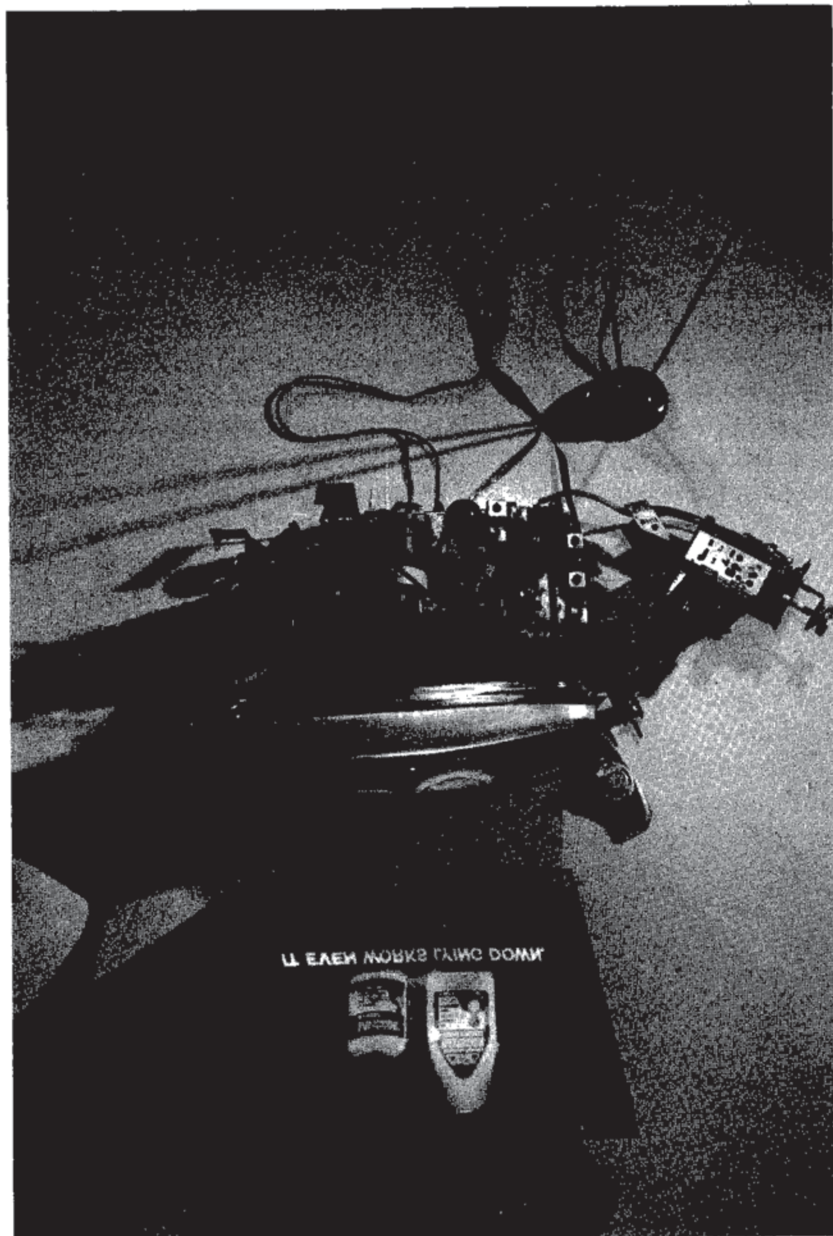

Homes for Cyborgs

The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence. No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the *oikos*, the household. Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other.

Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs"

If, for the first machine age, the preferred metaphor for the house was industrial, a "machine for living in," the second machine age would perhaps privilege the medical: the house as at once prosthesis and prophylactic. In the Corbusian "home of man" technology took the form of more or less benign "object-types" and perfectly controlled environments that allowed for the full play of the natural body in nature. The line between nature and the machine, between the organic and the inorganic, seemed crystal clear; organicism was a metaphor, not a reality. Now, the boundaries between organic and inorganic, blurred by cybernetic and bio-technologies, seem less sharp; the body, itself invaded and reshaped by technology, invades and permeates the space outside, even as this space takes on dimensions that themselves confuse the inner and the outer, visually, mentally, and physically. "L'homme-type," the modulor muscleman, has through a combination of prosthetic devices, drugs, and body sculpture emerged as Cyborg, a potentially gender-free mutant, and its home is no longer a house. As Walter Benjamin presciently observed, "The work of Le Corbusier seems to arise when the 'house' as mythological configuration approaches its end."[1]

