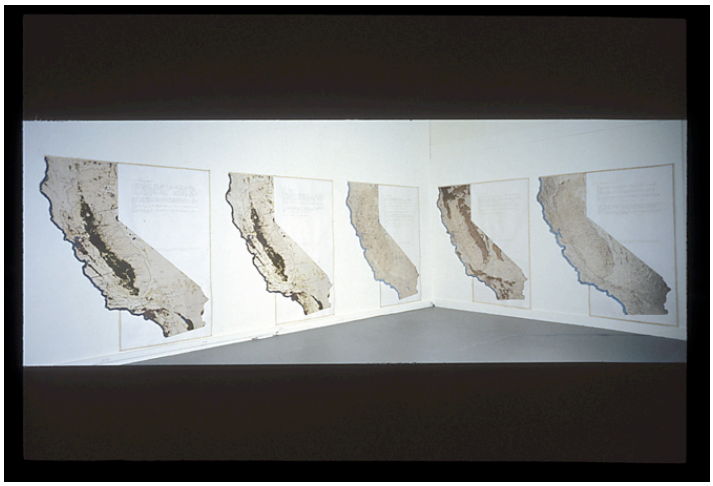
THE MEDITATIONS ON THE CONDITION OF THE SACRAMENTO, THE DELTA AND THE BAYS AT SAN FRANCISCO



I. From the satellite the central valley is one farm

Diking, channelizing, pumping
Diverting the flow of the San Joaquin at Friant and the Sacramento at the delta
Limiting the flushing of the delta and the bays
Crisscrossing the valley with ditches and canals
They damned all the rivers and most of the streams that
Flow into the delta and the bays
They damned the Sacramento, the Trinity, the McCloud and the Pitt
Fall creek, Hat creek, Cow creek, Stoney Creek, Battle Creek
Putah creek and Butt creek
They dammed the feather on the north fork, the south fork and the west branch, and all the branches of the Yuba and the Bear
They damned Oregon Creek, Canyon Creek, and French Dry Creek
The south fork and the middle fork of the American
They damned the Rubicon, Brush Creek, silver Creek, Tells Creek, Gerle Creek and Dry Creek
The Mokelumne, the Stanislaus, the Tuolumne
Angel Creek, Cherry Creek, Sullivan Creek
They damned and re-damned the Merced and the San Joaquin
The Kings, the Kaweach and the Kern
To irrigate over 6 1/2 million acres

II. In praise of folly

Visionary planners ingeniously using modern technologies to
secure inhabitants of California from flood and drought
have controlled the flow of water in the central valley,
developing a comprehensive, interconnected array of reservoirs, dams, power stations, pumping stations, ditches and canals, to irrigate the central valley and

to send waters over the Tehachapi Mountains to the metropolitan water district in the south
The largest irrigation system in history has been created
generating an 8 billion dollar industry that supplies food and fiber to the state, the national and the world
an improvable, profitable, expandable system of folly
Technocratic planners subsidized by the tax payers of the nation (and in hidden interest gifts by the state) at the expense of non-irrigated farming elsewhere
For the profit of a few large land holders and agri-business
have turned the entire watershed of the central valley into one large irrigation system serving over 6 1/2 million acres of farmland
It is composed of dams that become useless thru silting a pumping system that will use more energy that the project creates, a diking system requiring ongoing repair, that in concert reduce the quality of both the land and the water through progressive salinization and energy expensive self canceling system

III. On devaluing Land

A land division system operates such that the State of California is divided into cities and Indian reservations
counties, public (non-consumable) and private (exploitable) land and the private sector further subdivided by private ownership, where the size of the parcel is determined by the financial capability of the individual who possesses it and the use is limited by legal codes biased toward exploitation, independent of long term ecological consequences

A land consuming system operates such that public (communal lands) are so designated and preserved from private exploitation only when there is clear and present danger that one resource must be preserved in order to exploit another

