

HARNESSING DAYDREAMS

A Library of Fragrant Fantasies

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Smell works in many contexts as a trigger for fantasies: a scent reaches your nose surprisingly or familiarly and evokes memories and daydreams. Although associations with scents are extremely personal, they are also subject to conditioning factors that may be cultural, temporal or contextual. This paper traces conditioning factors and fantasies connected with smells by analysing the creations and marketing strategies of the Library of Fragrance, a company that commodifies the close relationship of smelling and daydreaming. What associations and atmospheres are chosen to be turned into perfume and how do perfumers find them? Which culturally constructed smell associations are profitable? How do individuals resist commodified scent-associations and where are the limits of instrumentalisation? Furthermore, what can we glean from smell regarding the practice of daydreaming?

Keywords: perfume, daydreams, memory, rationalised scents, smelling, revelling

“Playing in it.....lying on it.....or even mowing it....Grass smells wonderful.”¹ While reading these evocative sentences, one might (and is expected to) imagine the smell of grass and playing football with friends on a summer afternoon or lying on one’s back in a flowering meadow, looking up into the sky, wondering what objects the steadily changing clouds might reveal. Such drifting, daydreaming and sending one’s mind on a journey is a cultural practice that we all follow every day, whether in long business meetings, when looking out the window at the sky, waiting for the train, sitting in the bath, or driving a car. The words invite us with their olfactory emphasis to let our thoughts wander back to happy leisure situations. It is not, however, a quotation from a grass seed salesman of crafty intellect. Rather, it is a

quotation from the Library of Fragrance, a perfume company that markets its scent “Grass” with these words. “Grass” is one of a wide selection of scents the Library of Fragrance borrows from everyday life.

“Demeter Fragrance Library, the first company to recognise scent as your memory’s best friend, stands out from the designer fragrance crowd. We bottle down-to-earth scents that evoke pleasant memories and experiences of everyday life.”² These two sentences constitute the philosophy of the young American company that sells perfumes related to collectively shared, thought-stimulating atmospheres and situations. As a counter-movement to designer perfumes, the Library of Fragrance does not search for new, never smelled prestigious perfumes. Instead, memories, thoughts and sensitivities produced or

recalled by smells are at the centre of their business idea. A person might choose regular perfumes as a means of self-presentation or to express his or her membership of a certain status group (Classen, Howes & Synnott 1997: 161ff.); the Library creates perfumes like “Mama’s Cake Dough” or “Washing Kitchen” as an additional option, intended to enhance well-being by evoking daydreams and memories. The company’s philosophy emphasises this: “Scent can make you remember what you like best and take you places you’d rather be, no matter where you are or what’s happening around you.”³

An Approach to a Transient Phenomenon

The Library of Fragrance is a business idea that capitalises on the connection between scents and mental journeys. Its concept is evidence for both the everyday relevance of the cultural practice of daydreaming and mental travelling as well as the possibility of their instrumentalisation. Neither practice has until now received much scholarly attention. This seeming lack of interest from cultural researchers can be explained with the empirically hard to grasp nature of the phenomenon. All research on the subject of daydreaming faces the same methodological difficulty: daydreams are no longer daydreams once researchers want to look behind the stream of consciousness that constitutes them. Once we empirically question the contents of such mental images and try to make their implicitness explicit, the quality of the images changes. The first investigations concentrated on the prevailing cultural conditions, situations and stimuli for daydreams in contemporary or historical perspective. Swedish ethnologists Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren examined the cultural and social organisation of everyday imagination in the course of their study of idleness (2007). They emphasised that “although daydreams and fantasies often are seen as intensely personal, they are produced within a shared cultural framework, drawing on all kinds of raw materials from different forms of social interaction to media images and narratives” (2008b). An approach based on the material basis and prevailing conditions allows one to answer questions concerning typical situations in which daydreaming occurs, the

cultural-historical contextualisation of daydreams, as well as questions concerning the inspiration of daydreams or their shared cultural framework. In this context, Ehn and Löfgren (2008a) pointed out that dusk and dawn have been cultivated as times for daydreams and are associated with emotions of all kind (not only) in Swedish society. Further studies showed that popular narratives or film motifs also serve as frequent settings or narrative backdrops for our mental journeys. The Finnish cultural anthropologist and journalist Sven-Erik Klinkmann, for example, found out that the motif of falling, as it is hauntingly staged in popular films like those of Alfred Hitchcock, is a common element of daydreams (2008). Additionally, German cultural anthropologist Silke Meyer (2008) proved in empirical surveys that imaginatively adopted visions of heroism, found in fairy tales and other popular narratives, help young people to handle their everyday school life.

