* opened at the Cannes Film Festival on May 19, 2010. It is a 102-minute feature-length film in three parts: one, *Des choses comme ça* (Things like this); two, *Notre Europa* (Our Europe); three, *Nos humanités* (Our humanities). Filmed just under two years prior to the grounding of the Costa Concordia, the first half of the film takes place on board the opulent, doomed vessel.

The prescient film opens with a split-second image of two parrots sitting on a branch, one furiously scratching its head with its foot (Figure 2). The parrots fill the frame in full. A high-pitched continuous tone interrupts the brief scene, which then suddenly cuts to black. All over within one second, the moment ends as quickly as it began. However fledging, the opening scene here is important for it presents us with *loro*, the Spanish term for *parrot*, which is a homophone of *el oro*, the Spanish word for *gold*.\(^2\) As a commodity, gold recurs not only throughout the film but also through global currency trade over time. As a medium of exchange, gold functions as a currency to allow incommensurable items to be compared in quantifiable terms. As a form of money, gold thus facilitates transactions of unlike goods with relative ease, which is known as financial *liquidity*. By commencing with a scene involving two parrots, Godard presents us with both the image of gold and the image of water, if we are to understand gold as a currency that permits liquidity of transactions. A

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\(^2\) This connection was brought to my attention in David Phelps’s article “Film Socialisme Annotated: A guided tour through Jean-Luc Godard’s most allusive film,” *Museum of the Moving Image: Moving Image Source* (June 7, 2011), [http://www.movingimagesource.us/articles/film-socialisme-annotated-20110607](http://www.movingimagesource.us/articles/film-socialisme-annotated-20110607).
return to the “gold standard,” moreover, where currency is tied to the price of gold was suggested by conservative Americans in the aftermath to the 2007-2008 recession as a corrective to the instability of the marketplace. In just a flash, *Film Socialisme* thus opens with a metaphor for both gold and water, invoking the current economic crisis and providing a nexus of possible interpretations.

Not only does gold act as a signifier for water, but it also plays a key role in the plot development of the film itself. Shortly after being introduced to the two parrots, we meet Otto Goldberg, or “gold mountain.” Goldberg is responsible for the theft of the gold that Spain, in the thrall of civil war in 1936, foolishly sent to the Soviet Union for safekeeping. Alissa, Goldberg’s granddaughter, wears a necklace of ornate gold medallions. Inside a palatial casino on board the Costa Concordia, we watch gold medallions being pushed to the precarious edge inside a midway fair “2p pushers” game (Figure 3). Players deposit medals with the hope that theirs will be the one to trigger a cascade of falling medals to reap as their bounty. Timing is key. Drawing on a historical event, Godard here signals the role the archive will play in *Film Socialisme*: the fictional narrative is in dialogue with past historical events. At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Spain sent 7,800 cases of ingots and gold coins to a navel base in Cartagena, Columbia. The gold was to be then transferred to a Soviet ship whereby the gold would be under the protective watch of the Soviets. On October 20, 1936, Joseph Stalin sent the following telegram to Alexander Orlov, chief of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs:

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Together with Ambassador Rosenberg, arrange with the head of the Spanish Government, Caballero, for the shipment of the gold reserves of Spain to the Soviet Union.… This operation must be carried out with the utmost secrecy. If the Spainards demand from you a receipt for the cargo, refuse. I repeat, refuse to sign anything, and say that a formal receipt will be issued in Moscow by the State Bank.4

Just as vast amounts of personal savings in the 2007-2008 recession disappeared overnight, the gold too went missing.

In a New Yorker article “Film Socialisme: The Gold Standard,” Richard Brody notes that Godard’s usage of gold is a “McGuffin” employed to move the film forward.5 As a film invested in both narrative as well as the discursive, conjunctive possibilities of montage, gold provides a thread that links diffuse elements not only within the film, but also outside of the film through to Hirschhorn’s Concordia, Concordia. On the origin of Godard’s interest in gold, Brody quotes Jean-Luc Godard in a 1997 interview with Alain Bergala. Godard recalls a discussion with fellow French filmmaker Jacques Tati fifteen years prior, shortly before Tati’s death. Godard writes:

I offered to buy him a coffee. He said he could pay for it himself, and he took out a coin. A gold coin from the Bank of Spain. “That’s what’s left of the Spanish treasury that Stalin took,” he told me. It had been given to him by [the movie producer] Louis Dolivet, who was an agent of the Fourth International. I knew him from having approached him: he was my first contact, before [the producer Pierre] Braunberger, at the time of Gray Films [in the mid-fifties]. He produced “Mr. Arkadin” and “Playtime.” There’s even a shot in “Mr. Arkadin” where you see Dolivet. Tati explained the connection between them. He had been an assistant to the famous Willy Mutzenberg [sic], who had seduced the entire French intelligentsia and produced films, launched magazines. He had certainly placed money in Switzerland, which Dolivet inherited after the war. With this money, he produced “Arkadin,” which is a metaphor for the story of Stalin and takes place in Spain. According to Tati’s theory,

Stalin had supported the war in Spain in order to get hold of this money. Which is completely plausible, since Stalin was a former bank robber…. That’s a story that I’d really like to have shown [in “Histoire(s) du cinéma”]: what is the real relationship between “Mr. Arkadin” and “Playtime”? It’s the gold of the Bank of Spain and of the Spanish Republicans, which Stalin stole. With this money, Dolivet produced two catastrophic flops, but two very beautiful films.⁶

Godard required the appropriate historical moment to (re)create Stalin’s theft of the Bank of Spain’s gold reserves. Brought to his attention by his colleague Jacques Tati, who would create the high-modernist, quixotically humorous (Godard does not do humor) film Mon Oncle (My Uncle) a mere two years prior to Godard’s first feature-length film, Breathless (1960), the economic crisis of 2007-2008 provided Godard with the imperative to stage Film Socialisme.

⁶ Ibid.
1.2 Liquidity Crisis and the Sea
In stark contrast to the fleeting, full frame opening shot of the two parrots on a branch, when
the opening credits of Film Socialisme come to a close dark and enchantingly hypnotic
flowing waves encompass the screen. Here, in the first scene, after being introduced to
metaphorical gold by way of the homophonic parrots, Godard presents us with the infinite
openness of the sea. Looking down at the flowing waters, the first words in the film are
spoken (Figure 4):

Man [off camera]: “Money is a public good.”
Woman [off camera]: “Like water, then?”
Man: “Exactly.”

With this image of water encompassing the entirety of the screen, the sea represents another
totalizing force in everyday life: capitalism. The turquoise waters of the Mediterranean Sea in
which a nude Bridgette Bardot swam in Godard’s 1963 film Les Mepris (Contempt) is not
the sea Godard presents in Film Socialisme: such a sea is too inviting and would fail to
convey the damage that capitalism left in its wake in the 2007-2008 crisis. Rather, this sea is
a dark, foreboding sea of choppy waves and seemingly infinite depth. While still the
Mediterranean as we are watching a Mediterranean cruise, this same sea swam by Bardot in
1963 now grounds the Costa Concordia in 2012. The seas have changed through the course
of Godard’s oeuvre.

7 Consider the remarkable aptitude parrots have in mimicking almost any language which they hear.
Connecting the parrots to gold by way of their Spanish homophone asks us to consider the universal
nature of trade that is made possible when there is a common means, such as gold, to quantify goods.
We can thus push this metaphorical inquiry of the parrot to also stand for universality in the ever-
expanding, totalizing forces of the logic that underwrites capitalism.
As an economic metaphor, the sea is also called upon by the very neo-conservatives that brought about the economic crisis of 2007-2008. The aphorism “a rising tide lifts all boats” (demonstrably false after former United States President Ronald Reagan ushered in supply-side economics in the 1980s that, through massive tax breaks to the wealthy, brought in a new era of inequality) finds renewal, without irony, amongst the conservative right that bear much to blame for the crisis.\(^8\) As metaphor, the image of the sea binds the sea to economic theory. Godard thus opens with an overdetermined image of what sunk the Costa Concordia: on a micro level the ocean, the sea, inept captain; on a macro level liquidity, capitalism, inept financial system.

In 2007-2008, nearly $11 trillion in household wealth “vanished” in the largest financial crisis since the Great Depression.\(^9\) The Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission was created at the request of the American Congress in 2009 to “examine the causes, domestic and global, of the current financial and economic crisis in the United States.”\(^10\) The bipartisan and independent ten-member panel wrote:

> The crisis reached seismic proportions in September 2008 with the failure of Lehman Brothers and the impending collapse of the insurance giant American International Group (AIG). Panic fanned by a lack of transparency of the balance sheets of major financial institutions, coupled with a tangle of interconnections among institutions perceived to be “too big to fail,” caused the credit markets to seize up. Trading ground to a halt. The stock market plummeted. The economy plunged

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\(^10\) Ibid., xi.
into a deep recession.\textsuperscript{11}

The panel noted that the crisis was preventable and a result of human error as well as a failure of government to adequately regulate the financial sector. The reliance on liquidity and access to overnight credit along with insufficient leverage to obtain such credit was to blame for the recession. The major five investment banks, Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley had insufficient capital to sufficiently leverage the assets they borrowed. The report notes that “at the end of 2007, Bear Stearns had $11.8 billion in equity and $383.6 billion in liabilities and was borrowing as much as $70 billion in the overnight market” and remarkably, “it was the equivalent of a small business with $50,000 in equity borrowing $1.6 million, with $296,750 of that due each and every day.”\textsuperscript{12} Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman connects this over-extended borrowing to the collapse of liquidity in the markets:

Credit—lending between market players—is to the financial markets what motor oil is to car engines. The ability to raise cash on short notice, which is what people mean when they talk about “liquidity,” is an essential lubricant for the markets, and for the economy as a whole. But liquidity has been drying up…. Behind the disappearance of liquidity lies a collapse of trust: market players don’t want to lend to each other, because they’re not sure they’ll be repaid.\textsuperscript{13}

