

PIECES OF SAN FRANCISCO

“It is thus, in this *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.” – Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1995)



I. SUB-CALLA

San Francisco (February 2004) ... To start ... Chez Papa (‘Bistrot’), on Potrero Hill ... The origin of a circle (perhaps), a spiral, some-thing else ... The small, delicate Calla lily poised atop an ever-so-slight, slender stem ... rising from a vase, amid branches of Forsythia ... Out of the void of its dislocation, its allocated lot, its relocation, its occasion as decorative art ... Amidst diners, there as symbol and cipher (*pour votre vous et mon moi* ...) ... A Proustian thing-not-in-itself (formerly *with/for itself*) ... an unraveling moment ... unfurling, spiraling (circling) into discourse ... An opening above / below things ... spilling ...

Springing from origins unknown by way of a market-place (assemblage) of effects and affects ... Its *mise en scène* no longer authentic (originary), as place changes place, from hand to hand, now displaced ... and the vast world of its ‘classical’ point of arrival (*Aletheia**) lost and found ... Here, and there ... Here, then gone ... Re-situated in a stream of words ... now ... The conversation *en passant*, the swirling corolla of concepts, turns, twists, swoops, suggestions, whispers (*sursurrations*), categorical and singular ... Evasive and invasive ... and gorgeous ...

“The vulnerability of a place enables its sacral myth.” –Raimund Abraham

(1963)

San Francisco ... A man pissing in Maiden Lane (High Street of high streets) ... The city paralyzed by the Chinese New Year ... No one home at Berkeley’s School of Architecture ... The usual suspects at the CCA (California College of the Arts), problematizing the idea of the monument (by way of the World Trade Center Memorial competition, or the ‘cult of the monument’) ... The fusion thing (Landscape + Architecture) slowly coalescing in the space in-between loud reputations and low voices ... in-between the Present-Present and the Present-Past ... a black-and-blue gap in things ... The Embarcadero grossly over-subscribed ... Crissy Field decomposing (again) ... (Not George Hargreaves’ fault) ... Mission Bay waiting (to be reborn from the ruins, yet no longer a ‘bay’ ... long-since filled in) ... Union Square weeping cash ... Deranged classicism on display at the Palace of Fine Arts (the original ‘plaster’ version replaced in 1967 by a concrete and steel edition ... a pseudo-sublime spectacle ... a remaindered ‘remainder’ from the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Expo, designed by Bernard Maybeck) ... the sur-real Eternal Return of the Same ... *Civitas* as capital flows plus heterotopias ...

The bridges yawn ... The bay swells ... The fog rolls in ... Below the Calla (*sub-calla*) everything else (missing, yet barely discernable) lies half-asleep ... Shipwrecks / abandoned ships (buried below the city) ...

To erase the surface ... The magical imprint of the program ... To reveal everything else ... The palimpsest ... The secret archive ... The physical, non-physical coordinates below / within things ... An archive that arrests ... that places things under “house arrest” ... San Francisco as frozen time ... Waiting ... Ticking ... Dreaming ...

The dense stacks of William Stout Architectural Booksellers (landscape in the cellar ...) ... The thumping levels of Virgin music on Market Street ...



A salmon-pink cap for Human Rights (\$19.99) ... Couturiers to chic young things, Abercrombie & Fitch at 'Nordstroms' (at the south-west corner of Yerba Buena's "87-acre mixed use urban redevelopment" ... offering no Žižek ... no escape ... The (in)famous "philosophically-inflected" catalogue 'pulled' last year ... Clothing store as pseudo-pornographic 'novel(ity)' ... Too much edge ... Too little accommodation of that everyday nothingness otherwise known as good taste (American style ...) ... and therefore controversial and 'popular' ...

