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The Sociology of Odors[1]

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Despite their many endeavors, sociologists have yet to systematically analyze the significance of olfactory phenomena in human interaction. In this essay, the authors explore the social definitions of individuals, groups, and settings in terms of odors; and it is suggested that interpersonal and group relationships are at least partially contingent upon those definitions. More specifically, moral status, stereotypes, patterns of avoidance and attraction, and impression management techniques are examined in terms of odors.

Universally, human animals are simultaneously emitting and perceiving odors. Ethologists, psychoanalysts, and biologists have seriously studied the phenomenon. Yet, with the exception of Georg Simmel (1908, pp. 646–60), sociologists have either ignored odors or regarded them as an insignificant dimension of human interaction—a curious fact for the sociology of knowledge.

The sociological approach to odors might ask: What effects do differences in culture and life style have upon the perception and generation of odors? What social meanings are attributed to such perceived and generated odors? What social functions do such meanings fulfill? More specifically: Why are Negroes and lower-class persons often stereotyped as being "foul smelling"? To what extent are alleged malodors used as grounds for avoiding interaction? What is the social significance of the fart taboo? What are the dynamics of odor manipulation? Why, for instance, do people perfume? And does the use of incense during religious services have a sociological relevance?

In this essay, the authors will attempt to examine these questions and point out that odors, though long neglected by sociologists, do indeed have a significant bearing upon human interaction.

ODORS AND MORAL STATUS

Much of the moral symbolism relevant to interaction is expressed in terms of olfactory imagery. An untrustworthy person may be described as a

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"stinker," a "stinkoe," or a "stinkpot." In contrast, a holy or ritually pure person may be metaphorically described as emitting the "odor of sanctity" (see Wright 1967, pp. 23–24). At the same time, groups may be termed "smelly and slovenly" or, on the other hand, "clean and orderly." In any case, particular odors, whether real or alleged, are sometimes used as indicants of the moral purity of particular individuals and groups within the social order, the consequences of which are indeed real.

For example, E. T. Hall (1969, p. 119) has observed that when intermediaries arrange an Arab marriage they often take great care to smell the girl, and will reject her if she "does not smell nice." In the same vein, Havelock Ellis (1928, 4:64) cites a variety of situations where priests claim they are able to perceive whether a woman is a virgin by her odor. And, likewise, Pearl Buck (1946, p. 159) describes the association of odors with purity in the Oriental culture. In *Pavilion of Women* she portrays the Chinese reaction to Westerners: they are "rank from the bone because of the coarseness of their flesh, the profuseness of their sweat, and the thickness of their woolly hair." And later (1946, p. 262) she depicts Madame Wu assessing the character of one of her girls, Rulan: " 'Open your mouth' . . . from it came a sweet, fresh breath . . . she noted that all of the girl's skirts and inner garments were scented. She lifted the girl's hands and smelled the palms. They were scented, and her hair was scented, and from the body came a delicate scent. 'You will do well, my child,' Madame Wu said kindly."

Historians (Bacon 1957, 3:248) inform us that during the Middle Ages perfumers were suspected of "moral laxity," and it is pointed out that "although it hardly mattered to them they were held ineligible for service as kings." Also, it was commonly believed that "sorcerers and heretics could be detected by their foul and fetid odor (see Summers 1956, p. 44); and it was widely held that deeply religious persons could generally ascertain the specific virtues and vices of those they met by the odor that was emanated. A particular vice at the time was being a Jew, and Jews were noted for emitting an unusually foul odor which was believed to miraculously disappear upon conversion and baptism into the Christian faith (Golding 1938, p. 59; Klineberg 1935, p. 130). Apart from illustrating the moral relevance of odors, the belief is interesting in that it drew much of its meaning from an additional belief that at Passover Jews would themselves sacrifice criminally obtained Christian children (in parody of the Passion of Jesus) and consume the blood in order to rid themselves of their fetid odor—an act intrinsic to only a fiendish faith, that is, an immoral group (see Hecker 1859, pp. 38, 70–74).