Here, Krugman reiterates the metaphor of liquidity in terms of motor oil that permits the engine of capitalism to run effectively. The seemingly infinite sea, dark and viscous as motor oil marked by the waves Godard presents, dries up and causes the ship of capitalism to ground. The ground from which we observe the crises is prone to collapse given rising seas of inequality that implicate each and everyone of us. Economic theorist Thomas Piketty

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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., xvi.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., xx.
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outlines how the rising rate of return on capital investments over and above the rate of growth of output and income works to consolidate wealth amongst those who have access to credit and thus, liquidity, thereby creating a vicious cycle of growth followed by stagnation.\textsuperscript{14}

The foreboding sea Godard employs as a backdrop for the opening dialogue manages to evoke the crisis of two years’ prior while simultaneously portending the sinking of the Costa Concordia one year after. By opening \textit{Film Socialisme} with an image of two parrots, Godard triggers a series of metaphors that not only refer to one another, but refer to events both inside and outside of fiction. This referential chain of metaphor enacts the workings of the archive itself, an interest that Godard, Gèrècault and Hirschhorn all share and will be explored here. Metaphor opens up the possibility to engage and represent what is not present

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas Piketty, \textit{Capital in the Twenty-First Century}, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 1. Piketty goes on to outline how the growing inequality between those who have capital and those who do not will necessarily lead to the demise of meritocratic, democratic societies, a posit supported by a recent study by Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page that concluded “the preferences of economic elites (as measured by our proxy, the preferences of “affluent” citizens) have far more independent impact upon policy change than the preferences of average citizens do,” and, moreover:

Despite the seemingly strong empirical support in previous studies for theories of majoritarian democracy, our analyses suggest that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts. Americans do enjoy many features central to democratic governance, such as regular elections, freedom of speech and association, and a widespread (if still contested) franchise. But we believe that if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America’s claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened.

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups and Average Citizens,” \textit{Perspectives in Politics} (Fall 2014, Forthcoming),
spatially and temporally within the archive. For example, in one scene queued-up individuals pile food onto their plates at the buffet, an allusion by Godard to the excessive greed precipitating the economic crisis (Figure 5). As buffets are sold as “all you can eat” if you can afford the entrance fee, so too, is capitalism. Meanwhile, Otto Goldberg roams the corridors of the Costa Concordia free of sanctions despite the monumental theft of gold, thereby residing in a space seemingly outside of law. An onboard sermon indicates the presence of non-natural law, a faith in a supreme other equal to the very same faith some have in capitalism (Figure 6). These scenes all engage metaphor in calling upon elements both inside and outside of the course of the film. Parrots simultaneously link to Goldberg’s gold while calling upon the crisis preceding the film.

In addition to engaging metaphor through images, Godard engages metaphor through language and specifically through subtitle. There are always gaps of understanding between languages, differences that cannot be sufficiently articulated either through translation or by attempting to articulate in language what this difference is. One’s familiarity with a language thus influences and determines one’s understanding of a film (or text). Throughout the film, *Film Socialisme* moves between eleven languages including French, Latin, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Bambara, English and Greek. One such subtitle option provided by Godard, in addition to English, is called “Navajo English.” Godard posits that Native Americans were mistranslated, misheard and misunderstood and accordingly, in these subtitles Godard condenses English-language translation into what he finds relevant within
The Navajo English subtitles consist of only two or three words, separated by wide spaces and lacking punctuation. Verbs are rarely conjugated with some words combined to form a single word: noGod, don’tget, todaybastards (Figure 7). Through the use of subtitles that provide inadequate and inaccurate translations, Godard acknowledges the deficiencies present in both translation between languages and translation between language and image. The language employed informs and directs what we watch, while the language

15 As Samuel Bréan writes in “godard english cannes: The Reception of Film Socialisme’s “Navajo English” Subtitles”: The dialogue is mainly in French, but ten other languages (Latin, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Bambara, English and Greek) are present on the soundtrack or on title cards, most of them very briefly, and are not translated on the French prints of the film. Godard then asked Lenny Borger and Cynthia Schoch, who did the English subtitles for his two previous features, Éloge de l’amour (2001) and Notre Musique (2004), to translate the French dialogue entirely, without telling them why. He took this English text as the basis for what he called the “Navajo, Comanche, Cheyenne (etc.) English translation.” With a marker pen, he crossed out the words that did not interest him and left only those which seemed especially meaningful to him, before rearranging them, as will be described below. Some portions of dialogue were left entirely untranslated. Finally, the subtitles were inserted using subtitling software.


16 This is not the first time that Godard has experimented with subtitles. As early as 1963, in the film Le Mepris adapted from the novel of the same title by Alberto Moravia, Godard introduced the character Francesco Vanini, who “simultaneously translates conversations involving two, three or four characters into two, three or four languages” and does it “on her own initiative, self-evidently, without even being asked to do so.” Ibid. Moreover, on the 2004 film Notre Musique, Breán writes: Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo, playing himself, speaks in his own language, but his words are only translated into French when the character of the interpreter (played by Rony Kramer) is nearby, as in Le Mépris. When the Native Americans recite Darwish’s poem (in English), French subtitles are provided, which is also the case in the last sequence of the film, with the US Marines’ anthem. But a third instance of subtitling seemed more problematic to Godard, as was recently revealed in an interview with his old friend Jean Narboni, and provides a valuable insight into the director’s views on subtitling. In the film, when Israeli journalist
not used to describe the scene is a trace of what could be if we had a complete translation, a complete archive. By conjoining two words not previously coupled together, Godard draws attention to the space(s) in between words spoken. This technique was previously explored by Stéphane Mallarmé in his 1897 poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard (A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance)* whereby the distance between words on the printed page fluctuate and the white space in between words is meant to be read. Godard similarly brings the subtitles closer in line with what we hear than what we read. Godard here is drawing our attention to the liminal gap between a didactic, mimetic space of representation and interpretation that depends on translation and experience. A theory of metaphor is required to move beyond speculative connections that, while interesting, do not have a clear place in the writing of history.

In his 1996 text *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, German Philosopher Hans Blumenberg develops a theory of metaphor that attempts to find an epistemic ground outside of the actual, a ground fertile for exploring the relationship between history, ideas and philosophy. Rather than only engage with experience and logic, metaphor allows for an understanding of experience that is otherwise inaccessible through mimesis. For Blumenberg, the world is replete and overdetermined by contingent possibilities and thus, a turn away from mimetic understanding and towards metaphor instead is where truth will be found. Through utilizing the “seafaring metaphor as a paradigm” with a spectator observing the tragedy-at-sea from land, Blumenberg creates a theoretical vantage point—

Judith Lerner (Sarah Adler) interviews Darwish, she speaks in Hebrew and he replies in Arabic. Says Godard: “He understood her, because [he] speaks Arabic and understands Hebrew, but she did not understand, because she doesn’t speak Arabic – but she is a good actor.”
analogous to our position as observers with respect to the Costa Concordia tragedy today—that resides on *phantasmagorically* stable dry-ground that may collapse at any moment. The spectator does not merely stand outside of reality and while the spectator is “not personally involved in adventures, he certainly is helplessly at the mercy of the attraction of catastrophes and sensations.” Truth is to be understood through the point of view of the spectator who witnesses, a spectator who metaphorically resides in a liminal space that is both within the world of the shipwreck for it is he who observes, yet resides outside the world of the shipwreck in a space of relative safety.

Through examining Voltaire writing on Lucretius, Blumenberg notes that in witnessing the shipwreck from the safety of one’s own position on land as spectator, Lucretius links the empirical act of witnessing to “the advantage gained through Epicurus’s philosophy, the possession of an inviolable, solid ground for one’s view of the world.” One does not find

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17 I understand phantasmagoria to be the image of a dream: it appears real to us but is, in fact, fleeting and contradictory for what the phantasmagoric image represents does not necessarily have any bearing in reality. For both Marx and Benjamin, the phantasmagoric is rooted in capitalism and the commodity itself is phantasmagoric. When an object becomes a commodity upon entering the marketplace, the previous utility or “use-value” of the commodity is masked by its “exchange-value,” or value on the marketplace in relation to other commodities. The exchange-value is thus phantasmagoric for we see (know) the value but do not know the inner-workings behind the commodity that create such value (surplus-labour, ideology).


19 The translator to *Shipwreck with Spectator*, Steven Rendall, notes “the Greek word theoría derives from theoros, “spectator.”” Ibid., 2.

20 Ibid., 26. General knowledge on the life of Epicurus primarily comes from Diogenes Laertius's text *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* written in the first half of the third century CE. Laertius is the primary source for much knowledge on early Greek philosophers due to poor written records. Epicurus, from
pleasure in seeing one suffer but rather, one finds solace in both the safety of being outside of the event while possessing a rational vantage point from which one can gain perspective on catastrophe and engage in philosophy. For early Greek atomists, such as Lucretius and Epicurus, philosophy ought to concern itself with worldviews that avoid totalizing, teleological systems as put forth by Plato and Aristotle, and rather, eschew the divine and instead turn one’s investigations towards the interactions of and between material. Thus one should turn away from the air of which forms inhabit and instead turns to the ground of materialism. To find “stable footing” takes on ontological importance for it is the desire to find such solid footing that propels the philosophy of Lucretius and Epicurus forward. A contradiction between those on board the shipwreck and the spectators who witness arises. On this contradiction, Blumenberg writes:

which “epicureanism”, or life devoted to the sensuous is derived, placed utmost importance on relationships between individuals as constituting the good, ethical life. However, it is through book five of Lucretius’s early first-century BCE poem De rerum natura (On the Nature of Things or On the Nature of the Universe) that we get insight into Epicurius’s world-view of the cosmos and the relationship between both the cosmos and the individual but also between individuals themselves. Lucretius writes:

The ramping breakers of the main seas dash
Whole argosies and crews upon the rocks.
But ocean uprisen would often rave in vain,
Without all end or outcome, and give up
Its empty menacings as lightly too;
Nor soft seductions of a serene sea
Could lure by laughing billows any man
Out to disaster: for the science bold
Of ship-sailing lay dark in those far times.
Again, 'twas then that lack of food gave o'er
Men's fainting limbs to dissolution: now
'Tis plenty overwhelms. Unwary, they
Oft for themselves themselves would then outpour
The poison; now, with nicer art, themselves
They give the drafts to others.
The contradiction consists in this: what the spectator enjoys is not the sublimity of the objects his theory opens up for him but his own self-consciousness, over against the whirl of atoms out of which everything that he observes is constituted, including himself. The cosmos is no longer the Order whose contemplation fills the observer with happiness (*Eudaemonia*). It is at most the remaining assurance that such a firm ground exists at all, beyond the reach of the hostile element.  