How does the personal impress (leave its trace) in the impersonal ??? ... in the work of art and architecture ??? ... How does the impersonal press in upon the person ??? ... This trace of personal history is never effaced in the work of art insofar as it is not erased or secreted therein ... The idea that a work of art or architecture arrives out of nowhere (through a-historical inspiration) is both the sign of its origin (its myth) and the covering up of this origin ... The biographical nature of things (their singularity, uniqueness) is both misleading and unavoidable ... "History starts out as truth and becomes lies ... Myth starts out as lies and becomes truth ..." (Cocteau) ... Yet Richard Serra's origins (and the origins of Serra's brutalist anti-aesthetic) lie in the broken shipyards of San Francisco Bay ...



The work of architecture (and urbanism) is the sign of that rupture in things that allows its appearance (admitted only by the bravest / most strenuous of architects, such as Raimund Abraham) ... This rupture is a matter (often) of calculated force ... It is in the same way that the idea of a work arrives ... It somehow emerges from the maelstrom of impressions, iterations, and working documents *of the process* ... To claim it is simply what it is, is to also claim that it is original (and/or inexplicable ...) ... For such a work to be original (authentic), paradoxically, it must also have an origin (being given) ... The surface of the work conceals the origin, as a person with whom we might converse selects what is heard (said) and what expressions are folded into discourse ... which signals are sent and which signals fly below the radar ... It is those signals that fly below the radar that are the source of apprehensions and / or intuitions in the *field* of architecture and design ... Aura and gesture are forms of sublimated intuitions ... These intuitions are often



lacerating ... a qualitative force versus a quantifiable presence ... The entire rhetorical operation of presence and absence (absence of presence, and presence of absence) conjoins the qualitative and the quantifiable ... The negative monument (Heizer) represents this inversion of formerly positive forms, creating (in the process of inversion, elision, rupture) a vast gestural art of a 'formally contaminated' topology of voids and things ... Is it morally suspect terrain ??? ... this anarchic architecture ??? ... Matta-Clark's supposed 'transparency' ??? ...

[ENTR'ACTE]

Things are forever misleading us ... They feign singularity when in fact they are the result of manifold factors and forces ... Nothing is simply black and/or white ... The work of architecture, as it stands alone and mired in singularity, effaces the entire spectrum (the spectral nature) of its being ... All architecture is haunted by its own mythic reserve ... its own repressions and sublimations (continuous or dialectical ...) ... It must, in fact, be addressed as a person ... It must be questioned and probed for what it wants, what it might conceal, and what it might become under different circumstances ... For such works to reside in singularity they must also shut down discourse and impose silence on the implicit discourse of all things that engage other things ... Or they

must find a spokesperson (or critic) to perpetuate the fictional address of that singularity ... Thus the mawkish film 'My Architect' (at the Castro) and an audience full of architects (and its simultaneous screening in Berkeley, a few blocks from the edge of the UC Berkeley campus) ...