Anthropologists have also afforded some fascinating examples of the association of odors with "purity" in the moral order. For instance, Reynolds (1963, p. 126) reports the activities of a diviner within the

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Nguni tribe: "Where he seeks out cannibals and necrographers he does so with his nose for they have the smell of flesh on their fingers . . . the diviners frequently sniff vigorously when in the company of other people." Similarly, the nose-kissing practices of the Eskimoes and many other so-called primitive groups is usually associated with the mutual expression and assessment of character.

In modern societies there are many comparable examples. For instance, many males of the labor class associate the odor of cologne on a male with effeminacy—" he smells pretty." Consequently, it would be rare to find a steelworker who dabbed himself with cologne before going off to work. By the same token, a white-collar worker may be heard expressing a repugnance toward those who emit a "stinky sweat" or those who "smell like a farmer"—dirty and unclean. And his before-work ritual is more likely to include odorizing himself with cologne.

There are also echoes of the Middle Ages: "she smells like a whore," the implication being that a heavily perfumed woman is likely to be promiscuous. At the same time, advertisers are continuing to create a social consciousness that "bad breath," "ugly perspiration," or the "feminine odor" are signs of a contaminating character, a women who rudely affronts others.

The linkage between one's olfactory identity and one's moral state is referred to in the so-called scientific, as well as the fictional, accounts of human life. For example, the British social psychologist Ronald Goldman (1969, p. 95), in writing of a youth club, strikingly describes a "problem member": "In personal terms . . . Tim was always smelly and dirty, and many teachers reported the obnoxious nature of the smell that came from him during school hours. Very few people who dealt with him could dissent from the judgment that he was sly, vicious, and totally unreliable." In this case, Tim, the individual, stank physically and therefore morally.

Likewise, many alleged odors of groups are related with stereotyped notions about their moral laxity. For example, Pakistanis in Britain are described by a London dockworker (*Time*, May 20, 1970, p. 38) in the following way: "They seem passive and weak. They smell, don't they?" Similarly an American white may be heard to speak of the "stench of niggers," suggesting that it arises necessarily from their failure to bathe and to follow "decent human standards," and because they "live like pigs" (see Faulkner 1948; Dollard 1957; Brink and Harris 1969, pp. 138–40).

Finally, there is the "fart taboo," that is, the rule of etiquette which restricts flatus. It is so widely agreed upon that formal etiquette books do not even discuss it, and certainly anyone who "lets go a fart" in public is usually considered somewhat crass and undisciplined.

Curiously, social scientists have not touched upon the taboo, but its significance in human interaction is often vividly portrayed in novels. For

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example, in *The Catcher in the Rye,* J. D. Salinger (1951, p. 48) describes a situation: "All of a sudden this guy sitting in front of me, Edgar Marsalla, laid this terrific fart. It was a very crude thing to do in chapel and all." Again, in *The Sotweed Factor,* John Barth (1967, p. 371) describes the indignation that such a fart may evoke: "But this was a hard matter, inasmuch as for everrie cheerie wave of the hand I signalled them, some souldier of Gentleman in my companie must needs let goe a fart, which the Salvages did take as an affront, and threwe more arrowes." One might also note that the stigmatization of an individual for so "letting go" often involves an attempt by the "crass one" to convince others that it was someone else.

In short, odors, whether real or alleged, are often used as a basis for conferring a moral identity upon an individual or a group. And certainly such moral imputations bear upon the processes of human interaction. Let us next consider olfactory boundaries and the patterns of avoidance and attraction as they are generated through olfactory definitions of individuals, groups, and settings.

ODOR-AVOIDANCE AND ODOR-ATTRACTION

A skunk is a symbol of avoidance, whereas a rose is a symbol of attraction. Upon encountering a skunk most persons carefully maintain distance and warn others nearby of potential contamination. On the other hand, if one smells a rose he is attracted toward it, and he invites others to smell it and admire its aroma.

Avoiding the Skunk

From the sociological standpoint, the "skunk" we avoid may be an individual, a group, or even a setting, that is, a physical environment. If we encounter an individual "skunk" (e.g., a person with "bad breath"), it is commonly accepted that we may step back from the person so as to prevent further violation of our sense of smell. Usually, we mentally label such a person, and we may extend our discreditation by informing others that the person has a "problem." Strangely enough, the person himself is seldom directly confronted about his "problem" because of the embarrassment it would cause the dishonored self to embarrass the dishonoring one. Nonetheless, it is quite clear that if sensorial involvement were disrupted repeatedly, then social involvement would become sharply jeopardized—particularly in modern societies in which, there appears to be a growing consciousness of odors.