The spectator of shipwreck witnesses the potentiality of the cosmos for destruction in this world and takes comfort in one’s position of relative safety on dry land. This contradiction of being both within the event as constitutive yet outside as observer arises; but outside of material is room for contemplation of the event within one’s own mind. Both Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Concordia, Concordia* and Godard’s *Film Socialisme* call witness to the grounding of the Costa Concordia and the logic of the archive with one temporally before the disastrous event and one after. The film presciently announces a potential disaster that is always present within history, a contingency that is possible but not yet realized. This contingent possibility not only of disaster but also of any possible event will affect the archive on which history is grounded. As that which simultaneously creates and destroys,

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21 Ibid., 26-27.

22 A crisis of immiseration, for example, remains conceptual and potential until it actually occurs, as in 2007-2008. Crucially, what we are dealing with here is catastrophe both on the level of the historical event but also on the level of the image itself. While a spectator is not necessary for catastrophe, a spectator is a necessary condition for an image is always constituted *of* something; a representation implicated *of* something depicted. Blumenberg writes: “[the] transcendental spectator’s distance from the enormities of nature is not only that of the rocky shore but also that of self-consciousness, for which all this has become his representation. If the heavens at night “force on our consciousness the immensity of the universe,” there rises up “against such lying impossibility” something like transcendental defiance; the multiplicity of worlds exists “only” in an through our representation: “The vastness of the world, which disquieted us before, rests now in us; our dependence on it is annulled by its dependence on us.” Ibid., 61. Here Blumenberg is quoting Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1816), 1. sec.16; *Sammliche Werke*, ed. W. V. Löhneysen, 1:38. The English translations come by way of R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp.
nourishes and starves, carries to and carries away, the sea resides at a zero-sum point of contradiction; catastrophe delimits an end-point that exhibits the potentiality contained within the wave. For Walter Benjamin, while catastrophe is inextricably linked to the idea of “progress,” emphasis or belief in the idea of history “progressing” forestalls revolutionary change. The “impossible story” that Godard announces at the beginning of the film portends this potentiality of the sea while simultaneously announcing the contradictions of the archive that, too, creates while destroys.

Turning to the relationship between the sea and currency, Hans Blumenberg writes on the metaphor of liquidity:

> Two elements characterized by liquidity: water and money. The latter is said to be “like life itself to pitiable mankind.” This tool of the absolute interchange of all with all creates out of the separation of peoples, which is considered to be in accord with nature, the unmarked road by which they can be connected.  

The unmarked road taken by Costa Concordia Captain Francesco Schettino metaphorically connects Godard to Schettino, Schettino to Hirschhorn and Hirschhorn to Géricault. Liquidity provides an interchange that makes previously incommensurable things commensurable and quantifies what was previously considered on qualitative grounds, taking root in the catastrophe of shipwreck as marking a crisis that sets the stage for both *Film Socialisme* and *Concordia, Concordia*. Liquidity as a physical property is a great leveler for if one is to consider water cast upon a surface, the water will *naturally* flatten and disperse. Previously uneven surfaces are made even; points understood *qualitatively* are now made *quantifiable*, just as the exchange-value of the commodity masks the use-value.

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In chapter four of Karl Marx’s 1867 text *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Capital: Critique of Political Economy)—pages of which were sprawled out across the floor of Hirschhorn’s *Concordia, Concordia*—Marx gives us the general formula for capital, abridged “M-C-M’”. Giovanni Arrighi, writing on shifting centres of capitalist power in the ever-expanding reaches of capitalism, clarifies what is meant by the abbreviation:

Money capital (M) means liquidity, flexibility, freedom of choice. Commodity capital (C) means capital invested in a particular input-output combination in view of a profit. Hence, it means concreteness, rigidity, and a narrowing down or closing of options. M’ means expanded liquidity, flexibility, and freedom of choice.24

Capital strives towards liquidity, situated within the money-form, given the logic of capitalism that necessitates the continual, unimpeded expansion into new markets.25 Arrighi notes that this “financial expansion” precludes capital from calcifying in a particular industry or mode of investment as an end-in-itself as such would result in a “loss of flexibility and freedom of choice.” Just as a ship alongside a rocky coast navigates perilous late night seas

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25 Borrowing a schemata from Fernand Braudel, the “long twentieth century” incorporates the “Great Depression of 1873-96 and the thirty-year crisis of 1914-45.” Arrighi describes the latest capitalist epoch in a series of four consecutive hegemonic powers each rooted within a nation-state: from Genoa in the late fourteenth century through to Holland, Britain and finally, the United States today. For the purposes here, however, it is important to consider the relationships between these nation-states as facilitated by the sea. Capital demands liquidity yet hegemonic centres of power rooted within territory form appears, at first, to be contradictory. Arrighi writes: “The logical structure of state action with regard to territorial acquisition and capital accumulation should not be confused with actual outcomes. Historically, the capitalist and the territorialist logics of power have not operated in isolation from one another but in relation to one another, within a given spatio-temporal context. As a result, actual outcomes have departed significantly, even diametrically, from what is implicit in each logic conceived abstractly.” Ibid., 35.
with a metaphorical demand for liquidity, so too does capital seek states of liquidity with access to large amounts of cash and credit.\(^\text{26}\)

The metaphorical gold declared by *el oro* at the beginning of *Film Socialisme* alongside the torn pages of *Das Kapital* on the floor of *Concordia, Concordia* illustrate the relationship between the importance of gold in the development of capitalism and colonial efforts of the past several hundred years, much of which happened by sea. As I will discuss shortly, Géricault’s *Raft of the Medusa*, a print of which is on the ceiling of Hirschhorn’s *Concordia, Concordia*, depicts the aftermath of a failed colonial expedition to reclaim the state of Senegal for the French from the British. Political theorist Amedeo Policante writes:

> For Marx, ‘the modern history of capital dates from the creation in the 16th century of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market’ (Marx 1976, 247). He saw ‘the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins’ as ‘the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production’ (Marx 1976, 915).\(^\text{27}\)

European colonial efforts were dependent on the accumulation of gold in order to finance their global expansion. By the sixteenth century, the Royal Navy was England’s largest

\(^\text{26}\) Ibid., 5.

\(^\text{27}\) Amedeo Policante, “The New Pirate Wars: The World Market as Imperial Formation,” *Global Discourse* 3, No. 1 (2013): 55. Ibid. Policante, investigating the relationship between colonial expansion by sea and the rise of piracy, writes “It was these men who were making the commercial and then the industrial revolution possible, and it was these men that had caused a crisis in trade turning to piracy en masse in the early seventeenth century, turning the legally sanctioned freedom to plunder ‘beyond the line’ to their own ends.” Perhaps there is a parallel to be found between the crisis in trade stemming from piracy, and the similar actions of bankers who caused the 2007-2008 crisis.
employer of labour and consumed the greatest material resources employing a mix of English nationals as well as citizens from newly colonized nations.
2 The Archive

2.1 “So we come back to zero”
The archive, like the photograph for Roland Barthes, serves an eschatological purpose by compiling information in an attempt to forestall death. It marks one’s place in time, within a history. The act of writing history is a way to register events through time and avoid a point zero whereby nothingness is present; a nothingness that would entail history to merely be speculative, tenuous and personal. As cinema functions, for Godard, as a mode of writing history, while onboard the Costa Concordia Godard refers to the concept of “zero” three times, effectively calling attention to the importance of writing history and the possibilities of doing history through cinema.

The first mention of “zero” occurs when an unnamed male announces, “We are facing a sort of zero… I once encountered nothingness.” The second occurs in the onboard casino where, in response to the statement, “Money was invented so people wouldn’t have to look one another in the eyes,” the other, unnamed character, replies, “So we come back to zero” (Figure 8). Later on, sitting alone on a stage in a vast, empty auditorium, philosopher Alain Badiou gives a lecture that none attended, aside from Godard’s crew, and announces “…geometry as origin, the origin being always what we come back to…” (Figure 9). The third zero occurs while overlooking the sea. We are told, “Once, in 1942, I encountered nothingness” (Figure 10). Godard’s approach to filmmaking, evoking the logic of the archive, can be understood as a series of conjunctions (as opposed to disjunctions) and is not dialectical. Consequently, the combined statements announce 1942 as a “sort of zero” where one “encountered nothingness.” Godard here is referring to the January 20, 1942 Wannsee Conference, presided over by Nazi SS-Obergruppenführer, Reinhard Heydrich and
conducted by SS-Obersturmbannführer, Adolf Eichman. At a picturesque villa in the Western corner of Berlin, senior SS officials were presented with a list of Jews compiled by Eichmann to be murdered. Eichmann proposed “evacuating” Jews to the east, where concentration camps would be created, in an effort to murder the 11 million Jews, by his estimate, residing in Europe. In Heydrich’s words, this was “practical execution of the final solution.” Culminating in the deaths of an estimated 4-6 million Jews, this conference marks the nothingness sought by Nazi officials.