In the terms introduced by Donna Haraway, cyborg culture, a product of late capitalist technology, is at once an all-embracing and controlling reality and a utopia full of promise. The totalizing and hegemonic power of "modern production seems," in Haraway's words, "like a dream of cyborg colonization of work, a dream that makes the nightmare of Taylorism seem idyllic." But it also, she argues, opens up the possibility of a political struggle over the different boundaries it cuts through: the boundaries between the human and the animal, the animal-human organism and the machine, the physical and the nonphysical. "Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed. . . . Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert."[2] For Haraway, it is precisely in the interstices of these differences, in "the simultaneity of breakdowns," that the "matrices of domination" might be cracked open and, in the "pollution" that results, a new political and social practice opened up. Such a practice, she hopes, will create the conditions of a gender independence through the construction of what Alice Jardine has dubbed "Technobodies" by means of medicotechnologies of reproduction, transplants, and the like.[3]

The implications of this metamorphosis for architecture are more radical than even Reyner Banham would have envisaged. No longer are we fooled by the promise of the house as a bubble-container that frees its human contents from the vicissitudes of external environment: neither the Dymaxion dome nor the spacesuit reflects the infinite permeability assumed by the contemporary skin, the interchangeability of body part and technical replacement, or the spatiomental reconstruction implied by the cyberspace. This complex and impure system of existence, indeed, offers neither the luminous promise of technological utopia nor the dark hell of its opposite. The sleeper in *When the Sleeper Wakes,* H. G. Wells's turn-of-the-century dystopia, was faced with a clear confrontation between the scientific and the social; the hacker in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* no longer knows the difference between waking and sleeping.

In such a context, architectural exploration, as Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio have understood it, might best be limited to the precise dimensions of a controlled experiment. In a world of infinitely disseminated power—of surveillance, of the image, of the technological—the stylistic metaphor is as suspect as the functional solution. In their place, the minute and exactly calibrated interrelations of body and machine are subjected to a dispassionate scrutiny, transcribed as the automatic writing of a generation of readymades. These calculations take as their starting point the clearly distinguished systems identified by modernist technique: the system of the object, of the body, of the optical, and finally of the home. Each of these is carefully unwrapped, disassembled, and confronted, as it were, defenseless, to the next. The sites of these strategic deployments emerge as so many battlefields, strewn with the disemboweled residues of yesterday's biotechnical encounters: "no-man's-lands" or homes for cyborgs.

Cyborgs and their homes, of course, have a respectable prehistory in the modern period, in the monstrous merging of animal and human so characteristic of surrealist imagery. As Haraway writes, "The cyborg appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. Far from signalling a walling off of people from other living beings, cyborgs signal a disturbingly tight coupling."[4]

Such coupling has its own history. Thus the gentle horse-headed women and boys that populate Leonora Carrington's *House of Fear* and its illustrations by Max Ernst seem deliberately to transpose the attributes of the centaur and the unicorn in gender and implication. As Carrington herself remarked, "A horse gets mixed up with one's body . . . it gives energy and power. I used to think I could turn myself into a horse."[5] From the figure of Fear, in the Castle of Fear, who "looked slightly like a horse," in Carrington's text and Ernst's collage, through the Oval Lady, who holds the secret of turning herself into a living version of her rocking horse, to little Francis, a mask for Carrington herself, who grows a horse's head, these equine presences play on the register of sexual and mental ambiguities with evident autobiographical reference. It was, after all, Father who burned the rocking horse to punish the Oval Lady for even desiring to be a horse, and Francis whose horse's shape at once displayed his shame at failing to be woman and his androgynous desire. Carrington's horse-people seem to prefigure Haraway's separatist cyborgs.

Carrington's homes for androgynes are equally filled with a mixture of organic and inorganic objects: thus Uncle Ubriaco's workroom in "Little Francis" was "a spacious apartment on the ground floor filled with half-constructed constructions and wholly demolished bicycles. The walls were lined with bookshelves that held books, spare

tires, bottles of oil, chipped figureheads, spanners, hammers, and reels of thread."[6] A series of books—*Man and Bicycle, Intricacies of Pedals, Tobson's Essays on Spokes and Bells, Free Wheels and Ball Bearings*—was piled beside a heterogeneous collection that included starved cockroaches in a small cage, a string of artificial onions, a spinning wheel, ladies' corsets of a complicated pattern, and a great many cogwheels.

