

Smelling like a man : a socio-olfactory analysis of masculinity in Singapore

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2012

Nur, A. S. H. (2012). Smelling like a man : a socio-olfactory analysis of masculinity in Singapore. Final year project report, Nanyang Technological University.

<https://hdl.handle.net/10356/87280>

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NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES**



**Smelling like a Man:
A Socio-Olfactory Analysis
of Masculinity in Singapore**

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A Final Year Project submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Nanyang Technological University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

Year of Publication: 2012

Abstract

This exploratory study investigates the impacts of smell upon masculinity. Based on participant observations, surveys and in-depth narrative interviews, I extend to the theories of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) and gender performativity (Butler and Salih 2004) in providing an olfactory dimension. I organized my discussion around three themes that smell(s) i) is an embodied phenomenon, which influences gender performativity of those studied, ii) are appropriated through discursive practices that reveal power relations in various contexts and, iii) not only reproduces gender performativity but provides alternative channels for reconstructing gender perceptions. By examining the perceptions of smells among males in Singapore, this paper will attempt to elucidate the multiplicities of masculinities evident in various contexts.

Keywords: Smell, Singapore, Fragrances, Gender, Masculinity, Natural.

Word Count: 9,990 words (including text, references, tables, and appendixes)
114 words for Abstract

Acknowledgements

In my course of conducting this research, I was faced with insurmountable life problems that tested my tenacity and perseverance to levels which defy any linguistic means of describing it. However, upon completion of this study, I realized that I could go the distance, exorcising my own demons while at the same time reconstructing several versions of this paper. It was a harsh but truly remarkable learning journey for me, however at this point, I realized I ought to write an acknowledgement page because it would allow me to come full circle with the great individuals I've engaged with along the way, as well as reflecting upon my own thoughts and emotions in writing.

First and foremost, I would like to express my thanks to all my 31 respondents who took the time to respond to my interviews, where some even spent their off-days entertaining my academic endeavours.

Second, my to my mother, whose patience and support motivated me to pursue my studies further, regardless of what others has said. Words could not encompass how much your care and concern means to me.

Third, my heartfelt sincerity and gratitude goes out to Dr. Lim Chee Han, who granted me various discussion sessions since my sophomore years in University. His advice, provocative and indispensable, and his achievements in academia, truly inspirational. If not for the discussions with you, this study would not have materialized.

Fourth, I express my deepest thanks to Associate Professor Kwok Kian Woon, a dedicated academic, who never fails to make time for his students no matter how busy his schedule was. Thank you for the motivation, and encouragement to go the extra mile in this academic endeavour.

Fifth, to my friend and confidante, Quek Ri An, an selfless individual who shares my sentiments of academic pursuits, indulging me with idealistic discussions filled with nicotine and caffeine, while knowing very well how Marx flipped Hegelian thoughts. Thank you for your critical assessments of the various revisions of this paper.

Sixth, to my 'brother-in-arms', Mohammad Jauhari Kamal, a true feminist at heart, and a great friend whose advice goes a long way. Thank you for your advice that made Microsoft Word's proof checker seems like third grader's plaything.

Seventh, my gratitude to Assistant Professor Kelvin E. Y. Low, whose olfactory research in Singapore sparked great enthusiasm in me to pursue further. You granted me the vision and the opportunity to sit upon the shoulders of giants, in engaging with the scholarship and making *sense* of my own research. Thank you for your provoking works.

Last but not the least, to my friends Ezekiel Wong, Iris Carla, Adam Abdeali, Vernon Lim, and Janice Tham, for sticking with me throughout these four years, where the experiences we shared, the thrills we braced, and the fun we had, has sculptured me to what I am today. Cheers to the years of friendship, and to the many more years to come!

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1

Towards a Sociology of Smell

If everything were smoke, all perception would be by smell.

Heraclitus (quoted in Drobnick 2006)

1.1 The (Underestimated) Sense of Smell

The way we understand the world is never devoid of our senses. If one were trapped in a quiet place, engulfed by smoke, perhaps the only sense that one rely on the most is smell¹. Moreover, food will be absolutely tasteless if not for the capacity to smell. Physiologically, Aftel explains:

The olfactory membrane is the only place in the human body where the central nervous system comes into direct contact with the environment. The sense of smell... is first processed in the limbic lobe, one of the oldest parts of the brain and the seat of sexual and emotional impulses. [Therefore]... before we know we are in contact with a smell, we already received and reacted to it (2001:13-14).

The physiological experiences derived from the senses, inform our experiences, allowing us to reflect on other occasions. It enables us to distinguish chemicals in the air for example, a gas leak in the home. It also enables us to interact with people in different ways. Imagine yourself approaching someone who smells pleasant like a bed of roses, as compared to approaching someone who works as a fishmonger. What are the forces influencing our actions here?

Synnott explains that: “odours define the individual and the group, as do sight, sound, and the other senses; and smell, like them, mediates social interaction” (1993:183). The sense of smell is a socio-cultural phenomenon, infused with meanings and values by various societies and cultures (Classen *et. al.* 1994), enabling individuals to perceive and understand everyday

¹ The sense of smell is the faculty that enables us to distinguish scents, is also known as ‘olfaction’.

reality. In short, smell is not an entirely physiological experience. To smell is to sense, and to sense is to, *make sense*².

1.2 A Sociology of Smell?

In European traditions, the sense of smell is often accorded with a lower cultural status as compared to the other senses such as (the superiority) of sight. For instance, Aristotle and Plato placed sight and hearing at the top of their hierarchy of senses with the sense of smell at the bottom³. Even philosopher Immanuel Kant postulated that smell is the most unimportant sense as it was observed as hedonistic function, undeserving of cultivation (Aftel 2001:149; Kohl and Francoeur 2002:27). Howes (2003:4-5) discussed how notions of civility were attributed towards sight and hearing in European culture, whereas taste, touch and smell, were juxtaposed with animalistic features; the hallmark of civility rests upon the marginalization of smell. Etymologically, there are no available scientific classifications for the sense of smell as compared to the other senses (Synnott 1991:438-439). Scholars also explain how the present ordering of smells are often described in terms of other senses as there is a limited lexicon (1991:438; Miller 1998:67) and a lack of an agreement about olfactory codes (Low 2009:4).

Confronted with a plethora of ‘ocular-centric⁴’ discussions portraying visuality’s predominance within the sensory literature, there appears to be an emergence of scholarship problematizing discussions of visuality since the 1980s (Drobnick 2006:3). Scholarly research on the senses have developed over the past few decades (E.g. Low 2009; Classen, Howes and Synnott 1994), being touched upon briefly within various fields of study such as anthropology (Classen 1997a), and history (Smith 2003). Sociological discussions on the senses stemmed from Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, William James and John Dewey. Dewey (2005) highlighted how the act of sensing is an active and interpretive process rather than the consequence of a simple stimulus-reaction hypothesis. Laying the foundation for a sociological analysis of smells, Simmel emphasized the importance of the senses within the dynamics of social interactions; pointing how smells influences social interactions (Frisby 2002:116). However, he stopped short of an elaboration of such olfactive impacts.