Reading Vilem Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (1983) and Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995), simultaneously, brings to the foreground much that is nominally thrust into the background in both photographic imagery and textual documentation (and scholarship) ... Both types of information theory, deployed 'horizontally' (in time), result in a blind adherence to a surface of codified language (discourses) ... Both contain the mark of an authorized reading even if just below this surface resides all manner of unauthorized, sometimes automatic subsidiary readings ... hauntings ... The nature of the archive and the nature of the photographic or filmic image are close to the nature of the architectural image ... Today, indeed, they are interwoven ... folded into one another in the architectural media ... All three, as modernist (now 'post-industrial', 'info-technical') artifacts, share a bias (however temporal) for the misleading currency of surface articulation at the expense of depth ... All three (photography, texts, architecture) could be said to engage in Flusser's processes (theories) of the apparatus, the processes that convert experiences into "states of things" ... "The way in which they put a magic spell on life ..." ... or "the way in which we experience, know, evaluate and act as a function of these images." Thus, Derrida finds in the archive a destructive 'drive', an instinctive urge (a perverse libidinal economy ...) ... "The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself." ... This "invincible necessity", this "three-named drive" (death drive, aggression drive, destruction drive) "destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement." ... "It is at work, but since it always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own." ... "It will always have been archive-destroying, by silent vocation." ... And thus Flusser finds in the multiplication of photographic imagery (in the photograph as the first post-industrial object/thing ... in the "immobile and silent surface") a magical-ritual act capable of inducing a cultural stupor ... of making life a function of a mechanism or apparatus (the camera itself ... architecture itself ??? ... and the technological drive to obscure and enchant ... to become ever more complicit in de-naturing experience ... in producing an immense network (Cacciari's *nervensleben*) of apparatuses (often, now, disembodied) that conceal the fictitious nature of a nature only 'apparently' reflected in the lying mirror of photography ... in contemporary mimesis / imagology) ... It is the artist and the photographer (and the architect and the archivist) who might labor against these parallel drives (buried in the production of the work ...) ... On the one hand, a drive to destroy all traces of the violence implicit in the making of marks (the rupture that induces the work ...) ... and, on the other hand, the faceless, mechanical penchant to enchant (enslave, engender, enfold ...) ... It is, as always, the free experience of the world that is at stake in all such operations ... covering up or appropriating what Jean-Luc Marion has called "the stigmata of the invisible", that which comes into being by way of 'the given' (that which is 'being given' everyday, and taken away everyday ... to be returned as an instrumentalized some-thing else) ...

It is out of such 'invincible'/invisible physical (and metaphysical) and cultural (and horticultural) substrates that the Calla lily is born(e) ... borne aloft on the slenderest of stems ... a super-model ... gamine ... coquette ... sinecure of all things *sub-calla* ... a terrible beauty ... And at what cost ??? ... (02/08/04)

II. SELLING SAN FRANCISCO

"They [gardens] are, rather, compositions in the topological space." – Isamu Noguchi

Union Square ... enveloped in shopping ... Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Gucci, Victoria's Secret ... Niketown, Harry & David, Neiman Marcus (Philip Johnson, 1982), Tiffany & Company ... "Impulsive" and "Effortless" clothes for urban youth at Levi's ... "Laidback" and (also) "Carefree" ... Parking below the square (since 1942) ... very early "landscape urbanism" ... San Francisco's self-proclaimed "European piazza" ... Iconic palm trees at the corners ... Rulli ("Il Caffe" at 333 Stockton) poised atop the giant plinth of Union Square (atop the garage) ... facing the inner (heart of) the Square ... Black granite sitting walls ... granite and concrete paving ... typical urban 'hardscape', over structure ... Landscape as infrastructure (again and again) ... Pointless pavilions (floating in the architectural ether) ... fragments of the suppressed ... the garden-architectural trace ... Neo-Art-Deco lamps as sculpture ... "Flagship Retail for Lease" on Stockton (call 415.986.2220) ... At the center, the "monument dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt" (The Big Stick) commemorating the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in 1898 ... The triumph of imperialism ... the triumph of capitalism ... In the Presidio, now-quiet batteries ring the western edge of the new national park ...



North on Stockton to Chinatown and, then, North Beach ... The antithesis of Union Square ... mostly shoddy goods, odd bits of everything, by the acre, covering acres ... City Lights Bookstore on Columbus ... left-leaning books upon left-leaning books ... Tariq Ali's latest triumph, *Bush in Babylon* ... Straight to the topographics section (non-fiction in the basement), philosophy nearby ... Looking for Jean-Luc Marion ... Finding first *The Crossing of the Visible* [*La Croisée du visible*, 1996] ... asking for any others ... returning to find *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness* [*Etant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, 1997] faced out, but hiding behind another book ... "Cultural Memory in the Present", indeed ... Further up Stockton, Washington Square with Ben Franklin amid a grove of poplars ... Coit Tower in the distance ... Ancient conifers at the east edge of the park ... A fellow *flâneur* grumbles as I take pictures, "That's Franklin ... He's the one on the one-hundred dollar bill ..." ... North-east toward the ferry terminal, to check the timetable for ferries to Tiburon ... through Justin Herman Park ... past the ageing, concrete waterless fountain-thing by Armand Vaillancourt c.1971 (waiting to be removed ???) ... Commuter ferries to Sausalito, Vallejo and Tiburon ply the inky waters of the bay (tourist ferries to the west at Fishermans Wharf) ... The sun shines straight down Market Street ... blinding anyone heading west, up Market ... shadows engulf the canyons of the Financial District ... Catch the 15 bus back to Mission Bay ... (02/11/04)