For Carrington and the surrealists in general, these semiorganic and dream objects were arrayed to counter the implacable rationalism of purely technological modernism, epitomized in the shape of the Father, who, in the "Oval Lady," seemed "more like a geometric figure than anything else," and who achieved grotesque proportions in the character of Egres Lepereff, "The Great Architect," in "Little Francis." Based on Serge Chermayeff, appointed a surrogate parent during Carrington's stay in London, this designer of guillotines for the execution of boys like Francis espoused "good machinery and efficient planning," which "are always artistically moving." "My platform . . . was pleasing," purred the Architect, "though utterly devoid of anything save the merest mechanical necessities. It was a symphony of pure form." Francis himself was less certain that "architecture . . . in modern art is the nearest form to pure abstraction," observing innocently, "But if you build abstract houses, the more abstract you make them the less there'll be there, and if you get abstraction itself there won't be anything at all."[7]

Surrealism's antipathy to modernism, reflected in the well-known quarrels between André Breton and Le Corbusier, was, on the surface, based on this suspicion of abstraction. For Breton, modernist functionalism was "the most unhappy dream of the collective unconscious," a "solidification of desire in a most violent and cruel automatism." The argument was elaborated by other surrealists: Dalí in his exaltation of the art nouveau, with its "terrifying and edible beauty"; Hans Arp's championing of the "elephant style" against the "bidet style"; Tristan Tzara's indictment of modern architecture as "the complete negation of the image of the dwelling." All posed a volatile and elusive sensibility of mental-physical life against what was seen as a sterile and overrationalized technological realism: the life of the interior psyche against the externalizing ratio.

Le Corbusier himself summarized the opposing positions succinctly in his only contribution to a quasi-surrealist journal—a note on the

work of the psychologically troubled artist Louis Soutter, in an article published in *Minotaure* in 1936. To Soutter's remark, "The minimum house or future cell should be in translucent glass. No more windows, these useless eyes. Why look outside?," Corbusier replied,"This affirmation of Louis Soutter . . . is the very antithesis of my own ideas, but it manifests the intense interior life of the thinker."[8] For Le Corbusier, looking always, as Beatriz Colomina has observed, toward a universally transparent exteriority, the attempt to reenvision the objects of daily life metaphorically was misguided, leading to a dangerous imbalance in the human "technico-cerebral-emotional equation," the creation of a "sentiment-object" rather than an object of use. As Benjamin noted, it was in this debate that the essence of modernity might be summarized: "To embrace Breton and Le Corbusier—that would be to draw the spirit of contemporary France like a bow which strikes with knowledge to the heart of the present."[9]

Against the cold rationalism of the modernists, the surrealists called for an architecture more responsive to psychological needs: what Tristan Tzara termed an "intrauterine architecture" was thus conceived as a radical criticism of the house of Corbusian and Miesian rationalism. "Modern architecture," Tzara argued, "as hygienic and stripped of ornaments as it wants to appear, has no chance of living." Against the horizontal extensions and the dissolution of the barriers between public and private implied by the Domino model, Tzara posed the maternal and sheltering images of "uterine" constructions which, from the cave to the grotto and the tent, comprised the fundamental forms of human habitation:

> From the cave (for man inhabits the earth, "the mother"), through the Eskimo yurt, the intermediary form between the grotto and the tent (remarkable example of uterine construction which one enters through cavities with vaginal forms), through to the conical or half-spherical hut furnished at its entrance with a post of sacred character, the dwelling symbolizes prenatal comfort.

Entered through "cavities of vaginal form," these conical or half-spherical houses were dark, tactile, and soft. They imitated the play-constructed shelters of childhood.

> When one returns what was torn away during adolescence and childhood, man could possess those realms of "luxe, calme et volupté" that he constructed for himself beneath the bed covers, under tables, crouching in

cavities of earth, above all at the narrow entry; when it is seen that well-being resides in the *clair-obscur* of the tactile and soft depths of the only hygiene possible, that of prenatal desires, it will be possible to reconstruct the circular, spherical, and irregular houses that mankind has conserved from the time of the caves to the cradle and the grave, in his vision of intrauterine life which knows nothing of that aesthetics of castration called modern. This will not, in valorizing these arrangements with the acquisitions of actual life, be a return to the past, but a real progress, based on the potentiality of our most strong desires, strong because latent and eternal, the possibility of being liberated normally. The intensity of these desires has not changed much since the stage of man's savagery; only the forms and satisfactions have been broken up and dispersed over a larger mass, and, enfeebled to the point of being lost, with their acuity, the sense of true reality and quietude, they have, by their very degeneration, prepared the way for that autopunitive aggressivity that characterizes modern times.[10]

In Tzara's mingling of popular psychology and primitivism—his observations on architecture were published in *Minotaure* following Michel Leiris's illustrations of Dogon huts in 1933—we can identify a double nostalgia. On the one hand, the return to archetypal forms marks an identification with the origins of civilization and an explicit critique of its technological results, human and material; on the other, the notion of womb *as* origin displays a familiarity with Freudian explanations of desire and the repressed or displaced routes of homesickness: "There is a joking saying that 'Love is homesickness,'" Freud had written in 1919, "and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself while he is still dreaming: 'This place is familiar to me, I've been there before,' we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body" (U 368). It is no doubt in this light that we may interpret Tzara's desire that "the architecture of the future will be intrauterine if it has resolved the problems of comfort and material and sentimental well-being, if it renounces its role of interpreter-servant of the bourgeoisie whose coercive will can only separate mankind from the ways of its destiny."[11]