The "skunky group" has more sociologically interesting aspects. As indicated previously, stereotypes and the dynamics of prejudice often derive

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from alleged, as well as real, odors given off by particular groups. Indeed, odors are often referred to as the insurmountable barrier to close interracial and/or interclass interaction, and they are repeatedly referred to in order to account for avoidance patterns and segregated ecological niches. In Poland, for instance, anti-Semitism is often expressed in terms of the odor of garlic. The novelist Prus (1969, p. 68) presents a graphic example of this association in his work *Lalka* [The puppet]: "The new assistant set to work immediately, and half an hour later Mr. Lisiecki murmured to Mr. Klein: 'What the hell is it that smells of garlic?' And a quarter of an hour later, he added: 'To think that the Jewish rabble are pushing toward the Cracow suburb! Can't the damned nasty Jews stick to Nalewki or St. George street?' Schlangbaum kept quiet but his red eyes trembled!"

Like the hostile sterotypes of the Jews, racial prejudices, too, seek credence by reference to the malodor of the minority group. In fact, both Dollard (1957, p. 381) and Klineberg (1935, p. 29) have pointed out that alleged malodor is a crucial component in the white racist's conception of Negroes—so much so, Dollard suggests, that a hypersensitivity to or fastidiousness about body odors may become evident.

Class prejudices are equally supported by imputations that those of the lower class are "foul smelling" and must be avoided if one is sensitive to such odors. As Simmel (1908, p. 658) observed: "no sight of the proletarian's misery, much less the most realistic account of it, will overwhelm us so sensuously and directly . . . that we can smell the atmosphere of somebody is the most intimate perception of him . . . and it is obvious that with the increasing sensitiveness toward impression of smelling in general, there may occur a selection and a taking of distance, which forms, to a certain degree, one of the sentient bases for the sociological [*sic*] reserve of the modern individual."

It might also be added to Simmel's statement that given (*a*) the extremely subjective nature of olfactory perception, (*b*) the simultaneous process of social interpretation of these perceptions, and (*c*) socially generated and maintained stereotypes influencing (*a*) and (*b*), the allegation of the malodor of a group member can be imputed a priori rather than "accurately" perceived, and our interpretation of the meaning of the odor may not reflect the condition or the customs of either the individual or his group. Hence, social distance may be maintained by conventionally imputed, rather than "actually perceived," impressions of malodor. An example of this is contained in a pamphlet (National Renaissance Bulletin 1963) that urged white parents to keep their children away from youth camps allegedly dedicated to miscegenation: "How would you like it if an exquisitely-formed white child was no longer white? . . . Its sensitive mind no longer sensitive but apelike? Its beautiful body no longer beautiful but black and evil-smelling?"

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Finally, there are the urban-rural stereotypes. In Western societies urbanites may be heard identifying farmers with manure or "earthy-dirty" work, while the farmer may label the urbanite as "artificial-smelling," perfumed, or factory-smelling.

A poignant description of similar urban-rural antagonisms in Chinese society is offered by Pearl Buck (1931, pp. 110–11):

> Wang Lung and his wife and children were like foreigners in this southern city . . . where Wang Lung's fields spread out in leisurely harvest twice a year of wheat and rice and a bit of corn and beans and garlic, here in the small cultivations about the city men urged their land with stinking fertilizing of human wastes . . .
>
> In Wang Lung's country a man, if he had a roll of good wheat bread and a sprig of garlic in it, had a good meal and needed no more. But here the people dabbed with pork balls and bamboo sprouts and chestnuts stewed with chicken and goose giblets and this and that of vegetables, and when an honest man came by smelling of yesterday's garlic, they lifted their noses and cried out, "Now here is a reeking, pig-tailed northerner." The smell of the garlic would make the very shopkeepers in the cloth shops raise the price of blue cotton cloth as they might raise the price for a foreigner.