In considering the relationship between memory and history in her 1961 text “Between Past and Future,” Hannah Arendt argues that for the early Greeks, the concept of history was ineluctably tied to the bios, or life of an individual. As time progressed, however, it was the advent of modernity that ushered in the need for a historical narrative detached from the life of an individual, in an attempt to preserve one’s past. For Arendt, the desire to write history thus becomes independent from the temporality and mortality of the individuals’ life in an effort to preserve narrative. If history is to be understood as tethered to the bios of an individual, history is thus dependent on the link between the historical event and the individual, who of course exists in time and for a limited time only! Under this conceptualization, history resembles a tabula rasa under constant erasure, a recurrent return to zero without escape.28 History must be detached from memory and thus erasure to escape from the perils of nothingness. Sarah Clift, in considering Arendt’s conceptualization of history, notes that “first, history and poetry were given the task of inscribing politics into memory; second, that it is through the “acting in concert” of politics that humans were able

to obviate their own individual mortality; and third, that insofar as political action and human life were thought to be inseparable, the memorial inscription of politics came to be emblematic of humanness as such.”

The writing of history thus constitutes a political, collective attempt to formulate a collective memory that is not dependent on any one individual. The nothingness, the “sort of zero” of 1942 was an attempt to realize such erasure via the destruction of a collective memory.

Alain Badiou, whose statements are overlaid with archival footage of the Costa Concordia ship from afar in what appears to be a promotional video for the ship’s operator, Carnival Corporation, speaks on the notion of geometry as an origin point to which we return, an origin that people must be a part of. Interspersed with dense philosophical thought are pithy utterances such as “free time to do your shopping” by an unnamed female. Afterwards, on the outer deck we look across the sea and onto the lush Mediterranean Coast, the same region that the Costa Concordia sank. An exchange between an unnamed male and female is heard, bringing the relationship between film-as-text, as a historical object, into focus:

Female: “Poor things. The only thing they own is the name we impose on them.”
Male: “There’s nothing more convenient than a text. We only have books to put in books, but when we must put reality in a book… and looking below the surface, we must put reality in reality.”

The task of putting “reality into reality” is the task of the collector, of the archivist who, in obtaining and organizing objects and texts, attempts to make sense of the world today.

For Godard, cinema possesses an archival function that aims to obviate historical erasure through the principles of montage. Film Socialisme not only draws on numerous texts that

29 Ibid., 17.
reside outside of the film, but also draws on documentary footage interspersed with Godard’s own footage. It is through the process of montage, whereby through combining the filmed, fictional events with the found, documentary non-fictional footage history, for Godard, is written. Through such conjunction of film while in dialogue with events inside and outside of fiction, Godard engages the archive in the same manner in which Hirschhorn does: they both poke, probe and force us to ask “What is history?” For Godard, cinema is montage and imparts the entire history of the West.30 Such a strong claim entails that Film Socialisme not only provides a component of the archive of the Costa Concordia and anticipates the grounding of the ship, but also provides the history of the lead-up to the grounding itself. We must consider the vital roles that fiction and non-fiction provide in their collusion in writing history. One crucial subset of metaphor is ekphrasis, a mode of investigation that is engaged both in the writing of this text and in the workings of Film Socialisme and Concordia, Concordia.

The employment of ekphrasis as a methodological tool provides metaphor with greater epistemic weight.31 By engaging both fiction and non-fiction, ekphrasis allows one to write history by employing metaphor thus avoiding mere speculation. Crucially, an analysis that

30 Godard as quoted in Witt, 26-27.
employs ekphrasis engages with the poetic in an attempt to bridge representation with experience. Godard alternates between a variety of image sources in Film Socialisme: in one scene a close-up of two cats meowing back and forth to one another—footage that was an internet meme when Godard made the film—occupies the entire frame of the scene, which abruptly cuts to a prone woman on a bed watching the same meme but on her own laptop. “Meow. That’s what the ancient Romans called their cats,” Alissa explains, thus translating the sound made by the cats into language, a poetic translation in an attempt to represent what is unrepresentable in navigating between documentary, archival footage that originates outside the film yet, through montage, finds itself within (Figure 11). Philosopher Gilles Deleuze has written on Godard at great length in his texts Cinema 1: the Movement-Image (1983) and Cinema 2: the Time-Image (1985), as well as in an interview for the anthology Jean-Luc Godard: Son + Image, 1974-1991. The archive, as a collection that is not dialectical but rather compiles information through time and is a series of conjunctions, matches Godard’s approach to filmmaking. By montaging archival footage in conjunction with footage of his own, Godard searches for a new image that can adequately represent the crisis that faces us today while navigating the problematics of representation. Like the logic of the archive that continually creates while it destroys, Deleuze, writing on Godard’s methodology in “Three Questions About ‘six fois deux,’” notes “to speak, even when speaking about oneself, is always to take the place of someone on whose behalf one claims to be speaking, and to whom one refuses the right to speak…an image gets represented by a

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sound, as a worker is by his shop steward.”

Godard’s methods engage with the poetic spaces investigated through ekphrasis, the very space in between representation and experience.

After Godard’s *el loro/oro* opening sequence, a series of credit intertitles that provide several dozen names of writers, musicians and filmmakers are introduced (Figure 12). Here, Godard directly announces the intertextual, non-singular nature of *Film Socialisme*. Very few of the names are seen, heard or mentioned in the film, with the exception of Alain Badiou, yet all are either obliquely referenced by or informed Godard in the project. In one scene Godard presents a sunset seen from the deck of the Costa Concordia that is uncannily similar to the evening “green ray” sunset from the eponymous film by Godard’s colleague, Eric Rohmer, thus constituting a Deleuzian “crystal-image” that operates in a space between fiction and non-fiction, by presenting the present image of a past film (Figures 13 and 14). As the archive opens itself up to not only spatial but temporal sprawl, *Film Socialisme* makes explicit the need for context, yet blind spots are present: Godard does not mention Deleuze yet Deleuze’s many writings on Godard inform the film. In considering the philosophical

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importance of Godard’s film, John E. Drabinski, in *Godard Between Identity and Difference*, quotes Deleuze:

> Godard transforms cinema by introducing thought into it. He doesn’t have thoughts on cinema, he doesn’t put more or less valid thought into cinema; he starts cinema thinking, and for the first time, if I’m not mistaken. Theoretically, Godard would be capable of filming Kant’s *Critique* or Spinoza’s *Ethics*, and it wouldn’t be abstract cinema or a cinematographic application. Godard knew how to find both a new means and a new ‘image’—which necessarily presupposes revolutionary content. So, in philosophy, we’re all experiencing this same problem of formal renewal.\(^{35}\)

This “revolutionary act” that disposes of the old and ushers in the new, a revolution marked by traces of the old while underwriting a new logic and configuration of the day, engages the problems of the archive that always-already functions as a loss, as a lack, while continually adding to and subtracting from the archival stock. The ‘new image’ created by Godard and contained within the archive always bears a temporal index that marks its moment in time and always references the past. These images, such as the sunset Godard presents in homage to Rohmer’s “Green Ray,” mark historically material, real moments, that are not mere abstractions or abstract images. The totality created by the archive is, by necessity, always incomplete yet can be read as an open-ended story. I am in agreement with Drabinski when he writes:

> Deleuze is claiming Godard capable of filming a philosophical text—that is, producing philosophical discourse itself, and thus not a series of story lines or characters embodying ideas. Godard has never had much use for narrative. This philosophical character of cinematic language “starts cinema thinking.” Starting cinema thinking is precisely the composition of a disalienated, introspective, self-reflexive image.\(^{36}\)

\(^{35}\) John E Drabinski, *Godard Between Identity and Difference* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 5-6. \(^{36}\) Ibid., 6. It is important to note that Drabinski is only concerned with early-mid career Godard whereby Godard shifted focus away from narrative and towards film that incorporated montage and archival, documentary footage. Of course, early Godard films such as *Breathless*, *Weekend* and *Contempt* were all heavily invested in narrative and a coherent, linear story. Drabinski’s focus is *Two
The newly formed image resides outside of narrative yet forms the narrative of the archive itself when considered in conjunction with other images, some of which are within the film, many of which are outside of the film and found in other media. The attempt to narrate is an attempt to interpret and read the archive; an attempt to understand the machinations of history to make sense of one’s own place within a historical story. Thus begins an intertextual process of analysis to determine the nature of the archive, one that recognizes an always-present outside to the archive and involves a sprawling, dispersive field of examination that incorporates a multiplicity of objects, events, and citations. For Walter Benjamin, this process of inquiry is the process of doing history, an ever-extended, open and seemingly infinite project of composing, iterating and reiterating citations. In the Arcades Project, Benjamin argues that “to write history thus means to cite history. It belongs to the concept of citation, however, that the historical object in each case is torn from its context.”

The horizon of history is presented to us in a series of images that create a spatio-temporal understanding of the world: the cinematic images that Godard presents are images that simultaneously refer to the past while ushering in the future at the present moment. This is the image of history itself. Revolutionary progress is often signaled by catastrophe on a micro, day-to-day level yet in the longue durée of history, catastrophe is a logical necessity often determined by economic structures, as in the 2007-2008 crisis.

