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The submarine world of abalone

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Abstract

Working interstitially, or what Haraway (2017) would call "tentacularly", I will trace the lives of abalone in the sea as well the lives they have on land in farms, and the worlds their flesh animate when dried or frozen. In lieu of abalone narratives, I will look at the ways in which abalone come to be in law, government projects, the eyes of poachers, and marine biologists. To understand the underwater world of those engaged in abalone, Kimon de Greef and Shuhood Abader's *Poacher: Confessions from the abalone underworld* is particularly generative. This submarine world, or in de Greef and Abader's (2018) words: "underworld", allows us to see the relations that are formed through the poaching, production, and consumption of abalone, highlighting what Anna Tsing (2005) would call, "the friction of global capital", its messiness and the connections created through it. I also look to the ways government abalone aquafarming websites commodify abalone and water through their representations of the seas. Finally, I look at the abalone-mandrax assemblage facilitated by interactions with Chinese Triads as explored in Morris' documentary *The Story of the South African Quaalude*. By engaging in these readings I hope to engage in environmental questions, such as: Would interspecies justice mean taking into consideration abalone lifestyle, while recognizing that poachers are victims of an apartheid past they are trying to redress? How do we synthesize these two positions, when the ocean operates on its own time scale? The answers are unclear, but the worlds these sea molluscs have slid into makes thinking of a solution more complex.