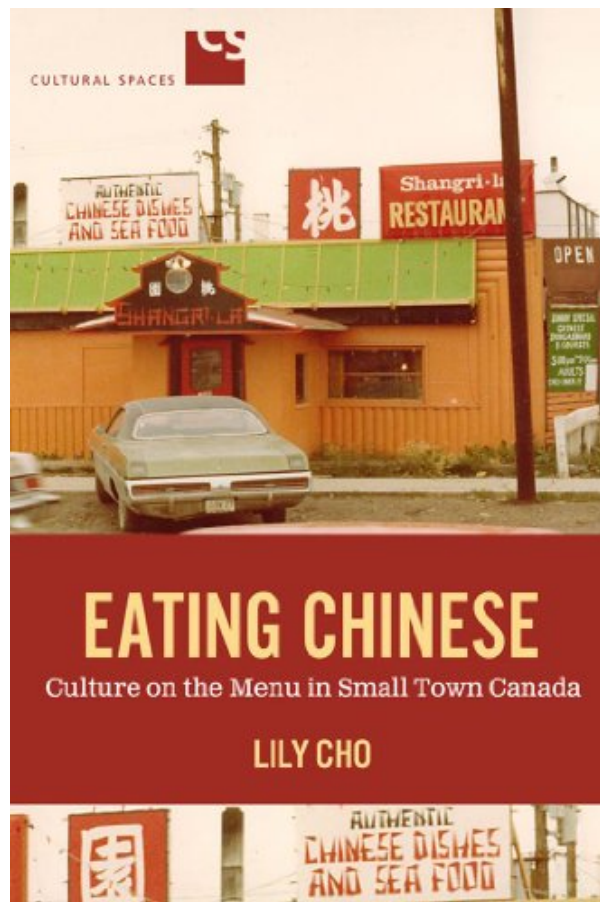
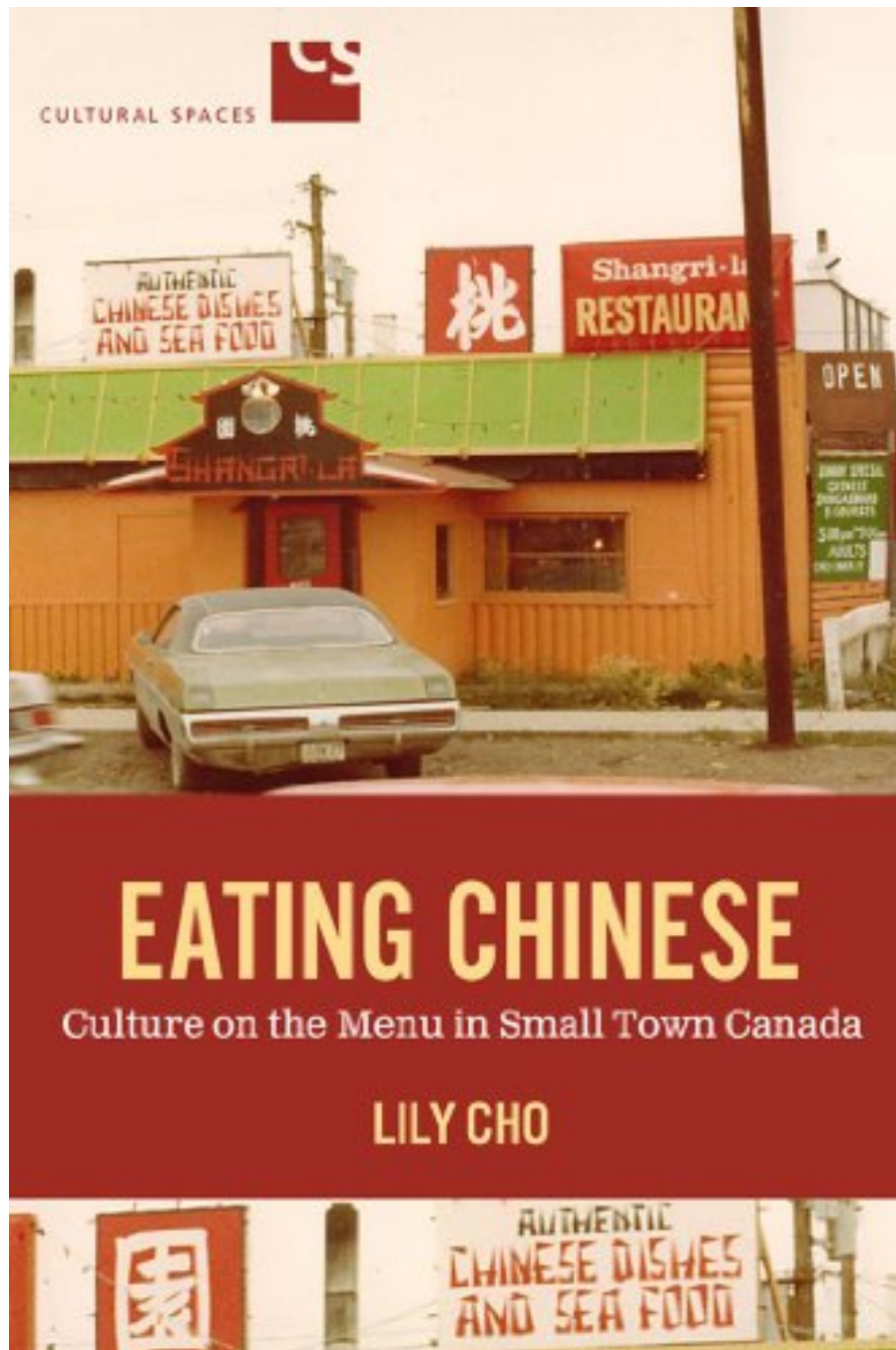