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38 Drabinski expands upon Deleuze’s supposition of the “problem of formal renewal” and posits that such a problem is to be solved by thinking of the unrepresentable, qua Ranciere, at the limits of thought. Catastrophic violence, such as World War II and the Holocaust, the twentieth century history
an understanding of the image in conjunction with other images; an avoidance of the singular. Citation and intertextuality are key in an effort to understand the image in writing history. Writing history becomes analogous to both the production of art itself for both share an investment in understanding the world that we inhabit while simultaneously presenting representations of the world. Fiction and non-fiction inputs collide, to produce a representational fictional output. *Film Socialisme* is but one of these outputs, *Concordia*. *Concordia* another. Ekphrasis as a methodological tool is an investment in this liminal space between fiction and non-fiction, borrowing elements from one to unpack the other. This approach rightly assumes the world is too overdetermined to provide a reductive historical account and thus concerns, rather, the writing of multiple histories, many of which may be contradictory. The archive, which provides the basis and grounding of historical knowledge, is not and can never be complete. Historical lacks and gaps of information will always be present, a specter within the archive independent of scholarly or historical awareness of these gaps. American poet and translator Cole Swenson notes that ekphrasis disturbs the binaries of representation and experience in an attempt to find where they overlap, an infinitely slim of colonialism and the necessity of civil rights movements to call witness to the violence of sexism and racism bring philosophy towards an existential crisis that potentially exposes its futility. Thus, how can one speak of such violence in catastrophe when tragic events repeatedly occur at the limits, events that dovetail the possibility of thought with the possibility of representation. This Adornoesque thought, picking up on the futility of poetry post-Auschwitz, calls Drabinski to ask of us “What resources can philosophy offer to a language of disaster? How is it that philosophy is disabled by the haunting pain of the world, and then, in a gasp of hope for a future, comes to find itself in need of renewal?” Ibid., 7.
envelop where the line that demarcates one from the other becomes increasingly small.\textsuperscript{39} Hirschhorn’s archive of the Costa Concordia disaster is composed of objects not from the ship itself but rather found objects that act as a poetic interpretation of the objects on board. The haecceity of these objects references the disaster itself and does not bear a mimetic relationship to the world in which they represent. A single life-jacket on the floor points indexically to a deceased body from the actual disaster: the fictive collides with the non-fictive within the archive itself. So, rather than understanding history as bearing a \textit{mimetic} relationship to the past world, ekphratic analysis instead tries to unpack truth by haecceity, or the “thingness” or “thisness” of an object. In other words, it is necessary to consider essence. To understand the essence of some thing is to engage in a subjective poetics of affect, of feeling, of the fictive.

Enmeshed with this formulation of ekphrasis is art historian Carrie Lambert-Beatty’s notion of \textit{parafiction}. Lambert-Beatty recognizes the increasing emphasis on fiction within art and defines parafiction as “like a paramedic as opposed to a medical doctor, a parafiction is related to but not quite a member of the category of fiction as established in literary and dramatic art. It remains a bit outside. It does not perform its procedures in the hygienic clinics of literature, but has one foot in the field of the real.”\textsuperscript{40} Parafictive worlds are invested in and intersect with the world we are in and are not independent, abstracted practices outside

\textsuperscript{39} As the space between representation and experience become increasingly small, the space begins to evoke what Marcel Duchamp termed the \textit{infrathin} or \textit{infraslim}, which is the exceedingly small difference between two things. Duchamp gives the example of the warmth of a just departed seat as being an infrathin difference between the warmth and the seat itself.

\textsuperscript{40} Carrie Lambert-Beatty, “Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility,” \textit{October} 129 (Summer 2009): 54.
of the world: they are of the world, and engage with the world, but, like ekphrasis, employ fictional elements through representation to help us comprehend experience. As an image, parafiction is where fiction and non-fiction, as well as past and present, meet. The non-fictional elements that inform the present fiction construct a history that is always prior to the present moment, giving context to the present while making both the present and future possible.

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41 In Lebanon, contemporary art practices arising out of and after the 1975-1990 civil war engage the parafictional space between fact and fiction. Walid Ra’ad’s the Atlas Group is one of many such practices. Formed in Lebanon in 1999, the Atlas Group is an artist collective that comprises an imaginary foundation in an effort to investigate and document the contemporary history of Lebanon. On the Lebanese Civil War itself, Ra’ad writes: “It is evident in Lebanon and elsewhere that “The Lebanese Civil War” refers to an abstraction. We proceed with the project from the consideration that this abstraction is constituted by various individuals, groups, discourses, events, situations, and, more importantly, by modes of experience. We began by stating, “The Atlas Group aims to locate, preserve, study, and make public documents that shed light on some of the unexamined dimensions of the Lebanese Civil War.”” Alan Gilbert, “Walid Ra’ad,” Bomb Magazine, http://bombmagazine.org/article/2504/. On this refusal to corroborate “Western” narratives of history and colonization, Hanan Toukan notes that these practices attempt “to subvert understandings of how the history of the Lebanese civil war might be read and narrated.” Hanan Toukan, “Negotiating Representation, Remaking War: Transnationalism, Counter-Hegemony and Contemporary Art from Post-Taif Beirut,” in Narrating Conflict in the Middle East: Discourse, Image and Communications Practices in Lebanon and Palestine, eds. Dina Matar and Zahera Harb, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 59.
2.2 Film Socialisme and the Time-Image of the Archive

Upon seeing a series of 610 banker boxes of Andy Warhol’s *Time Capsules* in an exhibition in Paris, Sven Spieker writes:

The boxes seemed to me like so much clutter and background noise—until, that is, I was suddenly struck by a small collection of Concorde memorabilia (napkins, tickets, dinner knives) that Warhol had brought back with him from one of his flights across the Atlantic. A few weeks before I visited the exhibit, a Concorde had crashed on an airfield near the French capital, killing all passengers aboard. Eerily, it was as if the presence of these articles in Warhol’s archive only a week or so after the fatal crash commemorated an event, a trauma—that of those killed on the plane some three decades later—that had not yet occurred when the archive was put together. What the archive records, my experience with Warhol’s boxes seemed to indicate, rarely coincides with what our consciousness is able to register.42

What we envision as “the archive” is imbued in not only a temporal network of past actualities and future possibilities, but a spatial network that always-already incorporates material not yet found given a historical blind spot, consisting of future material to come. A lack is always present that, as Spieker notes, always “haunts” the archive and the “historical record.” The event that has yet to occur (but is always possible), such as the grounding of the Costa Concordia, has the radical potential to demarcate new boundaries of the archive itself by eschewing the narrative that once was for an updated narrative that incorporates and accounts for the new information. The archive is thus subject to the whim of time.

The image of a Concorde airplane on a discarded napkin is of little interest outside of sentimentality until a fatal crash imbues the image with new meaning after the creation of the archive. Similarly, in *Film Socialisme* the intertitle “Egypt” precedes the Costa Concordia pulling out of port. In consideration of the forthcoming catastrophe, the image of the Costa Concordia seen from afar acquires an uncanny form as we take on the role of an omniscient

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narrator of our current history that is aware of an event in which the director, who creates the image, is not. Is this the last voyage? Thus captured within the image that presents itself to us is a diachronous state that ushers the image into the present, while the past that informs the image and is contained within it falls by the wayside: images have a temporal, indexical component.

Such formation of the temporal index of the image plays an important role throughout Film Socialisme. After the opening sequence that links water to money we witness an individual on the outside deck looking across the ocean through the viewfinder of a camera. Dressed all in black, the individual prepares to snap photographs of the sea through his black camera that operates as an extension of his vision (Figure 15). He takes none. After a brief discussion between two individuals on the necessity to “go north,” away from Africa which, we are told, has been abandoned once again we overhear a young boy ask, “You still have the watch, Stepmother?” After some time passes, we briefly return to the two individuals outside of the scene. The boy inquires “Uncle Matthias, why did you say this watch is worth a fortune? It doesn’t even tell the time.” An intertitle Des Choses (Things) interrupts the scene. Two minutes later, the intertitle Comme Ça (Like This) flashes on the screen and we witness a boy, presumably the same one who just inquired about the watch, being chased by a man. A brief struggle ensues. Godard cuts to a close-up shot of a black, Olympus brand camera.

A series of stilled images of the 35mm camera depict an in-progress lens change (Figure 16): the camera lens defines the field of vision and the field of what the viewer will see and thus implies an always-already outside to the image. The final image is necessarily incomplete,
the same specter of incompleteness that haunts the archive. Such incompleteness announces two modalities within the single image: in order for the present to be here, the past must simultaneously be present and hence the single image marks the intersection of present time with past time. The images of the 35mm camera constitute an image that stills and presents this image of time to us. The image, as an archive, is continually reconstituting itself through time in an effort to undergo the contradictory process of marking time while watching time accrue. The film camera, as the object that created the stills we watch pass on screen, simultaneously announces its logic of creation through depicting the object that makes the moment possible. Destabilizing and calling into question this logic, through a change of the lens, represents the necessity of an outside to the world in which we watch. In drawing our attention to the outside of the frame, the moment presented to us mimics the moment of working within the archive, always aware of an outside that predetermines both the archive itself but also the necessary lack within the archive.

Always at a loss, the possibility of a “lens change,” understood as an attempt to declare and invoke a new vantage point, exudes the potentiality of a complete archive if time permitted the collection and organization of all. But as such exactitude and completeness is impossible, what is presented to us in Hirschhorn’s archive must also be necessarily incomplete. The apparatus that makes possible the scene we are watching becomes the object of our visual awareness. The stop-motion movement of the 35mm camera makes visible the logic of the scene itself, for it is the camera that is the starting necessary condition to film the scene of stills. Given the breakdown of continual movement in film whereby images are typically presented at a standardized 24 frames per second, the stop-motion illustrates how film can
disrupt the temporal. The indivisibility of the image, that which is composed of the “virtual” (the image of the past, an indirect image) and the “actual” (the image that presents itself before us) entails the enfolding of time within the present moment. In other words, to read a singular image necessitates a reading of the image in a temporal context with what may inform the present image, but also with attention paid to the possibility of what is to come.

