

## Martyrdom and Aromatherapy

The increasing number of stores selling small labeled vials of essential oils with specific directions and cautions for usage indicates a recognition—albeit in a packaged sort of way—of the power of scent. In examining stories of martyrs from around the world, I have found that this power has long been known to martyrologists.

Martyrdom imbues a conflict with sacred meaning. In conquering the fear of death, the martyr becomes a symbol for a society's conquest over the enemy. This symbol binds together, strengthens and importantly for a small community, helps to recruit more martyrs. Martyrologists from many religious traditions have told inspiring tales to attract more martyrs, of how they travel directly to heaven, of the powers they have there to intercede on the behalf of their family and friends, of the crowns they wear.

There is another detail commonly included in martyrs' tales which seems at first superfluous to religious or political ends and directed rather at sensual whimsy. In many traditions it is said that martyrs do not decay but rather their bodies give off pleasant aromas. An article from 1998 in the *Daily News* of Colombo, Sri Lanka, for example, said that the blood of a recent Buddhist martyr had the sweet smell of breast milk. The Christian martyrs of Lyons who died in 177 CE were said to exhale the "sweet odor of Christ," a "fragrance which comes from knowing Him." The scent of a martyr can exist outside of time and permeate more than the air. The sweet-smelling manure of the gazelles who ate the grasses around the tomb of Husayn was appreciated both centuries before and after the Shi'ite martyr's death in 680 CE.

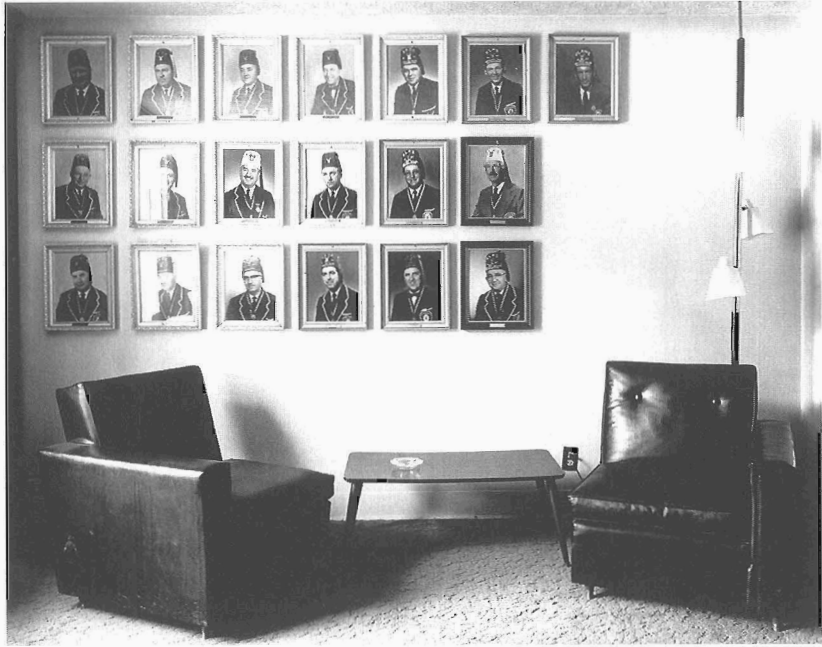
The aroma of apples is common to both Christian, Muslim and Hindu martyrs and can be detected by believers at Husayn's tomb if it is visited before dawn. Hindus and Shi'ite Muslims of Agra, India tell of the odor of the martyr Qazi Nurullah's body which was found three days after he died by searchers who noticed the smell of apples coming from his grave. It was his aroma spreading throughout the land which first drew people's attention. They followed their noses and gave birth to what a martyrologist would call a pilgrimage.

—Suzanne Evans

## Men's Club



—Lynne Cohen



## Michigan Central Station



1997/98, chromogenic print, 18 x 22 inches

—Stan Douglas

## Michigan Theatre



1997/98, chromogenic print, 18 x 22 inches

—Stan Douglas

## Migration

No prior century has witnessed a greater displacement of people from their original homes as the twentieth century. Twenty-first-century migration will outpace its predecessor. A recently published report by the United Nations High Commissioner states that forty-five million migrants, refugees, and expellees—victims of poverty, famine, epidemics, natural catastrophes, unemployment, civil wars, and persecutions—are in the midst of flight to new homes. This number will increase sharply in the immediate future, and the destination of such migration will continue to be the metropolis.<sup>1</sup> Let us examine how the transitory nature of migration—a condition that is often forced upon an individual—affects the psychological but also the physical creation of domestic space, and in this way better consider without generalization and naïveté the possibilities for providing the individual's most essential need within the urban realm.

The condition of the migrant is characterized by an inability to move fluidly in his or her new context and one where the capacity for adaptation is arrested by unfamiliar social, political, and cultural conditions that provide limited choices. To this end the author Franz Fanon wrote of the displaced subject, “I am for somewhere and for something else . . . in the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.”<sup>2</sup> Domestic space for most of the world's migrants is completely provisional—it is either the





first transition point in a long period of assimilation or a place where life is suspended preceding a return to their original home. In both cases these homes constitute way-stations between the previous home and an imagined home to which they aspire.

In twentieth-century modern architecture's polemical utopian projects, the immense and complex scale of the urban plan often subsumed the smaller scale of the domicile. Architects conceptualized the construction of the places of everyday life either as cells within a monolithic housing block or as units within a vast carpet of low-rise dwellings. In the visionary urban schemes, (such as Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse* or Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City*, to cite two prominent examples), life within the well-equipped house was organically linked to the functioning of the entire stable, urban milieu. These urban proposals emphasized movement systems that incorporated the latest technology in rapid transportation—automobiles and airplanes—but such obsessions regarding movement systems were always the means for increasing circulation within already homogeneous social groups.