As with individuals and groups, we are also prone to identify certain settings or physical environments in terms of real, as well as alleged, odors; and, we thereby seek to avoid them. Consider, for example, the avoidance feelings and patterns generated by the odor of a dental surgery,[2] an unkempt greasy-smelling restaurant, or a smoke-filled tavern. Note the tendency to associate mental hospitals and wards for the elderly with the odor of urine (see Henry 1966, pp. 406–8). Likewise, it may be observed that land use and development may be impaired in communities where the odors of a cannery, glue factory, brewery, tannery, or paper mill dominate the setting. Too often in their concern with the political and economic institutions of a community, social scientists overlook its sensorial aspects—whether they be visual, auditory, or olfactory.

Smelling Like a Rose

While "skunks" are to be avoided, "roses" suggest intimacy; and the individual who emits attractive odors relates effectively on at least one sen-

[2] Also, it should be noted that the distinctly different odors of dental surgeries and taverns help express the primary function of those settings. A dental surgery smelling of beer, whiskey, and stale cigarette smoke would conceivably cause a certain amount of suspicion or anxiety among the clients. The odors would undermine implicit social expectations involving the social meanings of trust in the dentist's professional responsibility, integrity or competence (e.g., his solicitude for hygiene). Thus, odors function partly to maintain the boundaries of social settings or the appropriateness of the relationships engendered within the setting. If the perceived odors in a setting clash with its routine definition, an individual would probably feel "dissonance anxiety" and difficulty in sustaining any bona fide identification with his setting.

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sorial level. This fact is evidenced by the importance placed on odorizing and deodorizing rituals, as well as such practices as sending flowers or scented letters to one's lover.

Smelling, however, is not restricted to individual "roses." We also like bouquets. In other words, there are grounds for hypothesizing that group intimacy or alignments are at least partially established or recognized through olfactory stimuli. As pointed out by Herbert Spencer (1896, 2:15–16), the practices of nose-kissing and sniffing among the Eskimoes, Samoans, and Phillipine Islanders are not simply salutary gestures. More important, they are means of group identification and cohesion. And, quite possibly, those very odors that serve as indicants for avoidances by out-groups simultaneously generate a we-feeling in the in-group. In this regard, one may hypothesize that the odor of garlic, which constitutes a component of the anti-Pakistani complex among the British, may nonetheless contribute to an in-group identification among the Pakistanis themselves.

Finally, there is the "rose garden," that is, the odor setting that attracts and facilitates interaction. While we tend to have avoidance feelings toward urine-smelling asylums, we are drawn to pine-scented parks; while we are disgusted by canneries, we are enticed by bakeries; while we find cesspools and polluted streams repugnant, we delight at beaches permeated by the smell of salt and sand. In short, an odor is often a crucial component in the definition of, and orientation to, an environment and is instrumental in generating appropriate activity. While odor settings may be taken for granted in an unreflective manner, they are nonetheless cues to particular modes of involvement within the setting.

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT THROUGH ODORS

Since odors do indeed bear social meaning, it is not surprising that various practices have developed by which olfactory identity and odor settings may be manipulated. Cross-culturally and historically one may observe efforts by actors to insure that they "give off" a creditable odor. Likewise, there are numerous examples of efforts to create a desirable odor setting.

To establish and maintain a socially accepted olfactory identity, actors engage in two basic practices: deodorizing and odorizing. The first practice usually entails the removal of socially discreditable odors through such activities as washing, gargling, and cleansing of teeth. There is usually a particular concern about the removal of perspiration. Odorizing, on the other hand, involves presentation of self with accreditable odors through the "art" of perfuming.[3] The existent rationales for deodorizing include

[3] In regard to perfuming, Theodor Rosebury (1969, p. 208) has raised an interesting and basically sociological question: "Maybe we ought to stop at times to wonder why we like flowers or coconuts or little Asiatic deer or the guts of a sperm whale;

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"health" and "cleanliness," while those for odorizing include "being fresh and pleasing to others." Through the use of deodorants and odorants an actor may anticipate his identifying label to be that of a "good, clean, and decent person" rather than a "stinker" or a "stinkpot." Through these practices an actor attempts to avoid moral stigmatization and present an olfactory identity that will be in accord with social expectations, in turn, gaining moral accreditation: he who smells good is good.

