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This summer, I explored the olfactory sense as a mode of racial thinking in contemporary Asian diaspora literature. I was drawn to analyzing smell in terms of marginalization, namely, how scent itself is a denigrated sense that may also be weaponized to oppress. In particular, I studied how Asian bodies have smelling that “resents” the colonial and hegemonic representations of olfaction while

uplifting the scents and senses of those on the margins. I'm especially interested in how scent functions in these reparative texts as a trope of migration, memory, disease, sexuality, and the nonhuman + extra-human.

To research this topic, I read a number of texts over the eight-week period. I began with a theoretical background on smell by reading Alain Corbin's and Jonathan Reinartz's Next, I shifted to Orientalism in literature with Sax Rohmer's , which reflects “yellow peril” ideology by constructing a hierarchy of scents and enforcing their containment. Hsuan Hsu's discusses such olfactory Orientalism as well, but Hsu turns his attention to how contemporary Asian writers/artists have fought back against such practices, with a focus on the environment and ecological justice. I was inspired by this reparative turn, and implemented it into my own work, choosing to focus on the creative and healing stories that contemporary Asian diaspora literature offers. With that in mind, I spent the next weeks reading texts by contemporary Asian writers, including Larissa Lta the Institute for Art and

Olfaction in Los Angeles.

My goal is to turn this summer research into a senior honors project. I have outlined my research into three chapters on empire, ecological memory, and intersectional identity, respectively, and I began drafting the first chapter, “Salt: The Smelly Logic of Empire.” This summer research thus initiates a longer, more far-reaching probe into contemporary Asian diaspora literature. On a personal note, this project indulges my love of literature and aromas in a way that makes my heart (and nose) wonderfully happy. Thank you so much to the Goldsmith Adams Research Fund and the Office of Student Fellowships and Research for making this exploration possible. Finally, thank you to my mentor, Belinda, for all the encouragement, insights, and trust along the way.