² Waskul and Vannini 2008; Pink 2009; Classen 1997a; Synnott 1993; Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994; Low 2009.

³ Howes (2009:109); Polansky (2007:302); Synnott (1993:185); Miller (1998:75).

⁴ A term used by Drobnick (2006) to denote the sense of ‘sight’ as the topic of choice in the sensory scholarship.

Classen (1993) provides an elaboration by discussing how smells are employed within various societies in categorizing different groups of people according to respective cultural values. She provided an example of how smells not only categorize groups of people into varying social orders, but also into sacred and natural orders:

...among the Bororo⁵, the odors that are employed to classify human, animal, and plant life are ultimately derived from the two fundamental classes of spirits: the *bope*, the foul-smelling, negatively perceived spirits of transformation; and the *aroe*, the sweet-smelling, positively perceived spirits of structure” (1993:102).

Waskul and Vannini (2008), following Classen, argued that people are able to differentiate, categorize, and classify things ‘odoriferous indexes’. Such indexical notions of smells denote ‘fixity’ and ‘rigidity’, which is contradicted by Classen’s relativistic stance in noting that, “such categorizations are not always absolute” (1993:102) as negative smells could be perceived as positive and vice-versa by various cultures.

Largey and Watson (1972) extended the discussion on smells by Simmel towards ‘odour management’, which parallel Goffman’s analytical framework of impression management (although the authors did not specify nor utilize Goffman’s texts or ideas). Waskul and Vannini elaborated Largey and Watson’s discussion (2008:1027-1028), by formally involving Goffman’s dramaturgical framework in explaining how people avoid moral stigmatization by removing socially discreditable odours through perfuming practices⁶ (backstage), and present themselves with socially acceptable odours (frontstage).

This act of managing the way one smells is also a social practice that is grounded in various socio-historical contingents such as during the reign of the Romans where their olfactory ideal extended the usage of perfumes as a basic part of everyday life, even onto domestic animals (Classen 1993:18). Perfuming is also considered an olfactory rite in some cultures, where olfactory management is pertinent to religious beliefs. Classen *et. al.* referred to the Arabic culture in Morocco, which compels Muslim inhabitants to maintain an acceptable olfactory condition within mosques, as failure to do so is seen as disrupting the sacred (1994:130).

⁵ The Bororo refers to the people who live in the Mato Grosso region of Brazil.

⁶ Herein, the term ‘perfuming practices’ or any other practices involving the management of one’s bodily smells through appropriating fragrances, having a bath etc. are subsumed under the notion of ‘olfactory management’ in this paper.

The impact of smell upon reality is significant in influencing the way people understand the world through classifying things and informing the perceptions of others, which sometime goes unnoticed. Locating the study on smells in Singapore, Kelvin Low's pioneering work discussed such dynamics in great depth.

1.3 Situating Smell in Singapore

Low's socio-olfactory research in Singapore elucidated the impact of smell as a social intermediary which influences perceptions on 'race', ethnicity, class, and gender (See Low 2006, 2009). His empirically-grounded works was carried out with 'breaching experiments' inspired by Garfinkel, and he also employed a place-based ethnography, ascertaining olfactive experiences from respondents in various fieldsites. In general, his study was grounded within the 'sociology of everyday life'⁷ framework, where he argued as questioning the taken-for-granted, and seeing the routine as new (Low 2009:31).

Low's research also uncovered instances where his respondents disagreed with the static 'gender-smell' categorization as "gendered scents are merely the outcome of marketing strategies, pointing... [t]o the availability of unisex fragrances... which upsets gender normativity" (2009:120). This is a unique finding as the public rhetoric of Singapore and its institutional structures maintain a bifurcation of gender roles (Teo 2009:533-534). Others have even contended how a Confucian paternal essence is engraved into the institutional structure (Heng and Devan 1995), where policies shore up towards the basic unit of the heterosexual family.

While his study was insightfully discussed with various examples, his notions on gender were not explored in detail. This study thus aims to expand the scholarly discussion of gender and smell within Singapore's context. The next section will present a review of gender within the general olfactory scholarship.

⁷ The basic premise in the 'sociology of everyday life' is to question the 'taken-for-granted' activities and actions of people in everyday settings.

1.4 Locating Gender

Historically, the practice of perfuming was frequently associated with females⁸ than males, where the usage of perfumes by males was seen as a sign of effeminacy. For example, Synnott (1991) explains: “Men are supposed to smell of sweat, whisky and tobacco... [while] women, presumably are supposed to smell ‘good’: clean, pure, and attractive” (quoted in Low 2009:22). Classen (1997b) provides a discussion on the ‘gender-coding’ of the senses, which is underpinned by historical circumstances. He highlighted how men are champions of the rational, and all things ‘culture’ while women are within the subjected domain of the irrational, and ‘nature’. This ‘olfactory divide’ and the consequential feminization of smells emerged during the Enlightenment:

Sweet, floral fragrances were considered feminine by nature because according to the gender standards of the day, ‘sweetness’ and ‘floweriness’ were quintessentially feminine characteristics... [Hence] men were expected to disdain all such olfactory artifice and smell only of clean male skin and tobacco... It was not just perfume which became feminized... [but] the whole sense of smell (Classen *et. al.* 1994:84).

In contrast, Graham’s contemporary study of fragrances⁹ (2006), revealed the presence of ‘unisex’ fragrances (or queer smells as he posited), which elicited consumer desires beyond the rigid sex/gender binary order. He postulated that such ‘flexible fragrances’ were manufactured for the purposes of adapting to the changing market, inadvertently providing the consumer “with an alternative olfactory imaginary that is at least suggestive of other gender and sexual possibilities...” (2006:318). Even with the presence of ‘unisex’ fragrances, etymologically, the prevailing standard of terminology for fragrances is still dichotomized into “perfumes” (females) and “colognes” (males) reflecting the gender divide. Moreover, the proportion of unisex fragrances pales in comparison with gender-specific ones available in the market.

I argue that the various scholarships on smell did not provide a theoretical implication of gender dynamics in relation to olfaction. Classen *et. al.* (1994) and Low (2009) pointed out the possibility of transgressing the gender binary through olfactory appropriation however, the explanation of such perceptions was not explored further. Although Graham (2006) laid

⁸ See Classen *et. al.* (1994:36-38) for an elaboration on the various olfactory ordering of femininity in antiquity.

⁹ The term ‘fragrances’ is used in this paper to denote scents/smells emanating from consumer products with olfactive properties.

the foundation for ‘queer’ smells located within a discursive analysis of various consumer fragrances, his study was divorced from the *lived experiences* (empirical) of social reality.

