

**Shark fin soup:**

**Collective imagination in the transnational public sphere**

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***Abstract:***

Sharks are facing extinction due to global commercial demand for shark fin and shark meat. Drawing on Robert Asen's concept of "collective imagination," this essay investigates two distinct, but mutually reinforcing, cumulative imaginaries that inhibit shark conservation efforts: Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western media products that vilify sharks. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, sharks have medicinal value and rhetorical significance when served as food. Additionally, Western media products construct sharks as monsters that hunt humans. In both cases, sharks are valued only for their anthropocentric value to humans as food, medicine or entertainment. Re-signification of sharks as critical members of healthy ocean ecosystems is essential to developing transnational public support for shark conservation policies.

***Keywords:*** Shark; shark fin; collective imagination; Traditional Chinese Medicine; Jaws

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