One's olfactory identity is particularly associated with racial, class, and sexual identification; and, as noted earlier, perfuming is closely related to the presentation and manipulation of those identifications. It has already been observed that racial minority groups are often stigmatized in terms of odors, and, as Dollard (1957, p. 380) pointed out, the allegation that a minority group is "foul-smelling is an extremely serviceable way of fixing on him an undesirable lower-caste mark and by inference justifying superiority behavior." Likewise, Myrdal (1944, 1:107) noted that "the belief in a peculiar 'hircine odor' of Negroes, like similar beliefs concerning other races, touches a personal sphere and is used to justify denial of social intercourse and the use of public conveniences which would imply close contact, such as restaurants, theatres, and public conveyances."

Dollard (1957, p. 381) found that in order to cope with their stigmatization Negroes engage in a widespread use of perfume: "Perfume is an effort to avoid the odor-stigma of being ill-smelling which Negroes know to be one of the beliefs of white people about them."[4] Unfortunately it might well be that the perfuming is seldom effective in the avoidance of the stigma. Instead, it may reinforce the white racist's belief that Negroes stink: If they didn't stink, they wouldn't have to cover themselves with perfume.

Like racial identity, class identity is often imputed in terms of odors. On the basis of reactions to forty-three different odors, Brill (1932, p. 40) reported that respondents "disliked most" the odor of perspiration; and he concluded that "this was not only because of its very sour smell, but, because it was associated with people of the lower class." Likewise, novelists and literary critics have noted that the odor of perspiration denotes lower class or status.

In a perceptive observation about Western society in the early twentieth

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couldn't we learn to love the smell of healthy sweat of men and women?" He is, of course, referring to man's almost universal historical concern to change and manipulate his personal odors in order to smell like a flower, tree, or animal. Why does the smell of lilac suggest an accreditable moral status while human sweat suggests a discreditable status? Does the discreditable social meaning almost always associated with human odors alienate human actors from their bodily selves?

[4] Brink and Harris (1969, p. 141) have pointed out that one of the white stereotypes about "better-educated Negroes" is that they take pills to avoid the odor they carry as a race.

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century, Somerset Maugham (1930, p. 140) asserted: "The matutinal tub divides the classes more effectively than birth, wealth, or education . . . the cesspool is more necessary to democracy than parliamentary institutions. The invention of sanitary conveniences has destroyed the sense of equality in men. It is responsible for class hatred much more than the monopoly of capital." In addition, Maugham thought it was significant that "writers who have risen from the ranks of labor are apt to make the morning tub a symbol of class prejudice" (see Brill 1932, pp. 41–42).

The observation of Maugham may have been grossly exaggerated; nonetheless, deodorizing-odorizing practices to avoid being "foul-smelling" and thus being associated with the lower class remain widespread. And, as with racial minority groups, it appears that the lower class often utilizes a great deal of perfume to avoid stimatization—so much so that the lower class is sometimes described as being "scent smothered" or "daubed in cheap perfume," "cheap" being a term used to imply lower class.

At the same time, the middle and upper classes attempt to support their status position by the appropriate use of "expensive perfumes," perfumes that symbolize high status. These perfumes are known through their advertisements in middle- and upper-class magazines: *Fete*, "a really distinguished, sophisticated, classic perfume"; *Amalie*, "expensive"; and, *Joy*, "the costliest perfume in the world." Often, too, these advertisements are associated with an aristocratic tradition, suggesting for instance, that Cleopatra or Queen Elizabeth used the perfume, and thereby appealing to a potential consumer's concern with class identity or status.

In short, one may observe that actors manipulate their olfactory identity to establish and/or to maintain their class identity. Often, too, they attempt to follow class rules set forth by etiquette books regarding the amount and type of perfume worn by those of the "proper class."

Historically, perfuming has also been associated with the enhancement of one's sexual attractiveness; and the belief that perfumes are erotic stimulants persists in most societies. For example, Beach (1965, pp. 183–84) has described a Southwest Pacific society where there is an aphrodisiac based upon the similarity of vaginal odor to that of fish: "Men use a red ground cherry attached to the leader of a trolling line to attract fish. After having caught a fish in this way the ground cherry is believed to have the power to attract women in the same way as it attracted fish. Their vaginas, like elusive fish, will be attracted to the possessor of the ground cherry." Beach continues: "Other odors are also thought to be seductive. Most potent of these is a very musky aromatic leaf worn only by men when they dance and another is the somewhat astringent odor of coconut oil mixed with tumeric. Women rub this mixture in their hair."