1.5 The Present Study: Males and Smells in Singapore

At present, there are numerous ways in which one could manage and appropriate smells, and the most common would be using fragrances in the form of perfumes, colognes and other toiletries (i.e. shampoo). With the plethora of fragrances comprising an increasing number of male-specific products in the market today, shows how the once feminine domain of perfuming is increasingly extended to males. Reports portray male consumer expenditure in grooming (including purchasing fragrances) as increasing in demand (AME Info 2008; Singh 2012). The Straits Times published an article in 2000, showing how males are increasingly purchasing fragrances (Leong 2000). In 2007, they published an instructional article, explaining the ways to smell ‘manly’ in Singapore (Gwee 2007). This begs the question, why are males appropriating fragrances? More importantly, how do they negotiate their masculinity through such actions?

The objectives of this study are threefold: Firstly, a discussion on how smell structures the way we perceive reality will be presented, which would contribute towards and expand the scholarship of the body to include olfactory. In order to contribute towards the scholarship, I not only intend to go beyond the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy by utilizing an *embodied* approach, but also beyond structuralist accounts of smell, by locating this study within lived experiences of respondents. Secondly, I delimit boundaries of empirical concern towards males, shedding light upon masculine dynamics through smell. This is not to assume that females will be excluded from the research, but rather, their narratives will provide empirical ballast towards analysing masculinity. In this vein, I narrow my focus towards fragrances and perfuming practices. Lastly, the above two objectives will be achieved within the context of Singapore, thus contributing an Asian perspective to the Western-centric sociological literature on smell.

In the following section, I present the relevant theoretical frameworks that will be utilized to complement and improve the theoretical limitations of respective socio-olfactory scholarship.

2

Exploring the Sense of Smell

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Although Goffman's sociology of interaction was adopted by Low (2006; 2009), and Waskul and Vannini (2008), I head directly towards Turner because he highlighted how Goffmanian sociology in general, is "a study of the self through the medium of the socially interpreted body" (2008:41). At this juncture, Turner made reference to Merleau-Ponty in going beyond the Cartesian mind/body dualism where "thinking, doing and feeling are practical activities that require our embodied presence" (Turner 2008:246). Therefore, the body and self are subsumed under the concept of *embodiment*. This leads to my adoption of Monaghan's interactionist approach of embodiment, which views the body as "not simply objects in the social world with an intrinsic nature; rather their meanings are dependent upon the actions and orientations of people towards them/selves" (2006:126). Hence, embodiment entails a *self-reflexive process*, by which people reflect upon themselves through the lens of the other and vice versa.

Following Classen *et. al.* suggestion that smells can only be described through metaphors (1994:3), I also utilize Lakoff's and Johnson's discussion on metaphors, where they argued that people's conceptual system which structures human perception and everyday activity is "fundamentally metaphorical":

Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people... [thus playing] a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor (2003:3).

Acknowledging the contemporary view of gender in sociology, I treat gender as not being an *apriori* of social interactions but rather, as (re)constructed *through* interactions. Combining the above arguments on the body towards gender, Connell sums up that, "gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do [rather than] social practice reduced to the body" (Connell 2005:71). In this view, I ally myself with Butler's notions on

gender and the body where she explains through Beauvoir that gender is seen as the corporeal site where cultural meanings are inscribed, and innovated (1987:130). She also collapses the distinction between sex and gender, where sex is already gendered (Brady and Schirato 2011:3).

These theoretical frameworks will help in making sense of the findings. Although initial data collection was analysed through the above frameworks, other theories would also be included to explain the findings more cogently. The next chapter explains the methodological approaches used in this study.

2.2 Methodological Approach

My methodological approach draws upon Pink's (2009) discussion on sensory ethnographic processes, where she emphasized the necessity to adopt a reflexive approach in uncovering 'sensory codes' in order to comprehend them in the broader social structure. Firstly, according to Pink, metaphors act as a sensory code as it is invested with olfactory experiences (2009:55). Therefore, I paid closer attention to metaphors such as 'bold', 'fresh', 'sporty' etc., these. And secondly, Pink emphasizes the importance of the observer to adopt a 'multi-sensorial' form of reflexivity, reflecting back upon the researcher's sensory experience in relation to others:

...the sensory ethnographer would not only observe and document other people's sensory categories and behaviours, but seek routes through which to develop experience-based emphatic understandings of what others might be experiencing and knowing (2009:65).

This is done by comparing present situational observations and researcher's immediate thoughts after involving her/himself in *similar somatic engagements* carried out by respondents. This form of ethnography aided the participant observation process as I recorded critical details that enabled me to create comparisons between respondents' and that of my own experiences after involving my sense of smell. In starting this exploratory research, I conducted participant observations to observe my own (sensory) experiences, in relation to the products that are frequented by males. The most appropriate field site would be retail environments, which Paterson explains as being 'relentlessly sensual' (2006a:364).

My interview process was largely informed by Low's (2006) olfactory research in Singapore, where he referred to PuruShotam's narrative form of interviewing as being appropriate for such research projects. Citing PuruShotam, he explains that this form of interviewing revolves

around the notion that human beings bear a narrative relation towards themselves, where their social experiences are formed by a “continuous narrational stream vis-à-vis a shared stock of knowledge” (Low 2006:612). In addition, Pink (2009:95) explains how to include greater awareness and perspective into sensorial analyses within the interview process by utilizing a theory of ‘place’ which involves

...understanding the narrative of the interview as a process through which verbal, experiential, emotional, sensory, material... are brought together... [creating] a place from which the researcher can better understand how the interviewee experiences her or his world (2009:95).

Understanding the narrative interview as a place-event, I included some form of material that capsulated scents from popular fragrances to provoke olfactory experiences from respondents as well as myself.

2.3 Methods and Sample

This research was carried out in three stages; pre-pilot (stage 1), pilot (stage 2) and in-depth narrative interviews (stage 3). I refined my interview schedule and sampling frame for stage 3 by establishing elaborate preliminary stages of research composing of participant observation sessions and distribution of survey questionnaires. This elaborate practice was in line with Kvale’s (2007) advice that comprehensive pilot testing will assist in determining limitations, and weaknesses within the interview design. All three stages provided a form of triangulation towards the research process.

The pre-pilot participant observation (stage 1) was a useful means for suggesting hypotheses to gain insight into this exploratory study as suggested by Cargan (2007: 24). Most of my ethnographic observations were recorded using a small wireless microphone receiver. Stage 2 was implemented to ascertain popular fragrances among individuals through the design of a simple survey¹⁰ (see Appendix A) and in turn, aiding me in choosing ‘scent tester’ strips¹¹. Noy suggests that snowball sampling provides social knowledge that is dynamic and emergent (2008:329), which was employed during stage 2 through expressing an option to respondents in being contacted for an interview session. I also obtained my respondents from snowballing through my own friends. Each respondent was given a copy of my ethics form,

¹⁰ This survey approach was intended to ascertain brands of products frequented by individuals, for purposes of the interview and tester strips, rather than elicit in-depth research questions.