In his 1896 text *Matière et mémoire* (Matter and Memory), Henri Bergson differentiates between two types of awareness: one practical, non-reflective and concerned within the present (matter); the other remembrance, reflective and directed towards representation of the past (memory). Writing specifically on film in *Cinema 2: the Time-Image*, Deleuze employs this duality of matter and memory to account for disjunctive temporalities within cinema. Complimentary to the breakdown of linear time within the archive, time within film—especially in the work of Godard, who invented the jump-cut—can move in erratic, diffuse directions that are not circumscribed by progressive linear time that passes in a regular manner. Time within film must be represented in the form of an image for that is all we are presented with. What is this image of time, and how does this image open up and enfold the logic of temporality within the archive? The “crystal-image” incorporates memory of the past with the present, for without knowledge of the past there is no knowledge not only of the present, but of time itself passing. Moreover, the crystal-image implicates the viewers of the film itself, thus referencing both events within the film while extending out into the world of the spectator. These crystal-images are thus reflections of the world we find ourselves in, yet as a crystal these images diffuse, refract and distort reality. Deleuze writes:

*Just as we perceive things in the place where they are, and have to place ourselves among things in order to perceive them, we go to look for recollection in the place*
where it is, we have to place ourselves with a leap into the past in general, into these purely virtual images which have been constantly preserved through time. It is in the past as it is in itself, as it is preserved in itself, that we go to look for our dreams or our recollections, and not the opposite.\footnote{Gilles Deleuze, \textit{Cinema 2: The Time-Image}, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Caleta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 80.}

The crystal-image is an image that encapsulates and archives time. The moment that the present becomes the past happens in the present moment. Time must split into two “dissymmetrical jets”, one into the past, one into the future, at every present moment.\footnote{Ibid., 81.} To quote Deleuze at length:

\begin{quote}
The crystal-image may well have many distinct elements, but its irreducibility consists in the indivisible unity of an actual image and 'its' virtual image. But what is this virtual image in coalescence with the actual one? What is a mutual image? Bergson constantly posed the question and sought the reply in time's abyss. What is actual is always a present. But then, precisely, the present changes or passes. It is clearly necessary for it to pass on for the new present to arrive, and it is clearly necessary for it to pass at the same time as it is present, at the moment that it is the present. Thus the image has to be present and past, still present and already past, at once and at the same time.\footnote{Ibid., 78-79.}
\end{quote}

In presenting us with the intertitle \textit{Comme Ça} (Like This), Godard forces the viewer to ask: like what? A pithy order given to viewers just after being presented with a young woman freely swimming in the indoor pool on board the Costa Concordia with the subtitle \textit{Jaffà, 1948…}. This woman is a crystal-image that not only represents a passenger on board the Costa Concordia, but a reference to Godard’s preceding film \textit{Notre Musique}. In this 2004 film, Godard, making a cameo in the film to discuss the relationship between “shot” and “reverse shot” while flipping through prints of individuals ostensibly returning to Palestine via boat proclaims:
In 1948, the Israelites walked in the water towards the Promised Land. The Palestinians walked in the water to drown. Shot and reverse shot. Shot and reverse shot. The Jewish people join fiction. The Palestinian people, the documentary.  

The answer appears in the intertextual references to other films, both Godard’s own film and others, to the post-Jaffa, 1948... declarative Comme Ça. Godard closes this scene in Notre Musique with a simple question that takes us back to Film Socialisme: “Can the new little digital cameras save cinema?” Film Socialisme is an investigation of the saving of history through cinema. After the declarative Comme Ça we are brought back on board the Costa Concordia ship, this time at night and under similar conditions faced by the Costa Concordia on the final night of its voyage. A flapping Naval Jack of Italy flag with St. Mark, a Saint known for helping Venetian sailors and now, perhaps, overlooking the wellbeing of the Costa Concordia.

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*46* Jean-Luc Godard, *Notre Musique* (2004). By way of beginning with the notion of archive as history, we arrive at the complimentary notion of image as history in an attempt to further this inquiry. Always accruing material, the archive is, of course, concerned with the present and events happening today, right at this moment. In a timely article titled “Palestine as Archive,” Sherene Seikalay writes:

> These [Palestinian] uprisings do not belong to today alone. They belong to the rebels of 1936-1939 who for a brief moment liberated the cities of Palestine from British rule; to the *fida ‘iyin* of the Palestinian revolution in the 1960s and 1970s; to the strikers and marchers who stood up against land confiscation inside Israel on Land Day in 1976; to the revolutionaries of the first *intifada* who faced brutality with civil disobedience; to the stone throwers whose time in Israeli prisons became rites of passage. Gaza today belongs to the other part of the archive that is the Palestinian condition, the archive of decolonization…. At the thin intersections of popular memory and archival practices lie the stories that people tell to make sense of the everyday. They weave these stories to shape the present, build connections to the past, and stake claims for the future. They draw on continuities. They distinguish ruptures. They attend to that pit of possibility and danger that is historical contingency. They sift through repetition to identify the singular, the new. And they build and nourish an archive: one that keeps a record of colonization and guards the will to decolonize. Gaza today, in its continuities and its ruptures, is an instance of the archive that is the Palestinian condition.  

Sherene Seikalay, “Palestine as Archive,” *Jadaliyya* (2 August 2014),  
Concordia passengers, marks a moment between *Comme Ça* and the voice of an unknown woman asking “Plan on staying in Haifa?” *Shot and reverse shot*, a cinematographic strategy that simultaneously evokes the processes of memory and time by referring to the past while drawing attention to the present moment is absent if we understand time as a string of beads that continually progress.

Returning to the image of the camera undergoing a lens change, we hear an off-camera conversation that deftly moves between three languages, French, English, and German. A man asks a boy, in French, “Where’d you steal that watch?” to which the boy replies, in English, “It’s not your business.” The man replies, again in French, “Give it to me or I’ll turn you in” to which the boy replies, but this time in German, “No, that’s mine.” The man then states, “And educated, to boot. What a piece of work, that Ludovic!” with regard to the boy’s language abilities. The boy, uncertain as to how the man knows his name, asks, “Who told you my name?” to which the man, finally closing the scene, replies “I know everything.” The last line is spoken seemingly out of scene for it comes to us much louder, as though the man spoke closer to the microphone thus creating the effect of hearing an omniscient narrator outside of the film itself acknowledge his prescient abilities. As befits the parafictional nature of *Film Socialisme*, this scene engages the gap between the possibility of the all-knowing archive given in the utterance “I know everything” with a recognition of the multitude of languages that situate, contextualize yet disrupt the individual objects. In considering history as composed of citations, when the possibilities of other languages is introduced into the logic of the archive itself, it is easy to see how the archive opens up onto never ending networks of chains of relationships connected by a series of citations and always open to the
possibility of new citations to come. Note the contradiction between the man’s utterances “I know everything” and his previous statement “Where’d you steal that watch?” If we consider the ever-expanding network of citations within the archive as history, contradictions become paramount to the logic that makes the archive itself possible. Contradictions will never be resolved given the parafictional nature of the archive. What these contradictions entail is not the impossibility of narrative within or of an archive, but the possibility of multiple, unresolved narratives that provide the archive with a story.
3 The Collector-as-Archivist

3.1 Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Concordia, Concordia*
Swiss Artist Thomas Hirschhorn’s practice employs quotidian and often abject materials to create works that, for Hirschhorn, fall into four often overlapping categories: altars, kiosks, monuments, and direct sculptures. 47

Recently reconstructed and situated on a street corner in Long Island, New York, for MoMa PS1’s *September 11* exhibition (2011), an assortment of kitschy objects from tea plates and lit candles to a television, red-yellow-blue spotted blanket alongside similarly coloured paintings, recognizable in their formulaic, grid-like pattern, come together to form an “altar” for Piet Mondrian (Figure 17). 48 Hirschhorn, in constructing altars for Mondrian, Otto Freundlich, Ingeborg Bachmann and Raymond Carver, builds such altars in an attempt to “fix” his heroes and strategically choses locations that are not noteworthy for death may happen anywhere, at anytime.

First situated in the main building of the University of Zurich’s Irchel campus, the *Robert Walser-Kiosk* was a small, cardboard enclosure with enough room for one person to comfortably sit and read pages of his fellow countryman’s novels taped up on the walls (Figure 18). The kiosks are less commemorative than the altar and more informational than the altar. The *Robert Walser-Kiosk* was the first of eight kiosk’s Hirschhorn built on site between 1999 and 2002. Other Kiosks included Ingeborg Bachmann (1999), Emmanuel

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48 The *Piet Mondrian-Altar* was first shown in Geneva in 1997.

In 2013, Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci was made the subject of one of Hirschhorn’s monuments, which are generally the largest, most elaborate installations the artist constructs (Figure 19). A combination of the commemoration of the altar with the information of the kiosk, the 2013 Gramsci monument was erected in the courtyard of the “Forest Houses” apartment blocks, located in New York City’s Bronx. Open to the public, Hirschhorn organized a series of plays and lectures that took place in the “scruffy, ramshackle complex” constructed from “plywood, two-by-fours, blue tarps, brown tape and Plexiglas.” As in his other monuments to philosophers (Georges Bataille, Baruch Spinoza and Gilles Deleuze), Hirschhorn enlisted the assistance of local residents to consult on and construct the monument, all of which are paid (unusual for many “participatory art” projects).

The fourth and final category is the direct sculpture, which is usually an installation constructed within a building. The death of Princess Diana in 1997 spawned the creation of the first direct sculpture, which are “acts of reinscription “signed by the community.”

49 Claire Bishop’s text Thomas Hirschhorn: Establishing a Critical Corpus, investigates the public’s response to Hirschhorn’s participatory projects through a series of interviews with local residents as well as essays by art historians, including Hal Foster. According to Bishop, the purpose of her inquiry was to respond to frequent speculation that participants of such projects, often from marginalized communities, are often portrayed as either “hapless victims or authentic collaborators.” Claire Bishop, Thomas Hirschhorn: Establishing a Critical Corpus (Zurich: JRP Ringier Kunstverlag AG, 2011), 7.

While the other three forms are usually displayed in public spaces, the direct sculptures are often found inside galleries and more formal art exhibitions.