III. LOLITA(S) ON POTRERO HILL

"How does one prove in general an absence of archive, if not in relying on classical norms (presence / absence of literal and explicit reference to this or to that, to a this or to a that which one supposes to be identical to themselves, and simply absent, *actually* absent, if they are not simply present, *actually* present; how can not, and why not, take into account *unconscious*, and more generally *virtual* archives)?" – Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1995)

Reading Derrida by candlelight ... by the light of two Lolitas (tequila, triple sec, and grenadine) ... served by a type of Lolita ... at Lingba (deranged monkey) bar on Potrero Hill ... Derrida reading Freud ... passing judgment on the nature of the archive, the archive of repressions ... the repressions of the archive ... The manufacturing of haloes ...

"The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future." – Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1995)

Derrida speaks (writes) of three doors, each one (of the first two?) opening to another ... "The last door opens, of course, at the last sentence of the book." Or, "where nothing is decided." And the specter of Walter Benjamin appears ... And a "narrow door" ... All three are "doors of the future" ... "What is a door doing when it opens onto a door? And above all onto a door one has passed through, in the *passage* of what comes to pass. In the *passage* to come?" ... Echoes of Benjamin's *Passagenwerk* ??? ... Echoing passages ??? ... Shopping malls (arcades ... Coney islands) of the mind ...

Of course Derrida hardly names the *first* door before proceeding (passing) to the *second* door ... But he asks the pertinent question nonetheless ... "[I]s there a historian of the promise, a historian of the first door?" ... This door, then, appears to open on *the past* ...

"The *third door* is also the first ..." ... The question of substrate (actuality), or that which supports the archive returns ... What it is ... It is, after all, what it is ... Even when it is most often quite simply nothing ... Artaud's 'subjectile' ??? ... and to 'unsense' the subjectile ...



IV. DEEP GRADIENT (AND SLUDGE)

“Deep Gradient / Suspect Terrain” ... by John Roloff (1993) at Yerba Buena “Gardens” ... “Painted steel, glass, water, continental shelf sediment, view ports ...” ... A terrarium, in other words, on axis with Botta’s unpronounceable SFMoMA ... A sinking “glass ship [...] that refers to the natural and geological history of California [...]” ... A green, iconic archive of sludge lodged in the passage from the Yerba Buena garden terraces toward Third Street and the Museum ... “Diverse mineral and organic matter extracted from the landscape by the rivers that flow to the sea through the Golden Gate [...]” ... A hot-house flower (a mini Magic Mountain ???) ... An art-house provocation ... the over-turned ambulance is gone (“This is not an accident [...] Please do not call 911 [...]”) ... Pathetic fallacy and art-chive at once ... “Natural cycles of growth, decay and rebirth [...]” ... “To repress the archive while archiving the repression [...]” ... San Francisco rests on sludge ... after all ... It is born (reborn) from sludge everyday ... Its everyday archive is sludge ... Botta’s severe, striated box for Modern art rests in (arrests) time ... storing the artifacts of what passes for the exemplary ... Yet it is not guilty of this *per se*, as it attempts a ‘timelessness’ (by way of the Ticino) that is, in turn, hijacked by time (by its insertion into San Francisco) ... “Botta’s building served as a forceful catalyst in changing the direction of SFMoMA and bringing about its rise to prominence. The fortress-like structure, patterned in cinnamon-colored brick accentuated with zebra-