Scents are another trigger for daydreams, more effective than sights. A scent is perceived as pleasant either in surprising ways or by invoking the familiar; it invites one to remember or daydream. Although scent associations are – like daydreams – extremely personal, they are also subject to conditioning factors that may be cultural, temporal or contextual. This was pointed out by Alain Corbin (1984) in his study of the sense of smell and social imagination in the period from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Since the 1980s, not least inspired by Patrick Süskind’s novel *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* (1985), numerous studies concerning all aspects of olfaction have been carried out.⁴ The particularly close relationship between being lost in thought and scents has often been accentuated, generally also with reference to the Proustian hypothesis of odour memory (Proust 1999[1913]). Nevertheless, there is hardly any research on the role which olfaction plays in the culture of remembrance and the connection between scents and daydreams respectively.⁵

Perfumes are consumer products. When considering how to explain the seemingly endless desire for novelty that forms the basis of late modern consumption, Colin Campbell (1987, 1994) points to the importance of daydreams. In his theory of “modern

autonomous imaginative hedonism” (1987: 77–95) he defines daydreams as “an activity which mixes the pleasures of fantasy with those of reality” (1987: 85). In contrast to traditional consumption theories,⁶ which state that things are bought for their social or practical usefulness, Campbell postulates that we buy things to come closer to the dreams we have of our personas. “The essential activity of consumption is thus not the actual selection, purchase, or use of products, but the imaginative pleasure-seeking to which a product image lends itself, ‘real’ consumption being largely a result of this ‘mentalist’ hedonism”⁷ (1987: 89). According to Campbell’s theory, that which we consume should allow us to draw conclusions about our daydreams.

What pleasant imaginations are hidden behind a perfume called “Grass”? I first discovered a small advertisement for the Library of Fragrance perfumes in a women’s magazine. This magazine usually contains full-page advertisements for classic perfumes with images of beautiful women dressed in the latest styles, which implicitly invite daydreams of a world of beauty and light-heartedness. Classic perfumes are used to surround one’s self with pleasant scents and the feeling of luxury, to increase one’s well-being, and sometimes to demonstrate one’s status or membership of a group. In contrast, the Library perfumes are targeted at the user’s thoughts: these perfumes are used to create an olfactory environment in which one feels intellectually comfortable.

In order for the Library of Fragrance to make a profit, it must find scent associations or daydreams that are shared by many people. Successful perfumes created by the company thus might shed light on the culturally shared predilections that allow scent-evoked fantasies in everyday life to be turned into commodities.

The Library of Fragrance explicitly states the associations the perfumes are intended to elicit on their homepage, both through the names of the perfumes and other information. This information was examined using media text analysis (cf. Köck 2007; Hengartner 2007) on the homepage of the company. The Library of Fragrance’s homepage lists product information for all of the currently available 250

perfumes.⁸ An interactive forum is also maintained, in which experiences with the perfumes can be exchanged, scent wishes posted, or scent mixtures can be discussed with the company’s “experts”.⁹ One aim of the present analysis is the division of available scents into categories (cf. Köck 2007). Further insights into the topic are sought via these two questions: which associations and atmospheres are chosen to be turned into perfume, and which culturally constructed scent associations are profitable? Using the characteristics of olfaction, the backgrounds in which specific scent associations work will be presented, and this question discussed: how do individuals resist commodified scent-associations and what are the limits of instrumentalisation? A final discussion will then examine what we can extrapolate from scents about the practice of daydreaming, its profitability, and its multiple constructions.

The aim of this paper is thus to present preliminary thoughts about the connection between scents and daydreams using the media texts of the Library of Fragrance as a basis. These primary considerations can then be used to further the study of the cultural practice of daydreaming.

The “Associative Sense”

Olfaction was often judged depreciatively in the history of philosophy, as a “mean” sense which would lose its appeal and was not technically controllable. In contrast, seeing and hearing were considered “far” senses, and were often brought into connection with objective thinking. They were also appreciated as traditional theoretical senses. As for olfaction, Immanuel Kant regarded it as a subjective sense of pleasure with antisocial and obtrusive characteristics, because it cannot be evaded (Diaconu 2005: 182–202, esp. 289). Even today people in western society share the opinion of French anthropologist Annik Le Guérér (2002: 3) who states that scents are more important as a sensory pleasure than for the intellect. In his conceptual considerations of “smellscapes”, British geographer Douglas Porteous (2006: 91) refers back to Kant’s terminology in differentiating between visual and olfactory perception:

Vision clearly distances us from the object. We frame “views” in pictures and camera lenses; the likelihood of intellectual response is considerable. By contrast, smells environ. They penetrate the body and permeate the immediate environment, and thus one’s response is much likely to involve strong affect.

Nevertheless, olfactory perceptions are tightly connected with thoughts, but it is more subtle, wandering ways of thinking rather than more directed styles of thought. Some philosophers from the nineteenth century, who rehabilitated olfaction and were devoted to the qualities of odours, were aware of this: Arthur Schopenhauer thus identified the sense of smell as a memory sense (although he banished olfactory pleasures from aestheticism just as Kant did), and Friedrich Nietzsche, who was called “the fine nose of philosophy” by philosopher Madalina Diaconu, valued olfaction as “*Inbegriff einer intuitiven, vorbegrifflichen Erkenntnis*” (2005: 196, translated as: “the epitome of intuitional, pre-categorical perception”). Brian Moeran, who has put forward ideas on the anthropology of scents in the context of his research on scent-marketing in Japan, denotes smell as the “associative sense” (2007: 157). The Library of Fragrance harnesses these characteristics of scent perception.