In modern Western societies, the perfuming practices are quite similar. Perfumes themselves are widely used by both men and women, and odor-

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ants are usually added to toothpastes, shaving lotions, hand lotions, and soaps, as well as hair oils (see Aikman 1951). Moreover, if advertising appeals indicate the legitimating motives for their use, then odorants are worn very often to enhance sexual identification. Consider the following advertisements of men's colognes: *Old Spice*, "Starts the kind of fire a man can't put out"; *Kent of London*, "It can't talk but women get the message"; *Pub*, "Uncorks the lusty life"; *By George*, "She won't? By George, she will!"; *007*, "007 gives any man license to kill . . . women." These types of advertisements are very often featured with nude or "sexually suggestive" women. They appeal to male desires to manipulate their olfactory identity so that it is sexually attractive.

Though less direct in approach, many advertisements for women's perfumes express a similar message: *Emeraude*, "Want him to be more of a man? Try being more of a woman"; *Tabu*, "The forbidden fragrance"; *Intimate*, "What makes a shy girl intimate?"; *Chanel No. 5*, "The spell of Chanel"; *L'Air du Temps*, "To summon a man, push this button"; *Maja*, "Maja is Woman. Genteel, earthy, provocative, poignant. The very mystique of a women"; *Ambush*, "Wait for him in Ambush."[5]

The extent to which a motive offered in an advertisement serves as a legitimating rationale for the use of a particular perfume needs further study; nonetheless, it can be hypothesized that a relationship does indeed exist. It is suggested that often the manipulation of an olfactory identity is related to a sexual identity.[6]

Social actors realize, too, that the context within which they act sometimes influences behavioral patterns. They know that an odor often defines a setting. Thus, like olfactory identity, odor settings are subjected to manipulation. As previously mentioned, the odor of whole communities is sometimes described as "stinky"; and the label may be detrimental to the image and development of the community. It is therefore understandable that efforts have been made to control or alter the odor of communities.

In 1969, Washington, D.C., adopted an air pollution code which outlawed odors injurious to the public welfare, the definition of welfare including reasonable enjoyment of life and property. To enforce the case the

[5] Taylor (1968, p. 153) has suggested that if aphrodisiacs are effective, perhaps anaphrodisiacs may also be developed. "Such a course might be convenient for explorers, astronauts, and others cut off from the society of the opposite sex. In prisons where abnormal sexual behavior commonly occurs, as a result of such isolation, the use of such anaphrodisiacs might be justifiable, paralleling the alleged use of flowers of sulfur in the past for the same purpose."

[6] One may also want to consider the relationship of smoking and identity. Smoking itself conceals personal odors, and the smoking of various types of tobacco—which have different odors—is often associated with different identities; cigars, with businessmen; pipes, with intellectuals or sportsmen; cigarettes, with bookmakers or card-players.

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city acquired a scentometer, a scientific device for calibrating "stink" (reported in *Time*, October 19, 1970, p. 12). Other communities have adopted similar procedures, particularly to force industries and sewage treatment plants to deodorize.[7] Each time the essential argument was: "Getting rid of the odor will stimulate a growth of the community through a more pleasant and healthy environment."[8]

While communities are often concerned with deodorizing a setting to create a more aesthetic environment, other efforts have been made to odorize settings. For example, odorants were applied extensively in the Roman Colosseum during gladiatorial games, the intent being to create a communal or we-group feeling (McKenzie 1930, p. 56). Likewise, the Chicago White Sox baseball organization has attempted to spray the scent of hot buttered popcorn in its stadium because that "makes people feel good"; and at the 1964–65 New York World's Fair, the India exhibition was presented with the manufactured scent of curry and cows (Hamilton 1966, p. 84).