Such nostalgia, however, hardly evoked the comforting images of hearth and home that were, during the same period, being raised by philosophers of the *Heimat* from Tessenow to Heidegger. For the apparently warm and all-enclosing interiors of intrauterine existence were, as Freud pointed out, at the same time the very centers of the uncanny. At once the refuge of inevitably unfulfilled desire and the

potential crypt of living burial, the womb-house offered little solace to daily life.[12]

Thus, Matta Echaurren's "intrauterine" design for an apartment dedicated to the senses, published in *Minotaure* 11, in 1938, was a deliberate attack on the commonplaces of the bourgeois home. The perspective view shows materials and forms that merge nature and the inorganic, the mathematical and the tactile. It was, Matta noted, "a space that will bring into consciousness human verticality." A true vertigo machine, composed of "different levels, a stair without a handrail to overcome the void," it was also a space of psychological interaction. Its columns were "psychological Ionic"; its furnishings "supple, pneumatic." Matta specified inflatable rubber, cork, paper, and plaster for the soft areas, all for better contrast, framed in an "armature of rational architecture." The whole space simulated a kind of artificial womb.

Man looks back at the dark pulsions of his origin which enveloped him with humid/dank walls where the blood pulsed close to the eye with the noise of the mother . . . we must have walls like damp sheets which deform themselves and join with our psychological fears . . . the body insinuated as into a mold, as into a matrix based on our movements.[13]

It was the task of the architect, Matta concluded, "to find for each individual those umbilical cords that put us in communication with other suns, objects in total freedom that would be like plastic psychoanalytical mirrors." Frederick Kiesler's "Endless House," designed in multiple versions between 1924 and 1965, was similarly conceived. Hans Arp spoke of this "egg"-like form as if it were the egg of Columbus: "In his egg, in these spheroid egg-shaped structures, a human being can now take shelter and live as in his mother's womb."[14]

This blurring of lines between the mental and physical, the organic and inorganic, was, for the surrealists, one of the characteristic pleasures of art nouveau. Dalí's celebrated eulogy to Gaudí's "edible" architecture had stressed its images of metamorphosis, of all historical styles merging into each other, of the intersection of the biological and the constructional, building and psychoanalysis, architecture and hysteria, in order to produce the ultimate object of desire, or at least its reification. Characterized by its mimesis of the digestible—gates with panels like pieces of calves' liver, columns with bases that seemed

to say "eat me!," buildings that as a whole might be assimilated to cakes—it was an architecture that, in Dalí's words "verified that urgent 'function,' so necessary for the amorous imagination: to be able in the most literal way possible to eat the object of desire."[15] Opposed to modern functionalism in every way, the Style 1900 discovered its real functions in the appetites and desires.

A "traumatism" for art, this style equally modeled itself on the postures of human trauma and psychosis. Using Charcot's photographs of female hysterics at the Salpêtrière, Dalí drew a "psychopathological parallel" between these images of "ecstasy" and the carving of the art nouveau.

Invention of "hysterical sculpture."—Continuous erotic ecstasy.—Contractions and attitudes without antecedents in the history of statuary (I refer to the women discovered and understood after Charcot and the School of the Salpêtrière).—Confusion and ornamental exacerbation in relation to pathological communications; precocious dementia.—Close relations to the dream; reveries, day dreams.—Presence of characteristic oneiric elements: condensation, displacement, etc.—Blossoming of the sado-anal complex.—Flagrant ornamental coprophagy. Very slow, exhausting onanism, accompanied by a huge feeling of guilt.[16]

The well-known theory of surrealist-inspired ecstasy that followed, summarized in Dalí's collage "Le phénomène de l'exstase," with its focalization of ears ("always in ecstasy") and juxtaposition of Charcot's photographs with art nouveau sculpture, also included a telling image of a tipped chair, empty as if having thrown its contents out of the picture.

This uncanny property of objects to adopt the characteristic behavior of their owners, thence to take revenge, the habit of the inanimate to take on the characteristics of the animate, and vice versa, had already been recognized by Freud. In a passage that seems to anticipate Ernst's collages, he speaks of the naive story of the haunted table from the *Strand Magazine*:

I read a story about a young married couple who move into a furnished house in which there is a curiously shaped table with carvings of crocodiles on it. Towards evening an intolerable and very specific smell begins to pervade the house; they stumble over something in the dark; they seem to see a vague form gliding over the stairs—in short, we are given to understand that the presence of the table causes ghostly crocodiles to haunt the place, or that the wooden monsters come to life in the dark, or something of the

sort. It was a naive enough story, but the uncanny feeling it produced was quite remarkable. (U 367)