¹¹ Each cardboard strip measured approximately 5cm by 1cm, and was available for consumers to use to try various fragrances. A total of 42 strips bearing different scents were obtained.

as well as my research proposal. Stage 3 comprised of 31 interview sessions, spanning across five months, which was held at quiet locations in accordance to respondents' preferences. I not only transcribed each interview session (approximately 85 minutes each) according to recurrent themes, but paid attention to metaphors utilized in describing smells. Overall the three stage process, aided in triangulating findings in relation to gender and smells.

Stage 1

The pre-pilot stage included two sessions of participant observation (eight hours each) carried out during weekends in June 2011, in two cosmetics departments located at Takashimaya and ION Orchard shopping malls. June was an appropriate month to conduct the research as it coincided with the 'Great Singapore Sale' which falls between May and July 2011 where a larger shopping crowd could be observed.

Stage 2

A total of 200 survey questionnaires were distributed in close proximity to the field sites over 2 days, after obtaining prior verbal approval from the department stores' management. 66 surveys were voided due to eligibility factors and information problems. The survey contained a set of four questions addressing the kinds of brands preferred in terms of toiletries and fragrances, as well as eliciting their perception of female, male and unisex fragrances. 15 individuals (9 males and 6 females) agreed to participate in personal interview sessions.

Stage 3

A total of 31 individuals¹² comprising of 20 males and 11 females (11 males and 5 females were obtained through the snowball method) of various demographic attributes were interviewed in stage 3. I included females in the interview process to uncover their perception on males, which could be used in juxtaposition with males' narratives that might highlight the changes (if any) in masculinity.

Treating the interview as a place-event, the inclusion of the scented strips was useful in provoking narratives of respondents' past experiences, where respondents recalled various situational encounters with such smells. I labelled scent strips according to its respective brand. Strips were revealed to respondents only, and/or identified the brands of fragrances

¹² See Table 1 for the demographics of respondents. Pseudonyms were employed, and any other identifying features were removed to protect confidentiality.

similar to the strips. Here, such strips were not presented with an ‘experimental’ intention but rather utilized only:

1. to evoke olfactory experiences
2. if respondents had problems recalling experiences

Through Pink’s sensory approach to ethnography, and treating the interview as a place-event, I was able to better relate to olfactory experiences of my respondents, while some of them had better recollection of their olfactory experiences after being exposed to the scented strips.

3

Embodying Smell

3.1 Experiencing Bodies through Smell

In general, respondents are quick to highlight the importance of smell in various contexts. They explained that various situations call for different fragrances, in which certain fragrances are deemed as ‘inappropriate’. Lucas alluded to this point:

...it depends on the occasion la... during my internship I realized you ought to smell... [g]ood and ‘confident’ in the workplace, as everyone [smells] like that. If you’re at the gym or heading to the stadium you try to use ‘sporty’ fragrances... Of course you can’t use sporty smell[s] at work!

As Lucas reflected upon his body through the lens of others, he realized his bodily smells differed across contexts. Fragrances described as ‘confident’ are deemed appropriate for the workplace, and ‘sporty’ for situations that call for some form of physical exertion, highlighting the association of context towards fragrances. A unique observation was how respondents expressed how they *felt* like a ‘different person’ after using such fragrances. Mike aptly described this:

When I spray like, certain smells that create a very... [pause] confident outlook, like when it smells ‘bold’, I feel like I’m more confident. My body feels [stronger] actually! [laughter]. *I feel like a different person...* Usually I wear this when I go to business meetings because [by] feeling confident, I was able to get things done smoothly (emphasis mine).

Angela substantiated this after recalling her experiences upon smelling some of the scent strips:

Well... I kinda feel different... yes. I usually go to the gym wearing sporty smells... usually those [that] have sporty smell[s]. The gym is typically a ‘sporty’ place, so with these smells you feel ‘sportier’...

To elucidate the above observations, let us analyse the use of metaphors since smells can only be described through such means (1994:3). Firstly, Lakoff and Johnson postulated how such metaphors not only structure the way people think, and perceive, but also what people do

(2003:3). Mike's narrative portray how business meetings require confidence, hence by appropriating 'bold' fragrances, he felt confident enough such that his actions were different, and in this case, better. In addition, the metaphors used to signify the smell obtains its meaning from the context itself. Gell explains:

...smell is always incomplete by itself, that it acquires a meaning not by contrast with other smells, but by association with a context within which it is typical. Where perfume is concerned this completion is contextual also... [just] as an odour permeates a place, and occasion, a situation, so the context comes to permeate the odour-sign and becomes *inseparably* part of it. (2006:405, emphasis mine)

Furthermore, in addition to smells being influential and contextual, the body is argued by Butler as being "lived and experienced in specific contexts" (Salih and Butler 2004:21). This contextual grounding of metaphors by respondents emphasizes how their bodies *ought* to smell like in various situations. Angela's case highlights how the gym is described as 'sporty', as do the 'sporty' fragrance she highlighted. This alludes to her embodying a certain kind of 'sporty' attribute through fragrances in recognition of the context. By applying different fragrances in realization of its associated metaphors, respondents experience their bodies *through* smells, which are also affirmed in reflecting upon others' expectations. These smells also amplify and modify people's perception of their bodies through feeling more 'strong', and 'sporty'. Hugh explained:

I'm not strong, or muscular. But I think I need to express to people that I'm manly enough at work... [so] 'strong' smelling scents help me somewhat achieve this... It gives a feeling of being stronger...

This modification and amplification through fragrances, encourages individuals to experience themselves as being physically different ('sportier', 'stronger'). Hugh's description reflects a majority of my respondents' responses, where the experience of one's body is tied to the olfactory properties of the body. Mike, Angela and Hugh's are just some of the narratives that illuminate the influential power of smells upon the body, and in these cases, transcending perceptions of the physical body (i.e. more stronger, confident etc.).

These findings show that smells are an embodied phenomenon, which reflects situational norms of olfactory appropriateness. The embodied nature of smells also modifies and amplifies one's perception of the body. These changes in embodied experiences through smell are also evident in gender performances as I shall present in the next section.

3.2 Gendered Smells, Gendered Bodies

During my participant observation sessions, I realized a substantial number of males not only spending a good amount of time within retail outlets, but also purchasing similar products females purchased. Out of approximately 647 individuals observed, 293 (45.3%) were males. Almost all of my male respondents highlighted how being a male requires one to smell good but more importantly, smell like a *man*. They use terms such as ‘strong’, ‘bold’, and ‘confident’, which are typically associated with masculinity. Females on the other hand, associated themselves with ‘flowery’, ‘floral’, ‘sweet’, ‘demure’, ‘fruity’, and ‘pleasant’. Charissa’s description aptly highlighted this:

...I think males smell very differently from females at work... they smell like man la... as compared to my female friends who smell ‘flowery’ and ‘sweet’... but I like the way I smell [flowery].