The use of incense is another example of the management of an odor setting. Religious groups have traditionally used incense to create an "odor of sanctity," an atmosphere of "sacredness" among the followers. It is burned so that the group may share a common experience. As each follower introjects "particles of the odor" within himself, he is believed to more nearly achieve unity with the others. Boulogne (1953, p. 95) has noted that the use of incense "provides for the senses a symbolic representation of the invisible action (communion) that is taking place" (see also Frazer 1951, 1:379–84). In the Durkheimian sense, the use of incense generates a truly social phenomenon.[9]

The deodorizing and/or odorizing of other settings such as theatres,

[7] See McKenzie (1966). For a discussion of scentometers, see "How to Trace Bad Odors," *American City* 82 (June 1967): 144.

[8] There have been various newspaper and magazine reports concerning odors and community development. For example: "A proposed site at William and Babcock has been judged unsuitable for a school because of industrial and stockyard odors" (*Buffalo Courier-Express*, January 14, 1970, p. 3); "Citizens of Escabana, Michigan, have formed a group to resist building of sulfate pulp mill in their community" (Associated Press release, August 29, 1970); "In Selbyville, Delaware, the Bishop Processing Co. has been ordered to de-odorize because an obnoxious atmosphere envelops the town with the consistency of a damp blanket and the aroma of rotting flesh. . . . Mayor A. B. Carey thinks that getting rid of the odor will stimulate the growth of other industry" ("War on Smell: Bishop Processing Company, Selbyville, Delaware Ordered to Deodorize," *Newsweek*, January 31, 1966, pp. 23–24).

[9] From the psychoanalytic perspective, it is understandable why odors and the act of smelling have been used to achieve a sense of communion with god (society, in the Durkheimian sense). Odors and the act of smelling suggest a more personal and intimate identification with the other. In contrast, visual and auditory experiences are seen as more alienating acts than those of smelling, tasting, and touching. In the former experiences, the self does not consume or take in the stimulating particle.

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supermarkets, home, and rooms might also be considered. Again, each setting has a socially expected or desirable odor. Thus we find widespread use of aerosols, for example, the seasonal application of pine and spruce scents in homes to convey "the spirit of Christmas." As Hark (1952, p. 152) describes Christmas eve: "Throughout the room, intangible but definite, the faint perfume of spruce and moss and beeswax hovered like a benediction."

Finally, odors are sometimes used to control, rather than please, a group within a setting. The use of tear gas to disperse a crowd is one such example—though at the same time it creates a common or shared experience by which a we-feeling may be generated within a group, thus only reinforcing the crowd's further unity: "Did you get gassed by the cops?"[10]

CONCLUSION

While much of this paper has of necessity been truncated and impressionistic, we feel that it nevertheless points to a need for the study of a much-neglected field of sociological analysis. Simmel (1908) and Berger and Luckmann (1967, p. 203) are just about the only sociologists who even mention the possibility of a sociology of the senses, or "sociology of the body" (e.g., considerations of the alienation from one's "bodily self," social projection of the "bodily self," etc.). The sociology of odors and olfaction should, ideally, develop as one part of a more general sociological concern with the senses.

Possible areas for further research include the following, which, of course, is not an exhaustive list: What is the relation between life style, bodily state, and odors? What sociocultural conditions function to repress and which to elicit a consciousness of olfactory stimuli? What are some of the historical and cross-cultural differences and similarities in "odor consciousness"? What are the relations between "odor consciousness" and social development? What are the psychosocial dynamics involved in the definitions and/or identifications of olfactory stimuli? What are the social dynamics supportive of odor control and manipulation? Why do interactants perfume themselves? What taboos operate in the area of odor control and manipulation?

What are the relations between perceived odors and "labeling" or "social typing" (e.g., "stereotyping")? Under what conditions, if any, do olfactory perceptions involve a more personal and intimate identification with others? Under such conditions, how effective are odors in the generation of an intersubjective "we-feeling," or a less detached, atomized, or objectified awareness of others?

[10] In this regard, Taylor (1968, p. 53) has speculated that further development of aerosols to regulate crowd behavior may be expected.

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What effect, if any, does a negatively defined olfactory perception have upon spatial considerations such as the establishment of personal space and spatial arrangements of interactants? Following from this, what effect, if any, do olfactory perceptions have upon ecological processes and land-use patterns within the larger society?

In short, how do interactants become conscious of how to feel about or define a given odor perceived to emanate from a given other in a given social setting at a given time?

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