What these four installation forms share in common is an engagement with archival practices through the collection of diffuse, esoteric, and what Hirschhorn, in evoking Marx, calls “precarious” material. As quoted in Hal Foster, “Towards a Grammar of Emergency,” Hirschhorn claims that his “work isn’t ephemeral, it’s precarious…. It’s humans who decide and determine how long the work lasts. The term ‘ephemeral’ comes from nature, but nature doesn’t make decisions.” In calling upon the term “precarious,” Hirschhorn draws attention to the “socioeconomic insecurity” that many workers are in today, considering rising unemployment alongside increasing consolidation of power within the corporation and weakening of labour laws since the crisis of 2007-2008 in a misguided effort to resuscitate capitalism and the economy. This engagement and sourcing of precarious materials to construct an archive underscores the temporality of the archive for the precarious state of a material, no different than a worker who finds himself in similar precarity, can change through time for better, or worse. What is precarious today may not be tomorrow and the opposite, too, holds true. The archive shares a similar temporal component to that of the image, as established, for time informs our reading of the object that is presented to us. The collector who constructs the archive is both compiling objects in space, as well as compiling history in time.

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Walter Benjamin’s conceptualization of the collector-as-archivist predates Deleuze’s conceptualization of the time-image, while both engage Henri Bergson’s entwining of perception with time. Benjamin, looking to the same text by Bergson that Deleuze draws upon, writes:

> At the conclusion of *Matière et mémoire*, Bergson develops the idea that perception is a function of time. If, let us say, we were to live vis-a-vis some things more calmly and vis-a-vis others more rapidly, according to a different rhythm, there would be nothing “subsistent” for us, but instead everything would happen right before our eyes; everything would strike us. But this is the way things are for the great collector. They strike him. How he himself pursues and encounters them, what changes in the ensemble of items are effected by a newly supervening item—all this shows him his affairs in constant flux.… For in the dream, too, the rhythm of perception and experience is altered in such a way that everything—even the seemingly most neutral—comes to strike us; everything concerns us.⁵²

The great collector here is Thomas Hirschhorn, as demonstrated by his 2012 direct sculpture *Concordia, Concordia*. The installation was exhibited one time only at the Gladstone Gallery in New York City some seven thousand kilometers from where the Costa Concordia ran aground. Notably, the exhibition ran from September 14 to October 20, closing one week before New York City was flooded by Hurricane Sandy.

Picking up on the oft-repeated phrase “too big to fail” after the idea that financial institutions, such as those that collapsed in the 2007-2008 crisis, were too interconnected and too large to fail and would be supported by the government by any means necessary, Hirschhorn presents us with an image of the interior of the Costa Concordia post-catastrophe. A collection of objects that construct an archive of the interior of the ship, Hirschhorn created a room turned ninety-degrees counter-clockwise, with tables mounted on the right-most wall to give the impression of the ship turned on its side, as it were. Fluorescent orange life-jackets are

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scattered throughout the floor of the installation, acting as markers for bodies that perished in the disaster. Various pieces of wood, Styrofoam, broken chairs and other assorted refuse are scattered amongst the lifejackets. Life preservers are situated across the floor from the lifejackets, indicating the incompetence of the captain and crew in saving all lives. A kitschy ceiling-light protrudes from the left-most wall. Pages ripped out of Marx’s *Das Kapital* are also scattered about the floor. On *Concordia, Concordia*, Hirschhorn writes: “This must be the form of our contemporary disaster. This must be the ultimate expression of the precarious, which nobody wants to confront.”

This form of our contemporary disaster is both a citation of the grounding of the Costa Concordia, but also a citation of the role of disaster within history itself. Disaster comes to us at a moment where the past collides with the future for catastrophe, for Benjamin, brings on progress. This sense of progress is not to be conflated with “progressive” in a left-leaning political sense but rather in a dialectical sense of pushing or progressing history forward. Just as Hirschhorn calls upon Marx by scattering pages of *Das Kapital* on the floor of *Concordia, Concordia*, Benjamin invokes Marx when developing an epistemology of progress:

Marx, in the afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital*: “Research has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyze its various forms of development, to trace out their inner connection. Only after this work is done can the actual movement be presented in corresponding fashion. If this is done successfully, then it may appear as if we had before us an a priori construction.”

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Here, Benjamin finds recourse in Marx by elucidating the need to unpack the object in a thorough manner in order to historicize and begin to contextualize the object itself. Marx has faith in the notion of a thorough historical understanding that appears as an a priori construction, thus existing prior to empirical analysis and wholly rational. Godard issues viewers this dictum when he instructs us to “look below the surface” when attempting to put “reality in a book,” in other words, to write history.

Hirschhorn’s *Concordia, Concordia* is an archive of the catastrophe of the present moment. The grounding of the Costa Concordia is more than mere spectacle, for *Concordia, Concordia* is parafictive, situated between the fiction of the installation and the non-fiction of the catastrophic event of the grounded ship. It is here, at this moment of parafiction that history is to be understood, which coincides with where the archive is epistemically located: through intertextual reference to political texts writing on the actual world, yet employing kitschy objects as stand-ins for the real, Hirschhorn’s installation opens up onto both the filmic stills and sequences as analyzed here from *Film Socialisme* and the historical facts that surround the grounding of the ship. This is citation.

For Benjamin, the attempt to ground history in progress, which is a remnant of Hegel’s teleological account of history, is anathema to the possibility of revolutionary change. The

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individual perpetually waits for the “right” moment to come, yet is constantly caught in the present moment. Benjamin, moreover, links this notion of progress to catastrophe:

The concept of progress must be grounded in the idea of catastrophe. That things are “status quo” is the catastrophe. It is not an ever-present possibility but what in each case is given. Thus Strindberg (in *To Damascus?):* hell is not something that awaits us, but this life here and now.

Hirschhorn invokes Benjamin in calling Costa Concordia the form of our contemporary disaster. What may not seem like “progress” to those on board and who suffered through the tragedy is seen as progress from the situation of the spectator who observes history, except the catastrophic event here is anathema to capitalism. This disaster functions as a two-way metaphor for both the crisis of liquidity that takes the image or form of a sinking ship on the high seas of capital as well as an allegory for the Sisyphus-like struggle faced by the collector Hirschhorn in the creation of the archive.

The futility of the archive is bound up in the attempt to situate its objects as images of the event being archived in a self-contained, complete sense. Just as the crystal-image recognizes the moment in which the past and future meet in the present, so too does the historical moment recorded in the archive as part of history contain a past being read in the present to construct the future. So while Hirschhorn’s kitschy tables mounted on the wall cite the actual tables where passengers dined moments before the Costa Concordia ran aground, the tables

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55 While I employ Deleuze’s notion of the crystal-image as it relates explicitly to cinema, it is important to note that Benjamin, too, formulates a conception of the image that is also dialectical and accounts for both present and past modalities within a single image. This is unsurprising given both look extensively to Bergson’s text *Memory and Matter*. For Benjamin, only the dialectical image is properly historical.

56 Ibid., N9a, 1.
too cite the tables filmed by Godard within the realm of fiction, as a film, yet documentary as depicting the actual tables themselves. (Hirschhorn may or may not have been aware of Godard’s *Film Socialisme*.) Nevertheless, his work simultaneously cites both texts while his work is, too, cited by those in the past.) On the attempt to place an object within an archive and develop a narrative, Benjamin writes:

> What is decisive in collecting is that the object is detached from all its original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind. This relation is the diametric opposite of any utility, and falls into the peculiar category of completeness. What is this “completeness”? It is a grand attempt to overcome the wholly irrational character of the object’s mere presence at hand through its integration into a new, expressively devised historical system: the collection.

Like the crystal-image, the archive overcomes the irrationality of investigation at the level of the present moment (avoiding an investigation of “mere presence”) and instead situates the object within a nexus of historical citations facilitated by the archive itself and the inquiries that select (or curate) the objects placed within. As history is a series of citations, so too is the archive. The archive becomes synonymous with history on these theoretical grounds. History takes the abstract form of the material nature of the archive, yet the two are intertwined in a nexus that continually implicates and informs the other.

On the ceiling of *Concordia, Concordia* is a print of Théodore Géricault’s monumental history painting *Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819) (Figure 20). Departing for Senegal on the

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57 Upon commencing this project in early 2013, I discovered that few people were aware that the cruise ship in *Film Socialisme* was the Costa Concordia. To the best of my knowledge, the only review up to early 2013 to make the connection between the two was by Xan Brooks, “Costa Concordia provided setting for a 2010 Jean-Luc Godard film,” *The Guardian* (15 January 2012), [http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/15/costa-concordia-jean-luc-godard](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/15/costa-concordia-jean-luc-godard).

58 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, H1a, 2.
17th of June 1816, the French frigate Méduse with roughly four hundred passengers on board had Captain Hugues Duroy de Chaumereys at the helm despite only sailing on a handful of occasions over the previous twenty years. En route on a mission to repossess Senegal upon handover from the British, then French Governor to Senegal, Colonel Julien-Désiré Schmaltz and his wife, were also on board. The ship was headed for disaster despite being part of an expedition of four vessels. I wish to turn here to Julian Barnes’s poetic explication of the tragedy of the Méduse, where he writes:

The sea was strewn with rocks; brigantines could not frequent these seas at low water. They had doubled Cape Blanco, or so they believed, when they found themselves in shallows; the lead was cast every half hour. At daybreak Mr. Maudet, ensign of the watch, made out the reckoning upon a chicken coop, and judged that they were on the edge of the Arguin reef. His advice was discounted. But even those unschooled in the sea could observe that the water had changed color; weed was apparent at the ship’s side, and a great many fish were being taken. In calm seas and clear weather, they were running aground. The lead announced eighteen fathoms, then shortly afterwards six fathoms. The frigate luffing almost immediately gave a heel, a second and third, and then stopped. The sounding line showed a depth of five metres and sixty centimetres. By misfortune, they had struck the reef at high tide, and, the seas becoming violent, attempts to free the ship failed. The frigate was assuredly lost.  