striped stone, has become a San Francisco landmark.” ... “Grandiosity is conveyed by the building’s rigorously symmetrical order and pure geometric volumes. The monumental aura has been compared to a cathedral [...] And as in a cathedral, the majestic vision elicited by the exterior is reinforced by the soaring space of the interior. A central atrium with glistening black marble floor, walls sheathed in pale birchwood, a grand altar-like stairway broken by stacked trays of balconies, and a 100-foot-high glass-ceilinged tower crossed by a dramatic steel bridge on the top level elicits awe.” (Sidra Stich, *Art-Sites: San Francisco*, 2003, *passim*) ... Modern art rises from the muck, the salty brine of history ... wave upon wave, repression upon repression, severing ties ... It archives its own repressions ... Yet it too is futural ... Its trajectory is already over the horizon ... To be modern is no longer to be Modern ... Inside, Sugimoto’s anti-divine, five-part panel ‘Last Supper’ (2002) ... a photo of a Japanese wax museum’s recreation ... witness to the contemporary idiom of photography without perspectival distortion – that is, ideality proposed and deferred ...

V. THE MISSION (YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED)

Gentrification ... “None of these people live here!”, she screamed (during the go-go years of the Dot.com bubble ...) ... regarding the wall-to-wall invasion of the Mission ... Habitat for Humanity has installed a few tutelary housing units along Mission Street (in Soma) ... Anyway ... En route to Color 2000 to pick up slides of haute-couture fashion (from *Vogue*, October 1997), luscious “editorial pages” photographed by Peter Lindbergh ... gamines frolicking in fabulous gardens ... poseurs ... “*The Age of Innocence* meets *Metallica* [...]” ... Proposition ‘J’ has made the front page of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* ... exposed as stalking horse for the upscale (mixed use) re-development of Mission Bay ... So-called ‘workforce’ housing, but for upper-middle-class, white-collar workers ... Double income, no kids (as urban planners refer to them ...) ... The City yet ‘reeling’ from the ‘economic downturn’ ... that is, the so-called Dot.com implosion ... The putative all-purpose excuse for the further selling of the city, notwithstanding fewer outbursts (perhaps) of personal anomie in The Mission ... More room to maneuver for pro-development politicians and real estate speculators ... Slow-moving structural ‘dislocation’ ... pushing the low-income workers further and further afield while throwing a bone to the advocates of fine-textured neighborhoods ... What is Humanity ??? ... An abstraction ??? ... Everyone ??? ... Or does it only come to a very real, very potent expression in the form of the dispossessed ??? ... San Francisco is crawling with ‘homeless’ people (many of which have, nominally, ‘homes’ ... apartments at least),



especially the neo-baroque spaces of the Civic Center (City Hall recently re-gilded, top-to-bottom, anyway) ... (The proposition was defeated at the polls on March 3 ...) ...



Mission Bay re-development ... 1999 to 2019 ???
... 303-acre site, former Southern Pacific rail yards
... “A new neighborhood, with a biotech-centered campus of the University of California San Francisco” as its “centerpiece” ... “Life-sciences industry” (Sidra Stich, *op. cit.*) ... The aesthetic divide widens ... More neo-traditional houses are proffered with stoops in the TransBay redevelopment scheme ... Even the Greens agree ... Another Dogpatch ??? ... On the opposite side of the chasm are the mid-rise condominium blocks (selling for an average of \$300,000 ...
Manhattanization was defeated ‘the last time around’ (high-rise, *de luxe* condominiums inserted into low-rise neighborhoods ...) ... The new