Such binary distinctions affirm Classen *et. al.*’s notion of the ‘olfactory divide’ (1994:83), revealing respondents’ conceptions of ‘female’ and ‘male’ that is constructed through smells. This alludes to respondents’ gender values, highlighting their understanding of masculinity/femininity. Nathan substantiates this:

Girls ought to smell ‘flowery’... [i]t’s lady-like... Guys have to smell different... they can smell ‘mild’ but most of the time its ‘strong’ and ‘robust’ smells... I guess because guys are stronger than girls [and] girls are usually soft...

These metaphors are fused with gendered meanings, highlighting how males and females perform gender as well. Nathan’s narrative iterates how physical attributes are linked with gender through smells, requiring ‘strong/robust’ smells as part of his masculinity. To the contrary, females are perceived as being ‘soft’. This physical comparison of gender seems to underpin the perception of smell. Chris described this in a different fashion:

Guys? Well these days even though you see guys wearing slightly ‘softer’ scents, [the scents] are still different from girls... Girls’ scents are always like flowers.

Although guys wear ‘softer’ fragrances, it is still perceived as different. Chris’s description on females, are consistent with most of my respondent’s experience, where females’ smell are always described in the same metaphors such as ‘floral’, ‘sweet’ etc. Diane’s narrative reinforces this:

Funny, I always knew it was normal for women to smell like ‘roses’ in most situations. We are all tender by nature [giggles]. But it’s different for men...

Female respondents such as Diane, were consistent in highlighting the normalcy of appropriating feminine fragrances in various situations, with recurrent use of similar metaphors like ‘roses’, ‘sweet’ etc. Diane’s explanation that females are ‘tender by nature’, reaffirms gender performativity in relation to the metaphors being used to describe fragrances.

Butler postulates that “being female (or male) is constituted through “discursively constrained performative acts that product the body through and within categories of sex” (Brady and Schirato 2011:6). The term ‘discursive practices’ was used by Butler to show how ‘saying’ and ‘doing’ are the same thing, that practices are not descriptive but are also *productive* (Butler and Salih 2004:91, emphasis mine). Moreover, the use of metaphors (saying) depicts the discursive constraints upon performative acts (doing), since metaphors are related to an individual’s conceptual system (Lakoff and Johnson 1994:3). It is *through* the (repetitive) performances of the actors where the subject is produced, seen as a form of a ‘disciplining’ process, naturalizing certain elements of identity as unchangeable (2011:12).

Therefore, olfactory management practices are discursive practices as they involve metaphors in describing the fragrances being used. In addition, these discursive practices not only influence gender perceptions but reproduce the heterosexual divide within respective contexts. However, with Nathan and Chris’s narrative of ‘mild’ and ‘soft’, along with Hugh’s usage of ‘strong’ smells, it begs further enquiry into this varying use of metaphors in describing smells, which alludes to differing forms of masculinity. The next section will present such elucidation.

4

The 'Sense-itive' Man

4.1 (Re-) Constructing Masculinities

In addition to emphasizing metaphors being associated with masculinity, male respondents acknowledge how the use of fragrances increases their perception of masculinity. Joshua iterates this:

I still remembered when I went to my friend's party without using my cologne. You know what, I felt out of place, [all my male friends] smelled great, and I felt like I smelled bad... like I'm not manly enough! Wow, come to think of it... I actually felt manlier when I had my cologne on. The ladies also always complement the way I smell, but it didn't happen that day

The use of fragrances in general, reinforces the perception of masculinity (i.e. feeling manlier). Feeling 'manlier' as described by Joshua, reflects the way masculinity is being perceived, which is reconstructed through the appropriation of fragrances. Furthermore, not having a fragrance applied encouraged the respondent to perceive that he smelt 'bad', pointing out how his masculinity has depreciated. Perception of masculinity is in part influenced by the fragrance being appropriated. Most male respondents highlight similar sentiments, but also shared how a shift has taken place in the ways males should smell. Trevor explained:

You can't go around smelling like the 70's... it's like so overwhelming [emphasis in gesture], and strong. Today when guys hang out [casually], they smell milder and less overpowering with softer smells. You don't need to be macho or anything like using 'strong' smells, you just need to be approachable...

Such strong-smelling smells, which is typically reflected in the literature as being traditionally associated with masculinity (Synnott 1991), has shifted towards a 'milder' dimension. By not being 'macho' – inferring a sense of machismo¹³ – and smelling 'overpowering', is to adopt an alternative masculine performance. Machismo as depicted by Trevor is seen as

¹³ Exaggerated masculinity

‘unapproachable’, inferred from the olfactory metaphor of ‘strong’, highlighting the social avoidance in interactions. Similarly, a majority of my male respondents emphasized the negativity involved with overpowering smells in casual contexts, which they commonly associate with the past. An example is Daniel’s experience:

All those ‘musky’ [and] ‘woody’ smells [of the past] are replaced... with milder ‘fresh’ and ‘fruity’ smells. But, if you wear these [in the past], you will be seen as a gay... now it’s accepted... it’s the ‘sensitive new age man’!

Daniel’s narrative of overpowering smells (‘musky’ and ‘woody’) is also described by my respondents as ‘aggressive’, ‘bold’, ‘hard’ scents. The avoidance of such fragrances symbolizes the hallmarks of contemporary masculinity. Where such scents were traditionally considered feminine, they are now incorporated into a masculine version, in which some respondents such as Daniel referred to as ‘the sensitive new age man.’ A few of my female respondents concurred with the notion that being a male in contemporary times requires sensitivity and being less aggressive. Lisa exemplified this:

Me and my [girl] friends always talk about how a guys these days have to be less aggressive, and be more... aware to things around him. By wearing strong smells, it’s so disgusting... I always tell my boyfriend to get those softer fragrances [because] it’s more pleasant...

Elucidating Lisa’s experience, McNair (2002: 157) explains this as a “homosexualized vision of masculinity... [where this] attention to self-grooming [is] traditionally associated with gayness.” Similar to Connell’s (1995) postulation that such homophobic attitude has traditionally been the archetype of masculinity among young males, the shift in perceptions of masculinity reflects an approval of ‘mild’ fragrances among males. Respondents referred to this contemporary shift as being ‘metrosexual’. Eugene explained:

I think wearing ‘softer’ scents are okay these days because, its metrosexual. [Yes], I’m metrosexual, and a lot of men are metrosexual these days. But I’m still a man [laughter].

