

## PERFUMERY AND EROS

When plants reach sexual maturity, the scent developed by their blossoms reaches its highest intensity. The fragrance created attracts insects and ensures consequent pollination and reproduction. Quite naturally, essential oils derived from aromatic blossoms are the most valuable materials of perfumery: Fragrance designed to attract. Interestingly, the materials of animal origin that are used in perfumery, like civet and musk, also serve the purpose of attraction and reproduction in those animals.

The erogenous effect of flower fragrances, such as Rose, Orange Blossom, Orchid, Tuberose, Jasmine and Lilac, has been mentioned by authors of all times. Musk, an animal-derived, non-botanical fragrance, has been a known aphrodisiac ever since it was first used.

For centuries, every culture of distinction has produced an art of perfumery whose purpose always was (and still is) to create, elicit or stimulate sexual arousal. There are two parts to achieving that response: One is to mask unpleasant, anti-erotic odors, the second is to use erogenous fragrances. Very often both principles are employed simultaneously.

## ELIMINATION OF ANTI-EROGENOUS ODORS

Unpleasant odors are eliminated by the deodorizing effects of soaps, alcohols and lotions. This effect of soaps and cleansers is invariably increased by adding fresh fragrances. In these instances, fragrances are used which may be characterized as acidic, fresh-flowery, fresh-herbal, fresh-spicy or fresh-fruity. The common quality of all these fragrances is their refreshing scent which is best suited to prevent or mask anti-erogenous odors.

Typical examples of fresh fragrances are oils of Bergamot, Lemon, Citronella, Cypress, the Pines, Eucalyptus, the Petitgrains (Citrus leaves), the Mints, the Rosemarys and the Thymes. Single chemical compounds showing this effect are Bornyl acetate, Citral, Citronellal, Eucalyptol, Linalyl acetate, Menthol and Thymol among others.

Though every refreshing effect is a spontaneous stimulation of senses, nerves or muscles, a long duration of this effect leads to reaction and saturation. Consequently, every truly refreshing effect must have a 'vanishing' quality. Only those scents that disappear quickly are perceived to be refreshing. The fragrances listed above are quite volatile and do not linger.

Real perfumes, however, are expected to have a particularly enduring quality, so

it is necessary to use less volatile fragrances which provide a lasting base. As a consequence, only certain types of products are perfumed exclusively with fresh fragrances such as toothpastes, bath products and eau de colognes.

The highly volatile terpenes are primarily responsible for the particularly fresh fragrances of Citrus and Conifer oils (Lime, Juniper, etc.). The fragrance quality of essential oils is best when they are truly pure (unadulterated) and newly produced. The less volatile (heavier) sesquiterpene compounds, as found in Vetiver and Patchouli, are responsible for the more lasting fragrances, the quality of which increases with age like fine wines.