version of ‘mixed-use’ redevelopment requires at least 40% of a middle-income family’s income ... \$2000 to \$3000 a month ...) ... Bus drivers and nurses earn perhaps \$45,000 ... Junior professors about the same ... Full professors \$100,000 ... The Mission Bay plan rests on maximizing ground rents ... through more market-rate condominiums and concessionary below-market-rate live-work lofts perhaps for the receding wave of urban ‘fabricators’ ... those who still actually ‘make real things’ ... the grey zone between the industrial worker and the post-industrial worker grows increasingly murky ... the post-industrial worker merely moving bits of information and paper (or bits and bytes ...) from one place to another ... Capitalism’s de-materialization of things outpacing things themselves ... Neo-liberalism writ large ... Thus, maybe, Serra’s iron column set amidst the semi-private courtyard of the Gap building in Downtown San Francisco is an anti-monument after all ... thrust in the gap in-between past and present ... wrapped in the generic imagery of Gap stores worldwide ... a gaping hole in things papered over, and the art of the vigorous gesture (again) ... The origin of Serra’s aesthetic not far away, yet fast-receding ... His father was a shipyard worker in Middle Bay ... The sign (once again) of the “search for the absent ‘Father’ ...” ... or ‘presence’ ... Yet we are caught in the space (the world) where being withdraws leaving only its trace (its mark, its stigmata) within the overlapping histories (archives) of people and things ... (02/13/04)

VI. ARCHIVE FEVER

“[H]aunting implies places, a habitation, and always a haunted house.” –Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1995)

And, archive fever “is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire to return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.” (Derrida)

The originary archive is the psychic archive ... perhaps the ontological archive (place of taking-place ...) ... Neither conscious reserve nor the mechanism of storing impressions ... But place of “places of inscription” (inside and outside) ... Haunted interiority and dissembling exteriority ... In the latter case the archive is a prosthetic thing, of which the former is primarily (its ground ... though there the idea of imprint and that which makes the imprint are fused into one temporal thing ...) ... Yet “archaeological parables” return in the attempts to access (unearth), to ‘psychoanalyze’ the psychic archive (“the topology of archives ...) ... To make it speak of / for itself (effacing the very idea / necessity of an external archive ...) ... Endlessly, then, circling the inauthentic nature of the prosthetic thing ... and its repressions ... looking always “more deeply” ... sensing specters (ghosts in the machinery of the apparatus ...) ... Looking always for a way out ...



“When the autonomy of the work of art is exposed as a sham, atemporal ideality gives way to temporal materiality. As the work of art enters time, time enters the work of art. Conversely, as time enters the work of art, the work of art enters time. No longer other-worldly, the ‘real’ is incarnate in space-time. Incarnate art can only be apprehended carnally.” (Mark Taylor, “Learning Curves”, *Richard Serra: Torqued Ellipses*, 1997) ... These words are addressed to the post-minimal art of Serra and others, by way of knocking the artistic object off of its privileged ‘podium’ ... an on-going project ... something that was pandemic in the 1960s and 1970s, and something that continues today in various iterations, including new work by Richard Serra such as “Torqued Ellipses” (exhibited at Dia Center for the Arts, in New York, in 1997-98 ...) ... Taylor places such works within the phenomenological trajectory of the quest for the ‘total work of art’ citing, in passing, Merleau-Ponty’s statements regarding space-time-body (of course) ... Such discourse privileges the body as “something like a topological knot that interlaces space and time ...” ... This sometimes precious obsession with the haptic (and the somatic) is derived from the sustained critique of ideality in art ... an oppositional discursus that can only be overcome by admitting to the work of art (and architecture) its essentially haunted nature either through “peripatetic perception” (disguised most often as one form or another of “carnality”) or through the re-articulation of topological *jouissance* (again) ... such that the Cartesian abstractions vilified by the phenomenologists are somehow fused

