



Scent and Scent-Sibilities: Smell and Everyday Life Experiences

Kelvin E.Y. Low

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Smells are distinct and ubiquitous. They envelope us, enter our bodies, and emanate from us. Yet, they remain relegated to the background of everyday life experiences. This book attempts to highlight the social salience of smell in social actors' day-to-day encounters where issues involving morality and social othering, presentation of self, and personhood intertwine with analyses of smell as a social conduit. These encounters include the experiences of anosmic individuals, which capture non-olfactive social worlds that are rarely addressed hitherto. Further deliberations on olfaction in relation to social memberships of race, class, and gender, elucidate upon social boundaries of inclusion and exclusion constructed vis-a-vis smell as a social marker. Olfactive adjudications of race and class are then expanded upon through the author's discussion of various smellscape in the context of Singapore. Olfaction, sanitary discipline, and olfactive simulacra are also expounded upon, thereby underscoring the control and manipulation of scents in the contexts of modernity and postmodernity. "Smells" therefore offer insights into the workings of social relations and power structures in society. By predicating analyses on empirical data procured from Singapore, along with case studies from the region and beyond, this study draws much needed attention on smell which has been a neglected sense in the wider literature. In addition, the concurrent employment of the other senses will also be explicated, which therefore demonstrates the social character of smell and other sensory modalities through historical and contemporary milieux. This book is a pioneering effort in offering sociocultural interpretations of scents based on primary and secondary data analysed using the trajectory of sociology of everyday life.

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