Creations and Marketing Strategies of the Library of Fragrance

Cocktails and Candy, Nature and Nostalgia

To earn money out of the Library of Fragrance endeavour, perfumers have to find collective, shared scent-associations. How do they capture shared “scents of everyday experiences”?¹⁰ In an e-mail, the company’s owner revealed that he takes his inspiration from meandering through the world with an open nose, perceiving everyday scents around him.¹¹ Inspiration is also drawn from a wish-list maintained on the company’s web log.¹² Many suggestions are made – from wet asphalt, dentist’s offices, and burning leaves to clover – and some posted suggestions tell a lot about the writer’s olfactory and memory universe. Coding of (compare Köck 2007:

352–357) the perfumes presented on the homepage shows that the scents of the Library can be divided into four main categories:¹³

1. Leisure Time

This category contains a substantial product line, “the happy hour collection”, which is dedicated to cocktail scents such as “White Russian” or “Mojito”. This set seems counter intuitive, for cocktails generally produce visual and gustatory impressions – though of course scent is necessary for full gustatory impact. But the scents in this category refer to leisure time – together with other perfumes related to intoxication such as “Cannabis” – and they capture the escapism of alcohol-induced inebriation. The latter simultaneously dulls and animates the senses while helping the drinker forget the everyday. Scents that refer to different customs are also included in this category. “Bonfire” and “Springbreak” are two such scents that embody situations outside of everyday life. Other scents such as “Fireplace”, “Flower-show” (meant to evoke the Philadelphia Garden Show), “Christmas in New York”, or “Kahala Hawaiian Surf” evoke other leisure time contexts.

2. Childhood and Nostalgia

Another category focuses on odours like “Baby Powder”, “Play Doh” or “Crayon”, a perfume that smells like “that fresh box of crayons on the first day of school.”¹⁴ This category refers to childhood experiences. Various candy-perfumes such as “Cotton Candy” or “Bubble Gum” are also included in this category. The latter smells of the well-known “Bazooka Bubble Gum”, and in its description the Library’s homepage explicitly refers to the connection between scents and memories: “As a matter of fact, a psychological study of tastes and smells that bring back memories found that one of the most frequently identified items was Bazooka Bubble Gum”.¹⁵ Scents like “Glue”, “Record Vinyl”, or “Washing Kitchen” that evoke nostalgic memories and sensitivities are also central components of this category. As a matter of fact, the Library offers a “Back to School Essen-

tials Mini-Set” which includes perfumes like “Crayon”, “Golden Delicious”, “Paperback” and “Pure Soap”. Finally, the perfume “Christmas Tree” promises “Happy tree memories, all year!”.¹⁶

3. Nature

This category contains a lot of flower-perfumes like “Dandelion” or “Daphne”, but also less specific scents such as “Rain”, “Wet Garden”, “Grass”, “Dust”, “Salt Air”, “Snow” and “Dirt”. The latter is a perfume which both actor Clint Eastwood and supermodel Kate Moss have claimed they wear.¹⁷ This shows us that unlike designer perfumes, the Library’s scents are not gender-specific. Does this mean that men and women share the same scent-related daydreams? The childhood fascination of particular animals is also turned into scent, for example in the perfumes “Earthworm” or “Firefly”. The descriptive text on the homepage aims to help those who cannot remember what fireflies smelled like: “Demeter’s Firefly seeks to capture the essence of an early north-eastern spring evening at dusk, the smells associated with the kind of magical night when the first fireflies of the year appear.”¹⁸

4. Food(stuff) and Aromas

The many perfumes that exploit the close connection between the senses of smell and taste come under this category. These perfumes include “Earl Grey”, “Espresso”, “Cranberries”, “Cucumber”, “Basil”, and “Beeswax”. There are also more exotic aromas such as “Dregs”: “While the ‘bottom of the barrel’ connotation associated with dregs is negative, it is essential to a full-bodied red wine, and therefore, not surprisingly, a full and pleasing aspect of the bouquet of a fine red wine. It is that aspect of the bouquet represented in Demeter’s Dregs.”¹⁹

In terms of culturally conditioned factors, it is obvious that the culture of remembrance shaping these perfumes pertains to western post-industrial societies. The scent of cocktails would likely invoke different associations in Islamic societies than in west-

ern ones. Many perfumes, especially the ones related to childhood, refer to consumer goods that are not available all over the world.

The Library’s assortment suggests that people’s preferred memories and mindscapes circle around leisure time, childhood memories, nostalgic tastes, flavours, food and experiences within nature. Why are these domains expected to evoke culturally shared (positive) reactions? Besides techniques such as extensive descriptions of scents, I would first like to present three reasons that pertain both to the scents themselves and their physiological perception.