This sensation, evoked, Freud explains, by an "over-accentuation of physical reality in comparison with material reality," was the precise equivalent of Dalí's architecture of "hyper-materialism." Le Corbusier characterized the sensibility, accurately enough, as a disturbance in the balance of "our tehnico-cerebro-emotional equation," an overinvestment of "sentiment" in objects, to the extent that "the feeling for cause and effect falters. We are seized by disquiet because we no longer feel well-adapted; we revolt against our enforced servitude to the *abnormal*."[17]

And yet, of course, modernism's own object imaginary was hardly less disquieting. Walter Benjamin, indeed, went beyond Dalí's simple opposition to make the conceptual link between the technical visions of modernism and the apparent antitechnical stance of art noveau. Benjamin, who cited Dalí on the "delirious and cold buildings" of art nouveau, formulated a vision of the Jugendstil that was, in reality, an "attempt of art to take the measure of technique."[18] Precisely because, Benjamin argued, the Jugendstil considered itself no longer "menaced" by technique, it could identify itself with technique. Thus he noted the correspondence between the curving lines of art nouveau and their modern counterparts, electric wires, which in turn paralleled the nerves of the modern city dweller: "In the characteristic line of the art nouveau are brought together—united in a montage of imagination—the nerve and the electric wire (and which in particular brings into contact the world of organism and of technique by means of the intermediary form of the neurovegetal system)."[19] For Benjamin, this intersection of technology and nature was represented by the displacement of symbols from romanticism to modernism.

Here we may begin to trace the affiliations of surrealism and modernism on the level of technique, affinities that were announced by Benjamin himself in the aphorism: "The reactionary attempt that seeks to detach the forms imposed by technique from their functional context and to make natural constants out of them—that is to say, to stylize them—is found sometime after art nouveau, in a similar form, in futurism." The structure that united the two, in Benjamin's terms, was fetishism. For it was fetishism that, in its multiple displacements,

"suppresses the barriers that separate the organic from the inorganic world," that is "at home in the world of the inert as in the world of the flesh."[20] Such confusions of identity were, as Sigfried Giedion noted, the inevitable product of the modern mechanization of the dwelling in its mission of repression against the bric-a-brac of the nineteenth century.[21] Giedion observes of the interiors of Ernst's *Une semaine de bonté*,

> Of the billowing drapes, of the murky atmosphere, Ernst's scissors make a submarine cave. Are these living creatures, plaster statues or models of the academic brush found reclining here or rotting? To this question no answer can or should be given. The room, as nearly always, is oppressive with assassination and non-escape.[22]

Surrealism and purism, indeed, fetishized precisely the same *types* of objects: what for surrealists were "objets trouvés" or vehicles of oneiric desire and for Le Corbusier were "objets-membres-humains," or the physical extensions of the body. As Le Corbusier himself recognized,

> The new "Surrealists" (formerly Dadaists) claim to lift themselves above the brute nature of the object and are ready to recognize only relationships which belong to the invisible and subconscious world of the dream. Nevertheless they compare themselves to radio antennae; thus they raise radio onto their own pedestal . . . the supremely elegant relationships of their metaphors . . . are all the time very clearly dependent on the products of straightforward conscious effort . . . the finality necessary to polished steel.

To prove the point Le Corbusier cited De Chirico, writing in the first number of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, December 1924: "They are like levers, as irresistible as those all-powerful machines, those gigantic cranes which raise high over the teeming building sites sections of floating fortresses with heavy towers like the breasts of ante-diluvian mammals."[23]

In this dependency of surrealist fantasy on the real objects of the machine world, "type objects" and "sentiment objects" met in their common aim to overcome technique in its banal manifestations in favor of a technological imaginary that would transform technology into the human and vice versa, into the prosthetic and potentially critical devices of the cyborg. It was not by chance that Walter Benjamin identified Olympia, the automat doll of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Sandman" and subject of Freud's analysis of the uncanny, as the

ideal woman of the art nouveau. "The extreme point of the technical organization of the world," concluded Benjamin, "consists in the liquidation of fertility."

