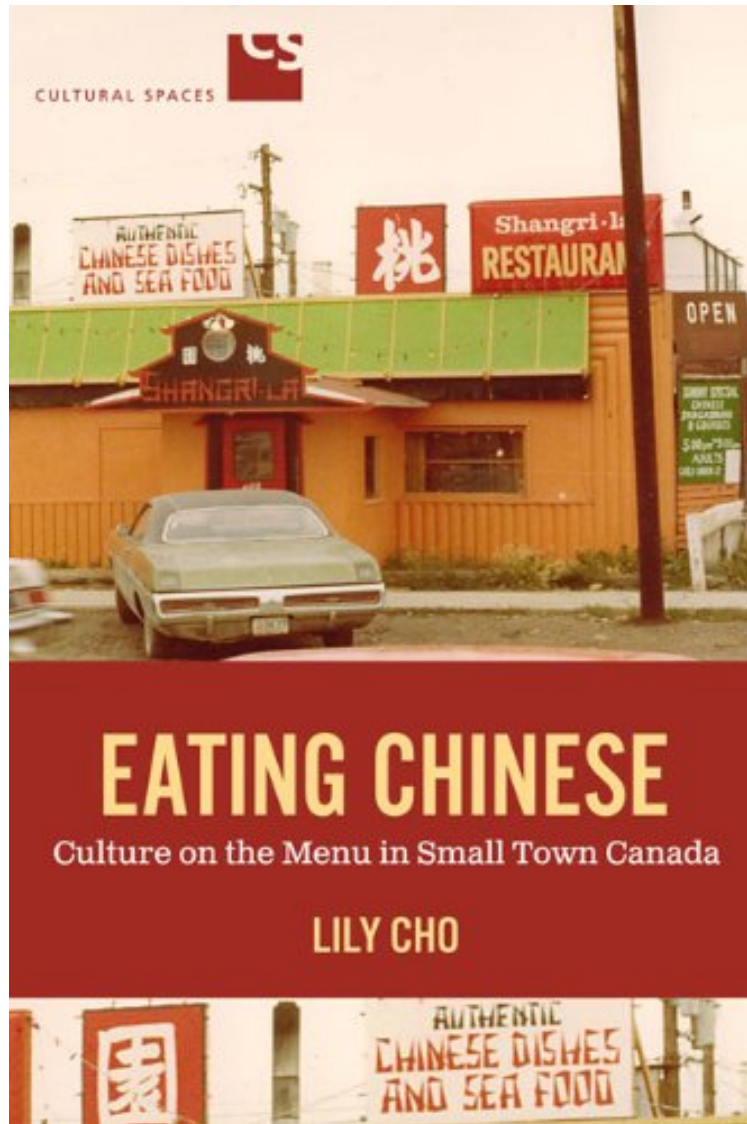


(Ebook pdf) Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada (Cultural Spaces)

Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada (Cultural Spaces)

Lily Cho

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Lily Cho : Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada (Cultural Spaces) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada (Cultural Spaces):

4 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Dense to the point of being unreadableBy C. J. ThompsonI 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 it 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?

"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.

Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada is a fascinating look at the ways in which Chinese immigrants related to mainstream Canadians through the food they prepared and served ... Cho is an engaging, lively writer ... There is much for the general reader to enjoy in the book. (Bruce Ward, *The Ottawa Citizen*) "Eating Chinese makes a major contribution to Chinese diaspora studies through its attention to small town Canada." (Donald Goellnicht *Journal of Asian American Studies* vol 15:2:2012) "Eating Chinese challenges scholars of post colonialism and diasporas to consider how diasporic culture is forged beyond the limits of the cosmopolitan metropolis, at intersections of the past and the present." Her insightful readings of ostensibly disparate narratives enable her to carefully peel back their layers to reveal how identities and structures of power are constituted in and around what some might take to be the most unlikely of places." (Jaclyn Rohel, *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*; vol26:2011) "Eating Chinese is powerful and rare work of criticism." This book generously points us forward, inviting us to imagine how acts of remembering a past that is not yet past could help clarify "work that has yet to be done." (Guy Beauregard *Canadian Literature* 219 winter 2013) This ingenious study of Chinese restaurants in small town Canada is as startling as it is brilliant ... Cho's deeply affective and moving ruminations serve a feast of critical insights on the politics of Chinese diasporas, old and new. (David L. Eng, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania) *Eating Chinese* presents an innovative analysis of small town Chinese restaurants and is a major contribution to research. Lily Cho's original approach to diaspora criticism, which is supported by distinctive examples, pries open the narrow identity politics that have constrained multicultural critical studies for the last decade. (Sneja Gunew, Department of English, University of British Columbia) *Eating Chinese* is a brilliant book, sensitively written, and grounded in a first-rate mastery of the archive. Lily Cho provides a path-breaking and immensely readable account of the ways in which food mediates the reception and reading of the Chinese diaspora in Canada and in the West generally. The work is a full nine-course Chinese banquet, written with the kind of sympathy which only a native informant can bring to the subject. *Eating Chinese* is one of the best books on diasporic lives and diaspora theory written these past few years. (Vijay Mishra, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Murdoch University) In *Eating Chinese*, the special on the menu is the dementia of diaspora, a palpable reading of memory and history located in the small town Chinese-Canadian restaurant. In shedding light on some of those "spaces where modernity sometimes stammers," Lily Cho usefully interrupts the states of mind that complicate the logic of migration and notions of home. (Fred Wah, author of *Waiting for Saskatchewan* and *Diamond Grill*) About

the Author Lily Cho is an assistant professor in the Department of English for the University of Western Ontario.