Standardised Components

Perfumes that utilise the tight connection of scents and tastes – like the cocktail and kitchen perfumes – benefit from the standardised composition of ingredients: A Mojito tastes and smells the same all over the world. For perfumes inspired by consumer goods, standardised ingredients also play a central role. The description for the fragrance “Baby Powder” explains, for example, that the Company Johnson & Johnson started importing Italian talc in the late nineteenth century and “shortly thereafter, that scented talc was being sold as baby powder, creating the link in our minds between the scent of baby powder and fresh cleanliness”.²⁰

Olfactory Childhood Memories and Nostalgia

Olfactory childhood memories are a central category in the library’s assortment. This is surely due to the deep impressionability of a young person – everything awaits categorisation at that stage. The relevance of childhood memories and nostalgic emotions for the Library of Fragrance’s assortment can be explained by a characteristic of olfactory perception: There are no innate olfactory preferences. During our lives we learn all kinds of associations and meanings connected with scents. The perceptions of scent thus consist not only of the sensation of the odours themselves, but of the experiences and emotions associated with them. Jim Drobnick (2006: 5) pointed out that this dialectical nature of scent is interdisciplinarily accepted:

An ambivalence between objective and subjective factors accompanies any odorous experience, yielding an intimate interplay between the physical level of materiality and physiology on the one hand, and the symbolic level of culture and ideology on the other. Perception, as researchers have pointed out, is inevitably influenced by the socialization of the senses and the contexts in which olfactory practices are engaged.

In a small survey conducted for this exploratory paper, a friend of mine told me that during her first stay as an au pair in Japan, she always smelled a cedar wood desk to ease her homesickness. The smell reminded her of peaceful childhood experiences in the garage of her mother, who worked as a wood sculptor. The British social anthropologist Alfred Gell pointed to this “extreme determination of olfactory meanings by non-olfactory contexts” (2006: 402). He characterises odours as being “incomplete” since their relevance for the individual can only develop in the particular context in which they are perceived. As a symbol for this specific context, a scent is able to evoke the whole situation and all the associated emotions. Therefore, Gell (cited after Drobnick 2006: 5) calls this status of scents “semiological ambiguity”, because scents can be both, stimulus and sign.²¹

During childhood the first and therefore most insistent *contexts* that are linked to scents are developed. Physiological dispositions improve the commodification of these impressions from the distant past. According to a study in experimental psychology, olfactory memories are predominantly embedded in areas of the brain housing long-term memory (Engenn, Kuisma & Eimas 1973). Scents can thus evoke the long-forgotten especially well. This may explain the strongly nostalgic emphasis of the Library of Fragrance. Nostalgia is a melancholy, often idealised and misty-eyed remembrance of the past, and not just a subjective feeling, but also an expression of a collective way of thinking.²² Forms of nostalgia shared within societies are shaped, reflected and often strengthened by media and other forms of popular culture. Societal nostalgias are thus documented and maintained with well-established

narratives and images. Grandma’s kitchen or other nostalgic kitchen scenes are used as verbal or visual abbreviations in food advertisement to give products attributes such as reliability, naturalness and authenticity. The Library does draw on such culturally condensed narratives and pictures, but not primarily with the perfumes themselves.

Contrastive Situations

Contrastive situations seem to be a crucial foundation for the conscious perception of everyday scents, and therefore also for the olfactory settings on which the Library capitalises. The description for the perfume “Wet Garden” for instance takes the customer into a spring garden: “Our Wet Garden takes place at Easter, full of early spring flowers, including young shoots and buds, after a hard April rain. It is the combinations of those flowers, the rain and the oils from the rich spring soil that comprise this fragrance.”²³

The conjunction with spring is important for the mechanics of our olfactory memory: against the background of a long winter we notice spring’s odours much more intensively. This olfactory memory is for example also used in advertising for cleaning agents. Douglas Porteous (2006: 90) described the physiological backgrounds for this effect as an “habituation effect”: “The perceived intensity of scent declines rapidly after one has been exposed to it for some time. Not that the scent disappears, but the perceiver becomes habituated to it.” This mechanism is at work in many perfumes created by the Library, as for example in the olfactory aspects of rain. The scent of rain can only unfold itself against the backdrop of a long period of drought. This is utilised in the perfume description of the Library:

It does seem that on summer days when it is hot and dry, with a thunderstorm brewing just over the next hill, you can “smell the rain.” Well, you can smell something, but rain? Have you ever tried to smell this same rain in January when the ground is frozen solid? Not a chance, but when the ground and plants are warmer, you can smell something. What you really smell comes not

from the air, but the ground! Plants release oils that enter the soil and blend with the other earthy odours.²⁴

Besides the nose's habituation effect, Alfred Gell (2006: 403) mentions that our sense of smell has an especially strong effect when other senses are just about to take action, as if in a stage of being in-between:

The sense of smell comes into play most when the other senses are in suspense, at moments, one should say, of materialization and dematerialization, the coming into being and passing away of things, situations, circumstances which hold our attention vividly while they are present [...] For example, a merely prospective meal is heralded, and its specific nature is somewhat suggested, by wafts of cooking smells coming from the direction of the kitchen, gradually assuming an ampler and more concrete character. [...] The smell of something cooking or the tang of an aperitif mark a transition from concept, expectation, to fact. [...] A mere aroma, in its very lack of substance is more like a concept than it is like a "thing" in the usual sense.

Here, the sense of smell is compared to the stage of an idea which is just on the edge of materialising. Such situations of transition produce vague mental images that can be memorised through olfactory impressions. The mechanism of the process of materialisation and dematerialisation, which characterises situations in which we let ourselves be directed by our nose, explains the impressive effect of aromas, natural scents, and the perfumes made out of them.²⁵ Furthermore, the mechanism explains the effects of numerous other scents that refer to moments of transition – whether that evoked by alcohol is a transition from work to leisure or from stress to relaxation.