Or
When private interest has not yet developed the vision,
technology or market to make exploitation profitable
Or
Where a public consensus has developed that a given piece of land has aesthetic features of sufficient communal value to preserve it from private consumption and private exploitation cannot muster sufficient energies to override that consensus
Or
When communal guilt has established legal barriers to consumption

IV. On Devaluing Water

A water consuming system operates where county and city governments, subdivided and reassembled into 32 water districts, in support of and supported by the State Department of Water Resources (historically) and the federal Bureau of Reclamation (initially and in perpetuity), have found it advantageous to use up ground water basins and dam streams and rivers to maximize the economic

growth of their constituencies, subsuming “riparian rights” under the doctrine of “appropriation and beneficial use”, independent of long term ecological consequences

Where all waters are seen as consumable by private interest and controls or limitations are placed on use only when there is clear and present danger that use must be controlled or limited in order to preserve its ability to continue to be exploited
Or
There is less water than the collective requests
Or
Where technology has not developed to the point where private interests can push the public to safely exploit the resource
Or
Where a public consensus has developed that a given stretch of water has aesthetic features of sufficient communal value to preserve it from private exploitation and private exploitation cannot muster sufficient energy to override that consensus
Or
Where communal guilt is at work

V. On devaluing topsoil

A topsoil consuming system operates where city and county governments, in support of individuals already in possession of the land, to insure the continuance of profit from that land, find it advantageous to commit as much acreage as there is water available as there is water available or as much water as there e is acreage available in order to maximize the growth and fiscal power of their constituencies, independent of long term ecological consequences
And
Where all topsoil is seen as consumable by private interests and controls or limitations are placed on use only when there is clear and present dander that use must be controlled in order to insure the continuance of profit
Or
Where technology has not developed to the point that private interests can push the public to safely exploit the resource
And
We have not yet developed the consciousness for communal guilt to arise in relationship to topsoil

VI. On valuing topsoil

If
Irrigated farming causes topsoil loss of 1/5 to 2” per year in the best of conditions and the process of irrigation degrades the soil remaining through salinization
While irrigation runoff waters progressively salinate and entropy the water system as a whole

Then
Massive use of irrigation is a self canceling system to be used only as a temporary measure hen surplus is depleted and other soil generating farming systems do not yield sufficient food and fiber for the nation as a whole and collective survival is threatened

The error admitted
and subsidies shifted

VII. On valuing water

If
the process of flood control is detached from the motive of irrigation
then
Off stream storage areas can be designed for the
control of excess waters and those waters released
during dry periods or used to refill ground water
basins
Then Dams can be removed permitting normal silt flow and the regeneration of river ecologies
Then Citizens can move from flood areas particularly difficult to control

The error admitted
And priorities shifted
VIII. On valuing land

If
The irrigated farm of the central valley is seen as a
long term net loss and paradigmatic of the overall system
of land division, sub-division, exploitation, consumption
and transformation into profit
Then
The whole system can be seen as self-canceling
Then
Contradiction emerges between socio-economic paradigm (exploit, consume and transform into capital) biological imperative (survival of the species) and the laws of the conservation of energy (transfer of energy from one form to another always incurs a net loss

The error admitted
And public interest redefined

IX. On revaluing priorities

If
Biological altruism (trading off the interest of the individual for the survival of the gene pool) is functional communal interest
in terms of species survival
and

Congruence with the laws of conservation of energy is functional communal interest in terms of species survival
Then
In the interest of our species survival all resources
would be held in trust as communal and used in congruence
with the laws of the conservation of energy
Then
Land and water would be passed on to succeeding generations intact, non renewable resources husbanded and renewable resources not depleted

X.

If
The paradigms that inform the present use and energy
practices of culture (exploitation, consumption, transformation into possession, transformation into profit) do not undergo modification by social forces
either voluntarily (through legal means) or involuntarily (through revolutionary means)
Then
They will undergo modification through the working out of the natural forces (read entropy)