Metrosexuality was coined by Mark Simpson to denote males who embraces commoditization and sexualisation (Anderson 2009:99). Anderson explains how such a label, “provides a justification for the ability to be associated with femininity, [which is] helpful in decreasing homophobia” (2009:100). Homophobia, according to Anderson, is the fear of being homosexualized. In this vein, metrosexuality provides alternative masculine scripts. However, male respondents that adopted this script did iterate to me that they are in fact, heterosexuals. Francis explained:

Oh I don't mind such milder or softer fragrances, its metrosexual!... I'm still straight, but its 'metro' to use such stuff...

It seems that metrosexuality is used to negotiate the terrain of feminine smells, which somehow legitimizes the appropriation of such fragrances as masculine. Being 'metro' is a discursive term, providing and justifying the possibility to appropriate feminine fragrances and yet retain heterosexual masculinity.

However, there were exceptions to this as respondents pointed out that such 'mild' fragrances were not appropriate for the workplace.

4.2 Smelling 'Powerful'

From my findings, the business environment encourages males to adopt a masculine role embodying confidence, and empowerment. Amidst the adoption of 'milder' fragrances, the work environment is seen by a majority of male respondents as requiring a different form of masculinity. Eugene highlighted this:

At work, it's not appropriate to smell 'mild'. [Males] need to assert [themselves] and put up a strong image with strong smells... All the guys do the same...

Eugene's emphasis that males have to wear 'strong' smells did not apply to most of my male respondents. Within such environments, there exist a hierarchy of smells, highlighting how 'strong smells' are perceived to be embodied by certain groups of males. Arnold explained:

I cannot smell too strong in the workplace because if my [fragrance] overpowers my boss, he may see it as if I'm challenging him. Unless of course you're in a high position, then it's fine... [but] I cannot smell too 'soft' too... people will think I'm a sissy.

This highlights underlying power relations through smell. Arnold's narrative portrayed how appropriating a stronger fragrance that overpowers that of another occupying a higher position in the hierarchy, is seen as challenging him. In this context, 'strong-smelling' fragrances are positioned in relation to authority and superiority, where 'challenging the boss' alludes to challenging the masculine hierarchy. In addition, males are not supposed to smell 'soft' which is deemed as effeminate. It is to strike a balance, between 'effeminate' and 'strong' smells. Francis' narrative exemplifies this:

Yup, too 'floral' or 'mild' smells in the workplace, is not good. [Using] strong smells at work seems fine but I doubt my friends would like that if I were to use that when going out with them.

The paradoxical nature of smells is exemplified, where strong-smelling fragrances are used in work contexts, consecutively being disapproved in casual contexts. A majority of my male respondents, who are working, also agree with this notion and there were some who shared how they felt 'constrained' within such olfactory power relations. Sam elaborated:

I used to like using strong smell at work... But my boss always wears a cologne that is not exactly strong-smelling... [thus] I have to wear something milder... it's all about 'sucking up', giving him respect... [A]ll workplaces are like that, a lot of constraints here and there.

This underlying power relation refers to a form of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 2005:76). Although the term has faced various criticisms and sometimes even being labelled as 'reified' and 'essentialistic' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:836), in this scenario it provides a ballast to view masculinities as hierarchical. Referring to Sam's narrative, a hegemonic pattern of masculinity is observed through the appropriation of fragrances in the context of the workplace. Through the use of less intense fragrances, deference is offered to Sam's superior. To the contrary, males of higher hierarchical positions are allowed to appropriate such fragrances. Benson, who occupies a managerial position in an organization, offered an explanation from the other side:

Well, I usually use a *Hugo Boss* cologne, which I admit is a really strong kind of fragrance, but that's precisely why I use it... As a Unit Head, I have to exert some kind of presence, and confidence.

The avoidance in overpowering males occupying positions of higher authority could be analysed using what Anderson terms as 'masculine capital', i.e. the "masculine levels of a man, as achieved through attitudes and behaviours... [w]here masculinity becomes a currency, in which privilege and esteem are traded" (2009:42). In Benson's case, in embodying stronger fragrances, he has higher masculine capital as compared to Sam and Arnold. They are seen as being under hegemonic patterns of constraint due to lower levels of masculine capital. Benson however, has higher masculine capital, thus having the privilege to utilize any fragrance he chooses, dictating the way other males *ought* to smell.

In general, most of my male respondents who are working shared similar views. In negotiating their olfactory practices according to the patterns of hegemonic masculinity through smells, they illuminate the hierarchy and power relations between superiors and

subordinates in any workplace context. In other contexts devoid of a formal hierarchy, the dynamics of hegemony is also observed through smells. Lewis elaborated:

The kinds of smells in the gym nowadays are getting stronger. I don't know la, but I feel it's normal to wear an 'aggressive' deodorant there. Cos it shows that are serious about working out... like being an aggressive man. At work you can't wear such overpowering smells, but at the gym you can... you [have to] show it man.

The context of the gym, typically seen as a male-dominated environment, pressures male individuals to conduct olfactory management to utilise 'aggressive' smells. In an environment that seeks salient masculine performativity, such metaphors also reinforce this claim that masculinity should be asserted in the traditional 'machismo' sense. Paul's narrative captures other similar sentiments:

The gym... [is] like a place where people work out, but there is this show of strength... I guess the guys there use super 'strong' smells... I also did the same, it's like a competition. 'Strong', 'hard', and 'robust' fragrances help you [portray] to others that you are [physically] strong...

The embodied perception of physical attributes through smells is again highlighted through such olfactive experiences, depicting an idealized masculine perception (context specific). Paul's narrative reflects how fragrances aid males in achieving this salient masculine performance which operates in an olfactory dimension, signifying the endeavour to embody higher levels of masculine capital. However, in casual settings such as gathering with friends, male respondents were eager to emphasize the reluctance in using strong-smelling fragrances, pointing towards how it is less receptive. Arnold explained:

Whenever I hang out with my colleagues, family [or]... girlfriend, I always use softer and milder colognes. I believe it's really well received. Even my male friends use these kind[s] of scents. I also received a bottle of [*The Body Shop's*] cologne by a [male friend], and it smells like a... [f]ruit! [Nevertheless], it's well accepted by people around me.

Paradoxically, masculinity is constructed using 'milder' and 'fruity' scents in such casual contexts. This goes to show how masculinity is constructed in differing ways, with different metaphors signifying a various perception of scents. Smelling 'strong' and 'bold' in one place is different from another, likewise with 'fruity' and 'mild' scents being accepted in casual occasions. In contrast, most female respondents also agreed that strong-smells are quite repulsive in certain contexts. Germaine shared such sentiments:

... [males] tend to smell different at work and at other places. At work they smell like they want to take over the world... other places, like going to the beach... they actually smell like, 'natural', 'ocean'...and also like 'fruits'! But it's really pleasant... [like] the new kind of man. If they smelled like how they do at work, it would be a complete turn-off!