Description Sells

The metaphor included in the company's name points to the fact that the issue is not simply scents.

In marketing a perfume, the words and images used are also important. Detailed descriptions accompany every perfume presented on the homepage. Why are these explanations – seldom found for classic perfumes – so important for the Library's concept? This can be explained by a further characteristic of the human olfaction as described by Brian Moeran. Referring to central thoughts of the French anthropologist and linguist Dan Sperber, he points out two main reasons for the intertwining of smelling and daydreaming.

- Odours cannot be named and therefore they cannot be disassociated from their causes or effects. We have to say "It smells *like*..." when describing an odour, trying to express our experience by means of metaphors (Moeran 2007: 156). Scent perceptions have to be described in many words, and as a result, as stated by Dan Sperber (1975: 116), "there is no semantic field of smells."
- As already discussed, scents have an intimate and immediate link to personal memory, which French novelist Marcel Proust archetypically described in *À la recherche du temps perdu* (although he was an asthmatic and allergic to scents). Moeran states that "precisely because the language of olfaction has no autonomous domain to itself, memory becomes extremely important as a means of aiding our recognition of scents. This is necessary, because, while we can recognise thousands of different scents in our every day lives, we cannot normally recall them independently of external stimulus" (2007: 156). Dan Sperber calls scents "symbols par excellence" (1975: 118) because they act as representations of representations in our minds.

Because scent does not have its own taxonomy, the explanatory descriptions play a crucial role in the marketing concept of the library – and the name "Library of Fragrance" itself evokes metaphoric abundance. Because scents are symbols, their descriptions conjure up atmospheres (or with Alfred Gell: contexts), which are represented by the olfactory sign.

This is a trick that has been used by many literary authors since the olfactory revolution of the nineteenth century so well documented by Alain Corbin (1984) or Douglas Porteous (1985, 2006). The Library's descriptions help to conjure up scenes, where culturally shared well-being, including comforting scent memories, are expected to be located. To make this nexus clear, I would like to focus on the example of scents inspired by nature. The description of the perfume "Salt Air" takes us to a place well known to all, especially to researchers of tourism: "Imagine a perfect sea breeze on the perfect beach at your favourite tropical island. Now you have the perfect description of Demeter's Salt Air ... Take off to the land of tranquillity where the scent of the sea breeze wakes you up each day and sends you off to dreamland at night."²⁶

With this description, a state should be imagined that has been labelled by Orvar Löfgren (1999: 213–227) as the phenomenon of the "global beach". That is a universal beach experience with globally standardised iconography, choreography – and scent – that developed in the 1950s due to the first advertising of Hawaii (and particularly Waikiki Beach) to appear in the mass media. To this day, Hawaii's beaches remain standardised and powerful symbols of the perfect beaches, which the global population desires to visit. The description of the perfume "Salt Air" conjures up this context and inspires pleasant mental journeys away from, and in contrast with, everyday life.

Limits of Instrumentalisation and Measures to Cope with the Idiosyncrasies of Scent Perceptions

Culturally shared olfactory perceptions are a result of standardised ingredients, olfactory childhood memories and other nostalgically motivated thoughts, as well as moments of transition that put the nose into a special focus. The names and descriptions of the Library's perfumes define these culturally known contexts that many people can conjure up and connect with a scent. However, individuals acquire associations with scents in an extremely personal fashion. This leads to a gap between description and scent

and is the reason that not all human beings assign the same scent to the same context. For example, the description of "Washing Kitchen"²⁷ made me think of freshly washed shirts, dried in the summer sun, but its odour reminded me of the bergamot scent of my aunt's old car where I always got sick in the back when I was a child (the Library also has a nostalgic perfume called "Vinyl" for the scent of an old car's interior that is said to be reminiscent of the odour of car seats from the 1970s). However, when I presented a sample of "Washing Kitchen" with a version of this article at the SIEF congress in Derry, the perfume actually smelled like fresh laundry for more than one third of the international audience. This little survey shows that the Library indeed detects culturally shared scent contexts, but that these contexts are opposed to many individual contexts.

The idiosyncratic aspects of scent perception have diverse influences on the actual scents created by the Library: a number of customer suggestions referring to the body odour of living beings were rejected. Everyday scents such as "Blood", "Wet Dog", or "Sweat of Fear" cannot work as a perfume because they invoke – for most people – disgust, or are so individualised that there is no culturally shared perception of that scent.