The modern cyborg was, in this way, anticipated by the automat, with its long tradition in romantic thought, from Hoffmann's Olympia to Mary Shelley's monster, from Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's *Eve future* to Duchamp's "Bride." These "celibate machines" were, as Lyotard has observed, all ruses, fabricated to obscure the essential impossibility of mechanically dominating nature, to blur the distinctions between the biological and the technical; the first such contraption was constructed by Hephaistos for Zeus and named Pandora.[24] Indeed, following Diller and Scofidio's experiments with the staging of Duchamp's Large Glass, we might hazard that their project includes a careful opening of the box belonging to that first "automate," as Alice Jardine has redubbed her, in order to expose the ruse of modernism.[25]

Conceived of in these terms, the objects of architecture become so many prostheses, extensions of the body tied to it in almost organic ways; instruments that, as Michel de Certeau has characterized them, might be defined according to their functions:

> Two main operations characterize their activities. The first seeks primarily to *remove* something excessive, diseased, or unaesthetic from the body, or else to *add* to the body what it lacks. Instruments are thus distinguished by the action they perform: cutting, tearing out, extracting, removing, etc., or else inserting, installing, attaching, covering up, assembling, sewing together, articulating etc.—without mentioning those substituted for missing or deteriorated organs, such as heart valves and regulators, prosthetic joints, pins implanted in the femur, artificial irises, substitute ear bones, etc.[26]

Of course, most of the object types conceived by modernism were prosthetic to one degree or another: Le Corbusier never tired of vaunting the claims of "objets-membres-humains," those type objects responding to type needs and type functions and operating as liberating extensions of our limbs—"chairs to sit on, tables to work at, devices to give light, machines to write with (ah! yes), racks to file things in." a "human limb object," properly designed to harmonize with the body, would act for all the world like "a docile servant. A good servant is discreet and self-effacing in order to leave his master free."[27]

The modernist prosthetic object was equally a master: the etiquette machines fabricated by Schreber for his children—to construct correct posture while lying, sitting, and standing—as well as the taylorized furniture of the Gilbreths were all so many devices to control the body for its own good, chastity belts for the machine age, bringing the organic into line with the social and economic systems of industrial production.

Against this, the object types of Diller and Scofidio neither serve nor dictate; they simply reveal. Peeling back the layers of consumer coverings, Bauhaus black or suburban veneer, they show the form of the guts inside. Televisions are transformed into biological analog through disemboweling, their tubes, wires, and connections left bare, as if to demonstrate their temporary, makeshift nature. On the one hand enfeebled and weak, cut open and wounded, these machines are at the same time threatening, as they parade the enormous power of the technologically constructed microorganism invading the house.

But these operations are not entirely neutral: beginning as a readymade, the unmade object is itself subjected to a subtle transformation and mutation that points not only to its internal nature but also to its expanded field of operation, its relation to the body. Thus the television screen, shifted from vertical to horizontal, is no longer the focus of a conventional view but now reflected in a mirror that takes its place. The screen, simulacrum of the real, is literally displaced through a simulacrum of itself, at the same time as its controlling (picture-frame) position has been unfixed and refracted through the action of the mirror. Similarly, chairs, which normally would image as well as serve comfort, are cut through in order to threaten the (sitting) body at its most vulnerable point.

Such objects are no longer subject to subjects; they counterattack. As in the collages of Max Ernst, they unionize in revolt, but now in the form of critical machines that pose new identities for their subjects. As apparatuses that both work on and fuse with once-separate bodies, they, like the cyborgs that "use" them, scramble all the recognized codes. Such objects fight back, they machine us as much as we machine them. Indeed, the only resistance, as many of the visitors to Diller and Scofidio's 1990 installation at the Museum of Modern Art realized, was to fall back on the commonplace reading of the objects, using the mirror for making up and envisioning the chair in

the air as a misplaced seat. The network of relations established among objects becomes itself a phenomenal prosthetic for the body, to be refused by normalcy.

If, at one level, the body can be interpreted as a construction determined by the discursive practices of its surveillance and punishment, in the literal constructions of Diller and Scofidio the body both transcribes itself and is written on. The chair that leaves a message impressed on the buttocks—the right way round for another to read—is a machine for transcription. But, unlike Kafka's writing machine that inscribed the name of the punishment in the flesh of the victim, these architectural "magic writing pads" leave only temporary marks. In this way, the states of the modern body are mirrored in reactive structures. Cybernetic and biotechnical operations—hacking, probing—are given material life through the physical exploration of inside and out and the optical scanning of a myriad blind eyes that observe without knowing.

Here the optical networks set up by screen and camera, observer and observed, stage a voyeuristic space in which objects and subjects alike are trapped *en abîme*. But while the apparent trajectories of the eye, marked by the intersecting visual cones of so many lenses, seem to replicate the laws of true vision, in fact the space is traversed by the lines of a "pseudo-optics" established not so much by the geometries of real optical systems as by the psychology of the viewers. And viewers are equally absent in this simulated science where objects take their place, describing an optical scene that both includes and excludes subjects, or rather includes them in the form of a system of virtual signs. In this way an empty chair will "stand in" for its user, closing the system from the outside, as if obligingly supplying itself in the position of the hypothetical spectator of Goya's *Las Meninas*, no longer a technical instrument but a psychological contrivance.