EATING CHINESE: CULTURE ON THE MENU IN SMALL TOWN CANADA (CULTURAL SPACES) BY LILY CHO



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About the Author

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"Chicken fried rice, sweet and sour pork, and an order of onion rings, please."

Chinese restaurants in small town Canada are at once everywhere - you would be hard pressed to find a town without a Chinese restaurant - and yet they are conspicuously absent in critical discussions of Chinese diasporic culture or even in popular writing about Chinese food. In *Eating Chinese*, Lily Cho examines Chinese restaurants as spaces that define, for those both inside and outside the community, what it means to be Chinese and what it means to be Chinese-Canadian.

Despite restrictions on immigration and explicitly racist legislation at national and provincial levels, Chinese immigrants have long dominated the restaurant industry in Canada. While isolated by racism, Chinese communities in Canada were still strongly connected to their non-Chinese neighbours through the food that they prepared and served. Cho looks at this surprisingly ubiquitous feature of small-town Canada through menus, literature, art, and music. An innovative approach to the study of diaspora, *Eating Chinese* brings to light the cultural spaces crafted by restaurateurs, diners, cooks, servers, and artists.

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About the Author

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Dense to the point of being unreadable

By C. J. Thompson

I am a serious 'foodie' with a general interest in Chinese food and a particular interest in how its export to the west has actually produced a separate and distinct cuisine in its own right. I was really looking forward to reading this book when I first saw it. I rather expected a broad look at North American Chinese food along the lines of *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles: Adventures in the World of Chinese Food* except with a focus on Canada rather than the USA. Unfortunately, I was sadly disappointed. This book is not even close to what I was looking for; rather its is an incredibly dense and obscure sociological/philosophical treatise which examines the Chinese diaspora using cuisine as the comparative frame of reference. The author does make an interesting point about 'Canadian Food' being almost exclusively defined by the menus in Chinese-Canadian restaurants and it is clear that she has made an extensive study of the evolution of menus in such establishments. Had these points been developed purely in the culinary sense I would have loved this book. Unfortunately, these interesting points served only as a springboard into ... well, I am not sure what! The writing here was so prolix, dense and jargon-laden that I was not sure if the author really had a valid point to make or was just pouring out nonsense in an orgy of over-analysis. Ultimately, I got weary of trying to find out an answer to the question and gave up about half-way through. Here is an example of the prose:

"In the context of identification, the idea of eating Chinese takes on the significance of a moment of violent incorporation with all of the cannibalistic connotations that accompany the moment of consumption. However eating Chinese in Canada is not simply a mastery of Chinese otherness driven by the nutritional

instinct. It is a repetition of the cannibalistic scene where the desire for violence is both preserved and repressed. It is at once an enactment and disavowal of violence, achieved through positivism of embracing otherness."

Uh... okay. Can I still get an egg-roll with that?

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