Individual scent horizons not only shape the reception of scents but also the stock of the Library. If a member of the company has negative associations with a particular scent, the creation of a new perfume can be stopped. For instance, there was a customer who requested a menthol perfume. However, the founder of the company could not stand this scent, because it reminded him of his ex-wife who constantly ate menthol candies to alleviate her chronic cough.²⁸

Temporal conditioning factors also have an influence on the Library's assortment. The company's founder created the perfume "Gin Tonic" at the beginning of the 1990s, because the taste and smell of this drink was popular among his contemporaries. When he presented the perfume to his daughter, she said a cooler and more up to date drink, like a "Sex on the Beach" cocktail, would make for a better perfume.²⁹ In an empirical study, Alan R. Hirsch has

interviewed nearly a thousand shoppers to find out which odours trigger nostalgic feelings. He showed that responses to the same odour change over time and that scent perception depends on the generation:

People who were born before 1930 in less urbanized and industrialized times [...] mentioned such natural odors as pine, hay, horses, sea air and meadows as reminiscent of childhood. But those born after 1930 were more apt to mention food and artificial odors such as plastic, scented markers, airplane fuel, Vaporub and Play-Doh as reminiscent of their childhood. (Hirsch 2006: 188)

A certain dependence on generations is also true for cocktail fashion and their scents. Therefore, the Library constantly changes its cocktail line and combines the scents of childhood of different generations in its product line in order to have olfactory memories in store for people of all ages and to improve sales. The perfume descriptions reinforce the nostalgic effect, as in the case of "Fresh Hay": "The smell of fresh cut hay on a hot summer day ... does it take you back there, too?"³⁰ But the descriptions also have to assist in overcoming the individual aspects of scent perception. Regarding the scent of the perfume called "Dirt", the company's director states:

People will occasionally say "This doesn't smell like dirt to me ..." Well, where did they grow up? Arizona? The South of France? Obviously then our Dirt isn't going to smell like dirt to them, as Demeter's Dirt was made to smell exactly like the dirt from the fields around the Pennsylvania family farm belonging to our founding perfumer.³¹

Simple scents can be mixed to bring about a collective association, even if they are, separately, enmeshed in individual memory. The company's homepage regularly provides recommendations on how to combine several perfumes for a complex olfactory effect. Mixing the fragrances of "Popcorn", "Dust", "Bubble Gum", and "Rubber" or "Tarnish" evokes, according to the homepage, the unmistak-

able scent of "Movie Theater".³² There is also a lively exchange of ideas on perfume combinations in the Internet forum the Library maintains. Many users buy more than one perfume to mix an individual olfactory environment that suits their thoughts, such as "Fahrenheit 451: a mixture of Bonfire and Paperback" or "Horse Camp: a mixture of Fresh Hay, Bonfire and Dirt".³³

Manipulative Scents

What can we glean from scent about the practices of daydreaming, its profitability and its multiple constructions? Scent stimulates thought, and the Library of Fragrance utilises the connection between scents and daydreams. This effect is used in many other contexts: museums use scented atmospheres as much as department stores, office buildings and apartment blocks. "Scent marketing" is a well-known marketing strategy used by companies such as Mercedes Benz, or operas such as the Teatro Real in Madrid, to improve their sales. In order to do that they create the scent of a garage "some time around 1900" at motor shows, or add the odour of jasmine to performances of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro".³⁴ Digital scent technology, the latest tool in e-commerce, intends to change the interactive entertainment experience by scenting movies, games, music, animation or any digital media "to create a more immersive and captivating environment for your audience. Atmosphere, mood, emotion and characters can all be enhanced with scent."³⁵ This method of evoking enjoyable or beneficial mental contexts and atmospheres via scents is a type of sensory manipulation that currently meets with some criticism (Nutt 2008).³⁶ In contrast to these measures that focus on the unconscious manipulation of sensory perceptions, the Library of Fragrance stimulates cognition purposefully. Like other spheres of the leisure industry, this business idea attests to people's longing for a new quality of experience akin to the tourist's mindscapes (Löfgren 1999; Bendix 2002). High mobility and the exhortation to use body and mind efficiently may have brought about a longing to revel in everyday, deeply familiar scents.

The Library of Fragrance belongs to the special

phenomenon Jim Drobnick (2006: 3) called “ration-alised scents”. He states that after many centuries of marginalisation, “smell is now the first and most popular sense people wish to *indulge*” (2006: 2). Against the background of a sanitised modern environment, in which smell has been silenced (Corbin 1984), we are actively looking for smells; they promise a richer, more complex sensory experience. This is noticeable in many areas and aspects of our everyday life. A growing wellness industry makes use of newly invented or already existing olfactory rituals from different cultures and thus communicates to us that a good scent belongs in every aesthetic environment. Some areas of cultural tourism also deliberately focus on the olfactory management of certain issues. For example, the man who runs the Sababurg Sleeping Beauty Castle, a romantic hotel in Hesse, consciously grows an opulent, rose-filled garden which he also uses to make liqueurs and jams. By doing this, he wants to improve the quality of the experience of the Sleeping Beauty theme and additionally stand out from the crowd of other providers (such as Walt Disney) who have also used this fairy tale (Hemme 2009).