The dimensions of masculine capital here is entirely different from that of the gym and workplace, which is observed through the embodiment of 'fruity' and 'natural' scents. Higher masculine capital here could be observed as bearing 'natural' scents, while strong smelling is being seen as repulsive.

This point emphasizes Reeser's fluid notion of masculinity: "the idea of a masculine self-creation, the self-invented or self-made man, or the new man who is in the process of constructing or creating himself might be morphologies of this kind of man of *becoming*" (2011: 49; emphasis mine). This state of 'becoming' highlights that males do not *become* a man, but it is carried out varyingly, in a constant state of *becoming*. Embodying strong smells in hierarchized and sporty environments are rewarded as masculine traits. To the contrary, such smells in casual contexts undermine masculinity. This is not to assume a rigid hierarchy but rather a spectrum of masculine perceptions through embodying smells. In the next section I shall explore the intricacies associated with 'natural' and 'fruity'.

5

The 'All-Natural', 100% Man

5.1 Smelling 'Natural'

Most of the popular 'mild' fragrances were perceived as 'organic' and 'natural' by respondents bearing 'fruity' and 'natural' (earth, ocean etc.) scents. The reason on why such fragrances were chosen was often framed within a 'natural' discourse. Peter shared his experience with such products:

...[the] colognes were having a 'fruity' smell and I think most of the time, these products are using natural ingredients. [They] do have such natural smells... and its 100% for men.

Peter's narrative aptly captures the sentiments from other male respondents that exemplify the framing of the product within the 'natural' discourse. His iteration that such products were highly suitable for males, signify the increased acceptance of such fragrances by males. In addition to the acceptance of 'milder' scents by male respondents, a large number of them also pointed out that such mild smells and even popular brands of colognes are adopting 'fruity' and natural scents as well. Vernon elaborated:

I have this cologne by *Calvin Klein*... it used to smell really 'musky', but now, there are 'fruity' scents from *Calvin Klein*. After trying it, I like it and I feel that colognes are starting to use natural smells and organic ingredients...

Regardless of the brand or label of the fragrance, so long a 'natural' or 'organic' scent is present, it is reified as being inherently 'organic' and/or 'natural'. Male respondents also emphasized that smelling 'natural' improves their masculine performance in casual contexts, where highlighted the importance of approachability. Gabriel said:

Last time, it's all about aggression and strength... being a man now is to be *approachable*, and using such natural-smelling fragrances helps in my meetings with clients... Like those 'fruity' and 'organic' [kinds]. (emphasis mine).

Paralleling Gabriel's use of 'approachable', a majority of my male respondents replied using similar terms such as 'sensitive', 'likeable', and 'open'. Such olfactive experiences are often

framed in juxtaposition with ‘strong-smelling’ fragrances that are often perceived as unattractive. Violet explained:

Once I met this guy who smelled like an apricot... [laughter] But it was in a good way... it’s damn nice! From then on, I started using it as well. I think it’s unisex since the product is advertised as ‘natural’. [Although] I think it’s not really stated as ‘unisex’... [but] my brother uses it too!

Although certain ‘natural’ products were not marketed as being unisex, they were perceived as such from the smell itself. Violet’s brother using her fragrances depicted an approval for masculine appropriation of such fragrances. These fragrances depicting the ‘natural’ create an ungendered perception, encouraging individuals to appropriate them. This is precisely what some of my male respondents explained. Francis’ narrative summed this up:

[laughter] Actually I don’t really know if [the fragrance] is unisex or not. I only know my friends like the way I smell, and my guy friends are all using it too. So far, I like it.

Francis’s narrative iterates the ungendered perception associated with the products, which is perceived through its smell. The reflexivity in embodiment is exemplified, as the masculine appropriation of these scents is re-affirmed by others. Mike elaborated on this:

The product is ‘organic’, so I’m guessing it’s okay for both girls and guys to use them. I get along with people better [through these scents]... It’s also okay for girls to use them too!

This new form of masculinity forms part of the metaphor that emphasizes *equilibrium* with others (including females) rather than dominance. To justify or market such masculinities, it is necessary to invoke this metaphor. Gender performance here could be seen as an on-going process according to Butler (2004), which consists of an embodied act of *becoming*, where one constantly *becomes* a gender (Lloyd 2007:39). Lloyd quotes Butler in pointing out the indefinite process of ‘becoming’ a gender that allows for varied interpretations:

Gender as a way of becoming, is thus an incessant activity, ‘a daily act of reconstitution and interpretation’. Since the body is the primary site of gender, the place where received meanings are reproduced, it is also the place where the norms of gender can be varied... [and interpreted in] way[s] that organizes them anew (2007:40).

Masculinity is constantly being reconstructed in various contexts through smell where males are in the constant process of becoming emphasizing the inherent fluidity of gender. Being a

‘strong smelling’ male at the workplace, as compared to smelling ‘natural in casual contexts’ is an apt example of how masculinity is performed and perceived differently. In addition, embracing the ‘natural’ discourse as ungendered reflects how ‘Nature’ is being perceived as ungendered. What could be the cause of this?

5.2 Framing the ‘Natural’

Evidently, most of these products do visually portray imagery pertaining to ‘Nature’ such as trees, flowers, fruits, oceans, and clouds. However, the affirmation of such visual-based reasoning from my respondents, are derived through smells. Daniel shared this:

I usually see how the product is marketed, like the advertisements and labels... I don’t usually see the ingredients most of the time, since the products are advertised as ‘natural’ and ‘organic’, it should be legitimate enough... Well you can’t taste [nor] touch it to know if it’s ‘natural’... funny, I trust my nose!

From Daniel’s comment, it seems that ‘natural’ is being reified through smells, where the verification on whether products are ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ is done through smelling them. There are exceptions to this where a few male respondents described such ‘natural’ scents as being chemically engineered to represent the ‘natural’. They do not actively pursue such fragrances, but acknowledge the existence of these products in comprising a small portion of the consumer industry. They nonetheless agreed that such (rare) natural scents are important. Chris elucidated:

I mean, most fragrances are more or less engineered to a large extent... how can it be natural? There are natural fragrances out there, but it’s really rare to see such product... [After using these products] I tend to feel ‘natural’, and not ‘artificial’... And most of these products are unisex. [I]t’s nature what.

Feeling ‘natural’ in juxtaposition with ‘artificial’ is to treat ‘Nature’ as being unmodified by human activity. However, all such fragrances (being sold) are more or less processed where perhaps only a tinge of extracts from ‘Nature’ (fruits, flowers) exists. A scientist who manufactures perfumes explained this: “When you extract molecules from a flower for a fragrance, you pull all the molecules out... [and] not smell like the flower” (Critchell 2004).