Just under two hundred years prior to the grounding of the Costa Concordia, a similar incident marked by poor navigation and incompetence occurred; an event little different than the one that presents us today. As a weak messianic power proclaimed by Benjamin, the present moment enters into agreement with the past as a form of determinism offered by historical materialism. This determinism returns us to Marx’s proclamation of a necessity to trace out the inner connection of the event, as futile as it may be to attempt to develop a complete, holistic account. Here, another grounding of a ship explicitly referred to in Hirschhorn’s Concordia, Concordia, constructs a historical loop of citations that recognize a beginning that informs the present. The Medusé finds itself intertwined with the grounding of

the Costa Concordia and both prior representations of it before (*Film Socialisme*) and representations that come after (*Concordia, Concordia*). As Marx aphoristically proclaimed in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*: “History repeats itself… the first time as tragedy, then as farce.”

With insufficient lifeboats on board for the passengers, the remaining one hundred and fifty took to building a raft and set sail again for what would be an even more calamitous voyage, this time lasting fourteen days resulting in acts of mutiny and cannibalism that will leave only fifteen survivors. In the passage excerpted above, Barnes gives an evocative, illustrative account of the events on board the raft, ostensibly reading the painting that he pointedly acknowledges is itself, a fiction. Barnes self-reflectively asks “Is this what happened?” and goes on to note the factual details as follows:

The expedition set off on 17th June, 1816.  
The Medusa struck the reef in the afternoon of 2nd July, 1816.  
The survivors were rescued from the raft on 17th July, 1816.  
Savigny and Corréard published their account of the voyage in November, 1817.  
The canvas was bought on 24th February, 1818.  
The canvas was transferred to a larger studio and restretched on 28th June, 1818.  
The painting was finished in July, 1819.  
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It was a news story that received tremendous attention and was considered an international embarrassment for the French. Géricault made numerous preparatory drawings and paintings for character studies and he also examined the archive of the Médusa and consulted eyewitness testimony. The utmost attention was paid to verisimilitude. Art historian Jonathan Crary notes that “according to Charles Clément, one of his earliest biographers, Géricault assembled an immense “dossier crammed with authentic proofs and documents of all sorts,”

60 Ibid., 44.
indicating that Géricault attempted to collect every news story and public document about the expedition and shipwreck, every bit of eyewitness testimony including the best-selling firsthand account by two survivors, J.B. Savigny and Alexandre Corréard.”

Géricault did not merely depict that which could be corroborated, however.

There are twenty bodies depicted on the raft yet biographers Savigny and Corréard, in their 1817 book *Naufrage de la frégate la Méduse*, note there were only fifteen survivors. So while the extra five are indeed dead, all deceased bodies had been culled and thrown overboard thus contradicting Géricault’s account. This oscillation between fiction and non-fiction of what is depicted in the painting and what actually occurred, of elliptical inclusion of *Raft of the Medusa* in the archive *Concordia Concordia*, engages in the parafiction of the archive and the poetics of ekphrasis. The possibility of ascertaining the past as it actually was is made impossible through the infinite, always open citations demanded by the logic of the archive. So while the crystal-image presents us with an evocation of the past within the present moment this past, too, is also fleeting. “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it “the way it really was,”” but rather, Benjamin writes, “It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.” The image of this moment of danger comes to use through the crystal-image whereupon the past haunts the present.

Deleuze writes:

> First, there is no present that is not haunted by a past and a future, by a past that is not reducible to a former present, by a future which does not consist of a present to come.


Simple succession affects the presents which pass, but each present co-exists with a past and a future without which itself would not pass on. It is characteristic of the cinema to seize this past and this future that coexist with the present.  

Here, Deleuze echoes Benjamin in the need to seize the past and future that we witness in the present moment. Continually informed by the past while determining the future, the archive operates within the same ontology as given to us here by way of the image. *Concordia*, *Concordia* does double-duty as that which presents us with both the crystal-image of a moment of disaster while taking on the role of archive that enacts the possibility of history.  

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63 Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 37-38.
Conclusion
The prescience of *Film Socialisme* potentially masks its ability to portend the Costa Concordia catastrophe and instead be framed as mere coincidence. This reading is shortsighted once we consider the image as possessing a temporal component that indexically marks the past while presenting an image in the current moment. Deleuze’s formulation of the *crystal-image* that incorporates the Bergsonian duality of *matter* and *memory* encapsulates and archives this moment. By understanding both Godard’s film and Hirschhorn’s installation as *parafictive* works that rupture the boundaries of *fiction*, the importance of Benjamin’s formulation of history as a process of continual citation becomes more clear. Writing history invokes the past in the present moment, while drawing from a constellation of fictional and non-fictional sources. As a subset of metaphor, *ekphrasis* disturbs the boundaries of *representation* and *experience* while opening up the archive—such as *Concordia, Concordia*—to incorporate both fictional and non-fictional elements by also recognizing the importance of experience and the “thingness” or *haecceity* of its constituent parts. Thus, archives are not singular, non-fictional entities but rather, archives are a nexus of endlessly messy fictional and non-fictional components that allow us, as historians, to write and try to understand history. The possibilities are infinite in this atemporal inquiry.

In its varied instantiations one common conceptualization of the archive dominates all: the notion of the archive as providing the bedrock upon which history is founded upon. Archives, however, are not a bedrock. Archives are unstable, resembling a seemingly infinite sea of crashing waves extending beyond the horizon of what is visible, while still operating as the grounding upon which history is formed. The image encapsulates the temporality of the
archive itself through similar workings. Just as the archive draws upon material of the past to make sense of the present moment while speculating about the future, so too does the image operate under this logic of continually citing the past while existing in the present.

Thus, the habit of understanding history as a linear chain of causally related events dissolves. As demonstrated by the interrelations of Godard, Hirschhorn and Géricault, the approach I have proposed here recognizes the fog of history in attempting to reconcile the non-fictional with a world of fictions. Walter Benjamin writes:

> Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, though events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one.\(^\text{64}\)

The point zero of history as archive appears to the historian as a diachronic constellation of images that mark the event. What unfolds before us is not only the notion of archive as history but a complementary understanding of the image as archive.

\(^{64}\text{Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History, 263.}\)
Figures

Figure 1. Thomas Hirschhorn *Concordia, Concordia* at the Gladstone Gallery, New York City, 2012. Photograph by Andrew Russeth via Flickr, [https://secure.flickr.com/photos/sixteen-miles/8089031831/](https://secure.flickr.com/photos/sixteen-miles/8089031831/). Creative Commons Attribution, [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/).
Figure 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of the two parrots that open *Film Socialisme*. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Loro). Film still, 2012.

Figure 2. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Loro). Film still, 2012.
Figure 3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of a 2p pusher game. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (2p Pusher). Film still, 2012.

Figure 3. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (2p Pusher). Film still, 2012.
Figure 4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of ocean overlaid with the subtitle “Money is a public good.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, Film Socialisme (Money is a public good). Film still, 2012.

Figure 4. Jean-Luc Godard, Film Socialisme (Money is a public good). Film still, 2012.
Figure 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of people queueing for a buffet. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Buffet Queue). Film still, 2012.

Figure 5. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Buffet Queue). Film still, 2012.
Figure 6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of a priest conducting a sermon. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Faith). Film still, 2012.

Figure 6. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Faith). Film still, 2012.
Figure 7 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of two men in a casino overlaid with the subtitle “gold Bank of Palestine.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (gold Bank of Palestine). Film still, 2012.

Figure 7. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (gold Bank of Palestine). Film still, 2012.
Figure 8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of the previous two men in a casino overlaid with the subtitle “So we come back to zero.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (So we come back to zero). Film still, 2012.

Figure 8. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (So we come back to zero). Film still, 2012.
Figure 9 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of philosopher Alain Badiou delivering a lecture overlaid with the subtitle “the origin being always what we come back to.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Alain Badiou, the origin being always what we come back to). Film still, 2012.

**Figure 9.** Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Alain Badiou, the origin being always what we come back to). Film still, 2012.
Figure 10 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of ocean overlaid with the subtitle “Once, in 1942, I encountered nothingness.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Once, in 1942, I encountered nothingness). Film still, 2012.

Figure 10. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Once, in 1942, I encountered nothingness). Film still, 2012.
Figure 11 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of Alissa watching an internet video of two cats overlaid with the subtitle “Meow. That’s what the ancient Egyptians called their cats.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Meow. That’s what the ancient Egyptians called their cats). Film still, 2012.

Figure 11. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Meow. That’s what the ancient Egyptians called their cats). Film still, 2012.
Figure 12 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of an intertitle listing various texts that influenced the film. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Textos intertitle). Film still, 2012.

Figure 12. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Textos intertitle). Film still, 2012.
Figure 13 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a sunset. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Sunset for Rohmer, the Green Ray). Film still, 2012.

**Figure 13.** Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Sunset for Rohmer, the Green Ray). Film still, 2012.

Figure 14 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a sunset. Original source: Eric Rohmer, *The Green Ray*. Film still, 1986.

**Figure 14.** Eric Rohmer, *The Green Ray*. Film still, 1986.
Figure 15 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of a man with a camera. Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Camera). Film still, 2012.

Figure 15. Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Camera). Film still, 2012.
Figure 16 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a picture of a man holding a camera overlaid with the subtitle “Give it to me or I’ll turn you in.” Original source: Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Camera stilled: Give it to me or I’ll turn you in). Film still, 2012.

**Figure 16.** Jean-Luc Godard, *Film Socialisme* (Camera stilled: Give it to me or I’ll turn you in). Film still, 2012.
Figure 20. Théodore Géricault, Raft of the Medusa, 1818-1819.
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