Daydreams and Memories

The Library of Fragrance also profits from the human wish to stop the evanescence of experiences and to conserve them in systematised memories. Picture albums or diaries are such tools, but they focus largely on visual and cognitive stimuli. Using scents as storehouses of systematised memories is difficult for a number of reasons. Alfred Gell points out one of them: “The smell of an object always *escapes*. Smell is distinguished by formlessness, indefinability and lack of clear articulations” (Gell 2006: 402). Furthermore, the experience of scent is characterised in part by its resistance of division into component parts – far more strongly so than is the case with other senses. Countless failed attempts at cultural histories of scents provide evidence of the effort to stop the evanescence of scent impressions and harness it into categories.³⁷

On initial examination, the Library’s business idea appears to tend toward this direction, but a

closer analysis (as well as scent sampling) has shown that it is not the everyday that is being marketed. If the scents of everyday life contained in the Library’s perfumes surrounded us everyday, we would not be able to notice them due to the “habituation effect” (Porteous 2006: 90). On the one hand, these scents are culturally conveyed symbols for contexts which stimulate daydreaming and for situations in which we allow our minds to wander (holidays, experiences in nature, leisure-time activities). On the other hand, these perfumes are olfactory symbols for collective memories. The Library searches for scents that point to culturally shared, olfactory patterns of memory; this in turn is to enable daydreams. This duality in the Library’s concept – evoking the past with the intent of positively influencing the thoughts/imagination of the wearer in the present – brings up an interesting question: what is the difference between memories and daydreams? What dimensions are at work in memory and daydream respectively? Do they use the same images, contexts and feelings? From what little has been researched of scent-inspired journeys of the mind, one can assume that the boundaries between memories and daydreams are blurred. In his studies about “system-smells” of the GDR, Gottfried Korff (1999) describes how the odour of parcels from West Germany or of intershops – shops near the German-German border in which people from the GDR could buy products from the West – embodied the “scent of the West” before the fall of Berlin Wall. These scents symbolised the olfactory epitome of freedom and therefore a prospective, scent-inspired daydream. Today, a clever man from Eisenhüttenstadt earns a lot of money with the replication of this intershop scent which he sells in cans. The scent now represents nostalgia, in this case the retrospective epitome of a long ago evaporated “scent of the East”.³⁸

Concluding Thoughts

What is the benefit of doing research on the sense of smell and the example of the Library of Fragrance for a study of daydreams? There are three aspects I would like to present as final thoughts.

1. As observed by Jim Drobnick (Drobnick 2006: 2), using scents for directed and purposeful evocation of atmospheres, mental travel and memories, as the Library does, is part of an increasing instrumentalisation of the sense of smell. These rationalised scents are one aspect of a broader rationalisation of the subliminal. Mental travel and daydream-like states of mind are being used as techniques to stimulate creativity in personal and professional domains. Strategies like “Neuro-linguistic Programming” (NLP; Schwarz & Schweppe 2000) deliberately focus on journeys of the mind and visualisations to lead us to professional success and a content life. Esoteric book shops are full of self-help literature and audio books, which use conscious visualisations in conjunction with the subconscious to multiply their effect. Today, daydreams not only serve to distance oneself from or deal with everyday life, they are also used as a directed activity and thus a work technique; “Daydreams at work”, in more ways than one. This observation is one reason why more scientific attention should be devoted to the cultural practice of daydreaming. One way to approach the topic would be to examine business ideas that capitalise on mechanisms of daydreaming. If, as Campbell states (1987, 1994), consumption is the attempt to materialise daydreams, studies of impact and impression (maybe of the Library’s clients) would be a further possibility whereby consumables could be used to understand people’s daydreams.
 2. The specific contents of daydreams within their culturally conveyed contexts cannot be inferred from an analysis of the Library of Fragrance. What really is going on in the minds of people and which personal contexts of experience contest the shared context of olfactory symbols can only be exposed by empirical methods. Regina Bendix (2006) pointed out how much knowledge can be gained from systematically including olfactory and gustatory impressions in the process of research. This new approach could provide more data than ethnographical research that relies only on the visual and aural senses (i.e. both senses that are traditionally linked to objective thinking). A more experimental approach including more senses could be useful particularly with regard to the methodological difficulties inherent in transient phenomena such as daydreaming. Scents, tastes, and sounds are daily stimuli that evoke memories and let our thoughts wander – these senses could therefore be used in methodology.
 3. Finally, according to Alfred Gell (2006: 405) there is one rule that can be applied to all perfumes as well as to the Library’s scent-evoked mental journeys: “The context dominates the sign. [A] perfume does not seduce, it sets up a context of seduction.” The Library of Fragrance is a business that commodifies the close connection between scents and daydreaming. It provides many impulses toward the question about cultural-historical origin contexts of typical daydream situations and it has a number of products that allow one to recognise in which *contexts* one might yet approach the phenomenon of daydreaming. For example the scent and the description of the perfume “Pipe Tobacco”: “Sherlock was onto a good thing, at least scent-wise.”³⁹ Smoking and the contemplation of tobacco smoke were activities that were very popular in middle-class German socialising clubs in the nineteenth century in order to acquire a sense of cosiness (Schmidt-Lauber 2003: 146ff.). Even today these activities are linked both to the uncontrolled wandering of thoughts – just like the role model Sherlock Holmes – and to intellectual thinking. The perfume “Dandelion”⁴⁰ reminds one of childhood, blowing the little, feathery parachutes into the sky and following them with one’s eyes, lost in thoughts.
- Another evocative perfume is the initially mentioned “Grass”, with the description “Playing in it.....lying on it.....or even mowing it...”:⁴¹ While mowing the lawn is a typical leisure-time activity, lying in the grass, looking up into the sky, wondering what objects the steadily changing clouds might bring out, embody the sweetness of doing nothing and trailing after one’s thoughts. This

contemplative engagement with clouds emerged in the early nineteenth century when observing clouds came into fashion as a consequence of meteorological findings as well as an interest in English and German romantic landscape art (Badt 1960; Hedinger, Richter-Musso & Westheider 2004). Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1954) also focused on the observation of clouds and explained: "There is no better image for clouds than thought and no better image for thoughts than clouds – for clouds are weavings of the mind and what are thoughts other than that?" Clouds, smoke and dandelions: many things that invite us to mentally wander have the same transient character as the scents of the Library of Fragrance. Further cultural, historical, and empirical research on the question of how we acquired the contemplation of these phenomena is required, as well as research into how they accompany and influence us throughout our life.