I cull from Paterson’s discussion on consumerism, where he calls such process of marketing as ‘virtualization’ which signifies how the product/service is “irreducibly experiential, incorporating not only signs or representations, but also more dynamic processes and imagination of the global through commodity consumption” (2006b:131). In addition, this

highlights the re-mediated and re-imagined product, framing how such engagement with these smells, brings one closer to 'Nature' (2006b:131). Framing such smells, Waskul and Vannini explained that,

...the relationship between an object and the sign which expresses it is always *mediated* by an interpretant, that is, by the sense [i.e. smell] that is made of that relationship (2008)

The embodiment of such ('natural') smells shows how olfaction mediates the perception of fragrances. Peter explained:

I once attended a dinner party wearing a 'natural' smelling fragrance. [Most] of my friends thought it smelled great. I think it's unisex... although the product is stated as for women.

This alludes to the perception of natural smells as being ungendered, regardless of the product label. Perception of 'natural' smells reconstructs the way masculinity is perceived, which highlights the fluidity of masculinity as postulated by Connell (2005). The influence of smell on gender is salient in this scenario, where masculine performativity is reconstructed using discourses of 'Nature'. The traditional association of effeminacy with 'nature' and 'natural' scents (Classen's 1997b), has reduced towards notions of 'unisex' which reflects the shift of gender perceptions. Such olfactive mediation of gender provides alternative gender perceptions, which could aid transgressing the heterosexual divide just as the cultural label of 'metrosexuality' established.

6

Conclusion

6.1 Smelling Manly: Concluding Remarks

Smell as an embodied sociocultural phenomenon, which mediates social experiences through olfactory management and appropriation. Summing up the findings, firstly, I argue that smell is an embodied phenomenon because it could only be described through metaphors, which influences the way people think and act. Secondly, smell is also utilized as a tool to reaffirm and amplify masculine performances as well as transcend physical perceptions of the body. Appropriating and managing fragrances are forms of discursive practices that constraints, reproduces and modifies gender perceptions and performances. In addition, this study on smells revealed how actors not only reproduce the heterosexual divide through discursive practices, but reveal the multiplicities of masculine performances within such heterosexual framework (in Singapore). At this juncture, Connell's notion of multiple masculinities (2005) is extended towards an olfactory dimension, as observed throughout my discussion.

Thirdly, I also contend that power relations exist within a masculine hierarchy through olfactory appropriation and management. Masculinity is observed to exist in a(n) (olfactory) hierarchy, underpinned by various contexts, where power relations rewards and undermines certain forms of masculinity. Lastly, the appropriation of 'natural' fragrances among respondents, which exudes the perception of 'Nature', alludes to a shift in masculine performativity influenced by 'natural' discourses.

Smells are a significant sensory phenomenon in reality. I reckon one way to superimpose the nineteenth-century prelude to the twentieth-century Cartesian cogito could be:

I smell therefore, I am.

6.2 – Limitations and Further Research

Since this study focused more towards males and masculine performativity, there were various areas in which this study could be expanded upon. Firstly, an intersectional analysis on gender (ethnicity, class etc.) was not included in this study but could be utilized in viewing gender and smells more holistically. Secondly, the contexts analysed here mainly comprised of the formal (workplace) and casual (gym). Further analysis in other contexts (sports, nightclubs etc.) could reveal significant olfactory perceptions influencing gender performativity. Thirdly, the olfactory analysis on masculinity could be extended towards discussion of metrosexuality and queer studies. Lastly, this study could be extended towards consumerism and environmental theories where an olfactory analysis could substantiate the discussions.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Educational Qualifications	'Race'	Occupation	Income (SGD)	Household Type
Chris	25	Male	Degree	Indian	Student	N.A.	4 Room
Joshua	17	Male	Junior College	Chinese	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Arnold	29	Male	Degree	Malay	Corporate Policy Executive	3000-3999	5 Room
Kenneth	15	Male	Secondary	Chinese	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Hugh	27	Male	Masters	Chinese	Engineer	3000-3999	5 Room
Lucas	23	Male	Degree	Chinese	Student	N.A.	5 Room
Peter	23	Male	Degree	Chinese	Student	N.A.	4 room
Sam	26	Male	Polytechnic Diploma	Chinese	Designer	2000-2999	4 Room
Benson	34	Male	Degree	Chinese	Department Head	4000-4999	Landed Property
Lewis	24	Male	Degree	Malay	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Vernon	36	Male	Secondary	Chinese	Web Designer	3000-3999	5 Room
Gabriel	30	Male	Polytechnic Diploma	Indian	Insurance Agent	3000-3999	Condominium
Marcus	16	Male	Secondary	Chinese	Student	N.A.	4 room
Trevor	23	Male	Degree	Malay	Student	N.A.	5 Room
Eugene	31	Male	Polytechnic Diploma	Chinese	Financial Consultant	3000-3999	Condominium
Paul	39	Male	Degree	Indian	Businessman	4000-4999	Landed Property
Francis	27	Male	Polytechnic Diploma	Malay	Property Agent	2000-2999	5 Room
Mike	28	Male	Degree	Chinese	IT Consultant	2000-2999	4 room
Daniel	18	Male	Polytechnic Diploma	Chinese	Student	N.A.	5 Room
Nathan	20	Male	Junior College	Chinese	Serving National Service	N.A.	5 Room
Eleanor	19	Female	Degree	Chinese	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Nancy	20	Female	Degree	Chinese	Student	N.A.	4 Room
Angela	20	Female	Degree	Chinese	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Sophia	17	Female	Junior College	Chinese	Student	N.A.	Condominium
Diane	33	Female	Degree	Indian	Marketing Executive	3000-3999	5 Room

Germaine	28	Female	Polytechnic Diploma	Indian	Accountant	2000-2999	5 Room
Violet	26	Female	Degree	Chinese	Teacher	2000-2999	4 Room
Lisa	19	Female	Polytechnic Diploma	Malay	Student	N.A.	4 Room
Mary	16	Female	Secondary	Chinese	Student	N.A.	5 Room
Charissa	25	Female	Degree	Chinese	Social Worker	2000-2999	5 Room
Irene	18	Female	Junior College	Malay	Student	N.A.	Landed Property

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

1) Do you buy cosmetic products and toiletries? If so, roughly how many times a month do you have shop for these items? _____

2) Typically, what brand of toiletries do you purchase? (E.g. Nivea, Loreal, Gillette etc.)

a. What do you like about the product? (E.g. Visuals/smell/ingredients etc.)
Multiple answers allowed.

a. Is the smell of the product important to you? Why do you say so?

3) Do you use deodorants, perfumes, or colognes? How often do you use them in a week?

a. Typically, what brand of perfumes/deodorants/colognes do you use?

b. What do you like about the product? (E.g. Visuals/smell/ingredients etc.)
Multiple answers allowed.

c. How would you describe the smell of the product?

4) How would you describe the smell of a product that is meant for females?

a. How would you describe the smell of a product that is meant for males?

b. How would you describe the smell of a product that is unisex?