What can be made of the continuing modern obsession for travel in light of the reality that the *de facto* modern subject was and is, not the self-directed, mobile cultural agent, but a migrant who is often compelled by unpredictable economic, political, and social upheavals, to move to a new home? The migrant, instead of arriving at a gleaming vast urban utopia that offers shelter, arrives at a contingent and intimate domestic space. Here, in ad-hoc sites of domesticity, the migrant assembles a new home out of material possessions—transported objects of sentimental value and newly acquired objects of consumer culture—imbued with both memories of the place of origin and aspirations of imagined spaces—despite the absence of a reasonable architecture into which he or she can decant his or her life. Is it possible to imagine that a market economy might still be able to provide even minimum dwellings to which people will aspire? Can this fissure be ameliorated or will housing for those within migration's undertow remain a myth within the twenty-first century as it has within this century?

#### Notes

1 Gert Mattenklott, "Editorial," *Daedalos*, (1994), 22–23.

2 Franz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 229.

—Paul Kariouk and Mabel O. Wilson

## Military Installation



—Lynne Cohen

## Modernism

Manic monadism.

—Ken Allan

## Montage

“Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and our furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling.”

{Walter Benjamin}

—Susan Lord

Excerpted from “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 242.

## Morphos



#1



#2



#3

—Christine Davis

## Museum of Accidents

*When it comes to information distrust the probable. Always begin by believing what seems incredible.*

—Emile Gaboriau





To innovate the vessel was already to innovate *the shipwreck*, to invent the steam engine, the locomotive, was again to invent *the derailment*, the rail catastrophe. So it goes for the birth of aviation, airplanes innovating *air-crashes*, the air catastrophe. Not to mention the automobile and *car pile-ups*, electricity and *electrocutions*, nor especially those *major technological hazards* produced by the development of chemical and nuclear industry... each period of technological development, with its instruments and machines, brings its share of specialized accidents, thus revealing *en négatif* the scope of scientific thought.

The military object, armaments or diverse devices, invert the tendency to privilege SUBSTANCE; on the contrary, the logic of war requires the ACCIDENT, disasters as a principle: canons, shells, tanks or missiles are then nothing but cumbersome war artifacts to be lightened and miniaturized as quickly as possible while their destructive effects (range, impact...) are constantly improved and made more spectacular in a bid to obtain the *absolute weapon* (atomic or otherwise), the absolute expression of major technological risk, the absolute form of fear, and thereby, one would hope, the beginning of wisdom.

Indeed, the beginning of wisdom would be, above all, an awareness of the symmetry between substance and accident, instead of constantly dissimulating them. To acquire a tool, a new piece of industrial equipment or whatever, is also to acquire a danger, a particular risk; it is to open one's door, to expose one's intimacy to hazards, slight or major. To censor evidence, as is so often the case, is to practice dissimulation, ensure disinformation, and so contribute to a loss of confidence in the effects of science, analogous today only to what happens in politics. Hence the disinterestedness, the decline of curiosity in the most varied fields, reckoned to the unprecedented development of electronic or other images, though the *simulation industry* marks the rise of contradiction and even a certain compensation.

*Exposing the accident in order not to be exposed to it* is, at present, the main function of simulators used to measure the performance of technological objects. It seems to me, the same should hold for the new museography, especially that which claims to deal with science and industrial products... As we saw on the TV news (18.2.86), the live demolition of a large building in a Paris suburb, the transmutation in 8 seconds of a 180m high-rise building into 70,000 tons of rubble: the "museum of accidents" already exists, I've seen it: it is the TV.

—Paul Virilio

Excerpted from "The Museum of Accidents," trans. Yvonne Lawrence. *Public 2: The Lunatic of One Idea*, 1989.

## Muzak

The corporation that pioneered what is generically known as muzak (much to their chagrin), elevator music, or dentist music. First established as Wired Radio, Inc., in 1922 to serve small public businesses, the company was founded by General George Owen Squier and was based on communication technologies he had developed for the Army. Over the next several decades, an arranging vocabulary, based predominantly on string textures and gestures, developed into what we now think of as elevator music. This music stopped dominating the programmed music market in the 1980's, however, replaced by what the industry calls foreground music, i.e. songs played by original artists. This development coincides with the invention of niche marketing, the widespread availability of home video and cable television to compete with network programming, and in general the shift to narrowcast over broadcast approaches. The three companies that dominate this industry today are Muzak, Audio Environments Inc., and 3M.

The few existing studies of ubiquitous musics all point to their embeddedness in contemporary capitalism. For example, Joseph Lanza argues in *Elevator Music* that it is the quintessential twentieth-century music, because it seeks to control the environment, as have other defining technologies of the century. Jonathan Sterne suggests, in *Sounds Like the Mall of America*, that programmed music is a significant factor in defining the relationships of spaces and flows in malls. And in a culture of music discourses that made it easy to dismiss elevator music as inauthentic, commercial pap, the shift to foreground music programming raises new problematics—particularly questions of value and ideologies—in the study of ubiquitous musics.

—Anahid Kassabian

## New Technology

A catch-all expression that sells cars and universities.

—Janine Marchessault

## Nonsense

For some time after its emergence as a literary genre in Victorian literature, nonsense maintained a strong dependence on its perceived opposite, sense. Without sense as a backdrop, nonsense was incapable of existing for Victorians, or at least of coming into view as a recognizable, modern form. Whenever nonsense fell outside the penumbra of sense, it regressed to gibberish, the lowest form of nonsense, and disappeared from view as a pleasurable or tastefully subversive literary form. The success of *Alice in*