No-body, then, can place itself at the central projection point in this optical system, which operates as a kind of literalization of post-Lacanian space. We who have become used to the diagram of our historically relative, rapidly changing perceptual structures, from Alberti's perspectival window to Nietzsche's labyrinth, are now presented with their archaeological reconstructions, each in conflict with the next, literalized by means of objects that project each system's sinister implications.

The gaze intimated by these layered and fractured cones of vision is, of course, no longer panoptical. In Alice Jardine's words, "We are no longer in the system of the panopticon described so accurately by Foucault . . . we are rather in a mode of self-surveillance: we watch ourselves as someone else."[28] From panoptical gaze to cyborgian gaze, Diller and Scofidio's intricately intersecting watchers shift attention from the written inscription of surveillance to the disseminated, three-dimensional network of glances and reflections. The carefully calibrated glances of the Dutch group portrait as described by Alois Riegl, the culturally precise meanings of perspective as symbolic form explicated by Panofsky, give way to three-dimensional hyperspatial constructions, in which fault lines figure as importantly as any completed sight lines. Where, in a pure cybernetic system as modeled by de Certeau, the privilege is given to writing, now boundaries are broken down and confused by their very inspection in three dimensions.

By the simple but critical act of "realizing" the model in practice, Diller and Scofidio establish a host of half-completed, half-broken refracted lines between mechanical objects and organic subjects; this network *is* in a real sense the cyborgian construction. Emulating at the same time as provoking both inner "hacker" or "cyber" space and outer or body space, the apparatus acts for all intents and purposes as a complicated and imaginary prophylactic among its subjects. The machine-age bachelor mechanism was forced to construct a real barrier, as in the hymenal wall of Alfred Jarry's "island of lubricious glass," which took on the form of any sexual organ when touched.[29] The contemporary cyborg, in contrast, is already insulated by a deflected gaze of a constructed gender and needs no traditional home.

But the home of a cyborg is by no means a site of technological utopia. Describing "home" as a social location, Donna Haraway confronts the breakdown of the bourgeois domestic myth in the face of cybernetic industry:

> *Home*: Women-headed households, serial monogamy, flight of men, old women alone, technology of domestic work, paid homework, reemergence of home sweat shops, home-based businesses and telecommuting, electronic cottage, urban homelessness, migration, module architecture, reinforced (simulated) nuclear family, intense domestic violence.[30]

What for the postwar generation of architectural technotopias, from Archigram to high tech, simply signified burgeoning social oppor-

tunity—the unlikely communitarianism of the "global village"—emerges in reality as a suburban battlefield strewn with the dismembered nuclei of imaginary families and the wreckage of their "homes." In such settings, for better or for worse, there is, Haraway claims, "no 'place' for women." In their place, there are "only geometrics of difference and contradiction crucial to women's cyborg identities." Where, in the taylorized settings of the twenties and thirties, the home was to be retooled to produce a generation of engineers and technocrats, the woman smoothly integrating time and motion into the carefully calculated spaces of a "kitchen-house-factory," now the space of technological competency is reduced to the flat surface of the monitor, the breadth of two hands on the keyboard. In this context the spatial order of the home carries less and less meaning, and its traditional "rooms" and their furnishings even less. A "machine for living in" has been transformed into a potentially dangerous psychopathological space populated by half-natural, half-prosthetic individuals, where walls reflect the sight of their viewers, where the house surveys its occupants with silent menace.

In the Capp Street project constructed by Diller and Scofidio, all these dimensions are explored: the space of each object is remapped as dining table and chairs are lifted in the air, beds and chairs are split in two, all following the vectors established by their (traditional) uses exaggerated to cutting effect. Objects now act out beyond their proper domains: chairs are attached to tables by locks and swings that emulate the presence of human arms; chairs are bisected by the locks of doors—all connected in ways they should not be, in order to reveal their sinister interdependence in the domestic system. Domestic objects are now set free to map their own space of instrumentality; human agency is supplied by surrogate objects, themselves prostheses of objects in their dangerous extensions.[31] Like the dust traces falling on Duchamp's Large Glass, the phantom operations of absent inhabitants and living objects are also mapped in their deposits. The moving bed is tracked by films of dust beneath it; the presence of former drinkers marked by the rings of glasses on the table. The house is left as if an obsolete and already abandoned technological space—like the inside of an old radio—a readymade, found again to be reused at will, dust and all; the traces of nonoccupation as well as of occupation seem to provide a schematic archaeology by which to begin again.