Notes

- * An earlier version of this article was presented at the congress of the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore in Derry, Ireland, June 2008. Thanks go to the organisers of the congress panel and the audience for many stimulating comments, to Regina Bendix, Dörte Bersebach, Franka Schneider, Victoria Hegener and the anonymous reviewers for useful references and for pointing me to further sites and to Almuth Kölsch and Claire Bendix for assistance with translation.
- 1 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=878. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 2 http://demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/?page_id=2. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 3 http://demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/?page_id=2. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 4 A good overview of the research history concerning olfaction can be found in Drobnick (2006: 3–5).
 - 5 The role of smell in dreams and visions in indigenous cultures is documented for the Umeda in Papua New Guinea (Gell 2006); see also Classen, Howes & Synnott (1997: 155–158).
 - 6 Campbell proposes a theory counter to classical deterministic consumption theories in the spirit of Thorstein Veblens "which emphasised instinct or external manipulation, whilst the only tradition of thought which presented the individual as actively involved in formulating his own wants placed the emphasis on emulative

- desires; solution which fails to distinguish modern from traditional consumerism" (1987: 88).
- 7 Because reality cannot fulfill dreams, a "state of enjoyable discomfort" (Campbell 1987: 86) is generated, which stimulates further consumption.
 - 8 http://www.demeterfragrance.com. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 9 http://www.demeterfragranceblog.com/bb/. Accessed September 21, 2009. In addition to this blog, there are Facebook and Twitter platforms which can be used to discuss the Library of Fragrance perfumes.
 - 10 http://demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/?page_id=2. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 11 E-mail-response from the Library of Fragrance's senior product manager Sandra Krüchel, received April 28, 2008.
 - 12 www.demeterfragranceblog.com. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 13 Many of the scents could be placed into multiple categories, for example "Almond" could be in both Food(stuff)/Aroma and Childhood Memories and "Fireplace" in Leisure-time and Nostalgia. A study of the reactions and impressions elicited by the perfumes would lead to interesting information and certainly some new categories.
 - 14 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=1117. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 15 http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=989. Accessed February 18, 2010.
 - 16 http://demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=837. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 17 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demeter_Fragrance_Library. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 18 http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=861. Accessed February 18, 2010.
 - 19 http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=854. Accessed February 18, 2010.
 - 20 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=1031. Accessed September 21, 2009. According to a survey conducted by Montreal Concordia University in 2007, "Babies" is one of the most popular smells (Classen, Howes & Synnott 1997: 1).
 - 21 How we acquire associations connected to scent is still unexplored. The physiological-genetic mystery of scent reception was explained in a Nobel Prize-worthy way by the two neuroscientists Richard Axel and Linda B. Buck in 2004. Research on the culture of memory crafted the term "olfactory memory" (Kölbl 2001) as a catchphrase, but there is thus far little in-depth empirical research on the role of the sense of smell in the context of cultural memory. This is the case despite the fact that the sense of smell and its associations fit extremely well into the system of collective orientation and type development. This was convincingly demonstrated by

- the German cultural anthropologist Gottfried Korff (1999) using the example of the scents unique to the GDR.
- 22 For further information about the cultural constitution and forms of the “collective memory”, see Halbwachs (1985[1939]); Assmann (1992); Assmann (1999).
 - 23 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=976. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 24 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=940. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 25 This is probably the reason why natural scents, from flowers, fruits and vegetables, belong to the small number of general scent preferences that can be established for Westerners. However, there is little evidence that universally pleasant or unpleasant smells actually exist (Porteus 2006: 91).
 - 26 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=1045. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 27 www.libraryoffragrance.de/seiten/wasch.htm. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 28 www.demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 29 www.demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 30 <http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=1109>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 31 www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=853. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 32 www.demeterfragranceblog.com/blog/. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 33 <http://www.demeterfragranceblog.com/bb/viewtopic.php?t=28>. Accessed February 18, 2010.
 - 34 The company Scentcommunication created these and numerous other olfactory experiences: www.scentcommunication.com/content/view/12/13/. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 35 <http://digiscents.com/blog/>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 36 See also a study of the German Federal Environmental Agency 2006: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse/hintergrund/duftstoffe.pdf>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 37 Summed up by Le Guérér (1994: 10–16).
 - 38 *Berliner Zeitung*, March 1, 2007.
 - 39 <http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=931>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 40 <http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=850>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
 - 41 <http://www.demeterfragrance.com/Product.aspx?ProductID=878>. Accessed June 4, 2008.
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