with the earth-bound coordinates of the space-time continuum effectively worshipped by Land Artists, post-minimalists, and post-conceptualists ... Or, in the name of opening the work of art to its other, there might also be the need to close the work of art to itself ... its narrow self (its always advanced, advancing need to occlude both its origins and its repressions ...) ... And yet, Jean-Luc Marion opens *The Crossing of the Visible* with an extraordinary explication of how the invisible informs the visible, “crosses the visible”, within a theory of perspective (and not simply a *theory of perspective* but a *phenomenology of perspective* ...) ... “The invisible gives relief to the visible as one gives a title and a fief [territory] – in order to ennoble. From this the first paradox of perspective must be considered before every painting: the visible increases in direct proportion to the invisible. The more the invisible is increased, the more the visible is deepened.” (p. 5) ... From there, then, we will travel to the far edge of representational and conceptual terrains, finding in a third reduction that the concept of ‘the given’ contains/frames the necessity of never naming that ‘place’ (archive/reserve) out of which things arrive ... And that that ‘It’ is also, after all, the ultimate repression (field) within the reserve (fund) within everything and *for* everything ... This repressed field is perhaps, in the manner of dialectical sublimation, the so-called ‘ground’ beneath our feet ... It was Bachelard that best illustrated, by way of Novalis, that dialectical sublimation is in fact a foundational experience within inhabiting the world ... This is no longer the same thing as continuous sublimation, or the endlessly repressive ‘nature’ of the tyranny of objects, objectifications, and ‘naming’ ... The third reduction (beyond the object and beingness) is the radically given ‘nature’ of everything (Agamben’s idea of ‘infancy’ perhaps ...) ... In other words, the conceptual sign of ‘the given’ offers the ultimate Way Out of the stalemate of a world overly programmed, constitutionally a prison-house, and ethically a shambles ... GK (02/15/04)

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

**Aletheia* in Martin Heidegger’s sense: i.e., “showing forth” or “unconcealment” ... In Jean-Luc Marion’s “third” phenomenological reduction, the conceptual sign of “the given” emerges as the bridge between the two infinities (of Pascal) and the repressed “nature” of Cartesian abstraction ... This “given” is the meeting-place, in



Marion's exegesis (after Husserl, and after Heidegger), of two gazes: that of the object and that of the subject (and collapses the space of the subject/object dialectic implicit within all metaphysics ...) ... This last reduction, which is an 'act', proposes that iconicity (the presentation of the self-referential thing-in-itself) is the antidote to endless semiosis (and post-modern nihilism ...) ... Marion's argument opens the space of a quite different 'Sublime' insofar as this Sublime is no longer the monstrous (the uncanny or grotesque) thing of post-modernist rhetoric and discursive praxis, but instead a repressed field otherwise known as 'depth' ... Such a concept suggests that the proscription (elimination) of depth (perhaps best approached through Benjamin's troubled cipher of the 'aura') was the seminal principle of modernist rhetoric and modernist hegemony ... Its restoration, through the concept of 'givenness' is possible through the act of deep-sea diving generally notated within cultural criticism as 'critical inquiry' (which is no longer the same thing as 'theory', but the emergence of radical contingency / immanence, or, as Marion indicates, the appearance of the transcendental in the immanent ...) ...

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SELECT PROVISIONAL OUTTAKES

- UC Berkeley / Department of City and Regional Planning - <http://www.dcrp.ced.berkeley.edu>
SF Planning Department / Better Neighborhoods - <http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/planning/neighborhoodplans>
SF / Urban Ecology / Neighborhoods - <http://www.urbanecology.org>
SF Planning and Urban Research Association - <http://www.spur.org>
SF Housing Action Coalition - <http://www.sfhac.org>
SF Muni / Third Street Rail - <http://www.sfmuni.com/aboutmun/3rdover.htm>
SF Yerba Buena Center for the Arts / "Look Deeper" - <http://www.yerbabuenaarts.org>
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy / Crissy Field - <http://www.crissyfield.org>
Bureau of Public Secrets - <http://www.bopsecrets.org>
Kenneth Rexroth's columns for the *San Francisco Examiner* - <http://www.bopsecrets.org/rexroth/sfe/>