Such an assemblage no longer prefigures a robotic future of unified and gleaming technology; rather it is composed in a present of uneven development, filled with the detritus of past systems of technical order. As described by Michel de Certeau, this present takes on the characteristics of an open-cast mine, still operative in a terrain layered by the fragments of already obsolescent systems:

> Epistemological configurations are never replaced by the appearance of new orders; they compose strata that form the bedrock of a present. Relics and pockets of the instrumental systems continue to exist everywhere. . . . Tools take on a folkloric appearance. They nevertheless make up a discharged corps left behind by the defunct empire of mechanics. These populations of instruments oscillate between the status of memorable ruins and an intense everyday activity.[32]

Despite the apparent homogeneity of the cybernetic system, it operates in the interstices, and with the help of every previous system of bodily and textual inscription. Thus the readymades found by Diller and Scofidio are neither pure types, as imagined by Le Corbusier, nor ironic countertypes, as re-represented by Marcel Duchamp. They are nothing more than junk, throw-away objects found in the street or at the local dump. Already useless to the system of technological utopia, they nevertheless have been recuperated by precise operations for another system, the cyborgian.

In this way, Diller and Scofidio construct environments that have all the air of those transitional wastelands described in contemporary science fiction: the "Night city" of William Gibson's *Neuromancer,* at once "a kind of historical park: reminding the most advanced Japanese technology of its humbler origins," and an "outlaw zone," "a deliberately unsupervised playground for technology itself."[33] More specifically, Diller and Scofidio's Capp Street project resembles in microcosm that other "Nighttown" depicted by Gibson in the short story "Johnny Mnemonic":

> The mall runs forty kilometers from end to end, a ragged overlap of Fuller domes roofing what was once a suburban artery. If they turn off the arcs on a clear day, a gray approximation of sunlight filters through layers of acrylic, a view like the prison sketches of Giovanni Piranesi. The three southernmost kilometers roof Nighttown. . . . The neon arcs are dead, and the geodesics have been smoked black by decades of cooking fires.[34]

In the trusses of these abandoned domes lives a community of LO TEKS, dedicated to a reversal of progress into primitivism, transformed biologically into cyborgs of Darwinian regression, half-dog, half-human. Their city is a bricolage of junk held together by rough epoxy joints, taped to the rafters of this technotropia, "jury-rigged and jerry-built from scraps that even Nighttown didn't want." But where Gibson seems to celebrate, however savagely, a "neuromanticism" that points to a cybernetic sublime in these technological ruinscapes, Diller and Scofidio remain analytical and dedicated to the didactic dissection of the processes that construct this new world.

In this project, the selection of the everyday and well-used object—the old chair, the worn-out television—is deliberately calculated to lull suspicion. Old friends, thrown away after years of service, these objects are nothing but familiar—so familiar indeed as to become banal. But in their recuperation and necessary deconstruction they take on more sinister overtones. Returned from their proper burial, discovered in the wrong place, invested with an uncanny life of their own, they break the long process of deterioration and degradation that leads from the familiar, the ordinary, to the banal, returning once more to the status of the unhomely.[35] In the event, their effect is neither uncanny nor familiar, but rather a demonstration of the potential uncanny, an unveiling of the secret but ever-present reciprocities that bind people to objects in posttechnological domesticity.

What Gibson calls "the consensual hallucination" of cyberspace, occupied by the disembodied consciousness of a hacker jacked into a matrix of spatially represented information—the public realm of the cybernetic—is now brought home. What Adorno epitomized as the dilemma of homesickness—the result of "distancing"—is now solved. The illusionistic virtuosity needed in order, as Adorno dreamed, to experience homesickness at the same time as staying at home is now technologically supplied.[36]

Private space is revealed as infinitely public, private rituals publicized to their subjects and these in turn connected to the public matrix. No longer sheltered from public surveillance by a well-defended private realm, the space of the domestic will now become, as Alice Jardine has hazarded, an agent of self-surveillance: "A lot of these ethical and political regimes will come together in self-surveillance; not all of it will be imposed from the outside . . . self tests . . . in the privacy of your own home . . . soon no-one will be able to touch anyone else, and I think it's going to be everyone."[37]

In this sense, Haraway's cyborgian myth operates as much on the level of dystopia as of utopia; it is, as she explains, built out of irony, "the attempt to build an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, materialism."

> Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true. Irony is about humor and serious play. It is also a rhetorical strategy and a political method.[38]

Her attempt to pose the cyborg as "a creature of social reality as well as of fiction" that emblematizes the contemporary state of "lived social relations, our most important political construction," is a valiant effort to hold the unthinkable and the possible in the same frame, a counter to the gender divisions and relations that construct the (traditional) present.[39] Such irony, of course, can only be sustained in the active play of political and social experience; its difficult dialectic can rarely be incorporated in the positive spaces and aesthetic constructions of a material shelter. Thus the "house" implied by Diller and Scofidio demands continuous consciousness of physical and psychological discomfort from its para-inhabitants; it converts the pabulum of Heideggerian nostalgia into a *Hausangst* that reveals the banal and everyday nature of the *unheimlich;* the dream of *Heimat* founders on the reality of the coffin-hotel in the zone.

III

Spaces