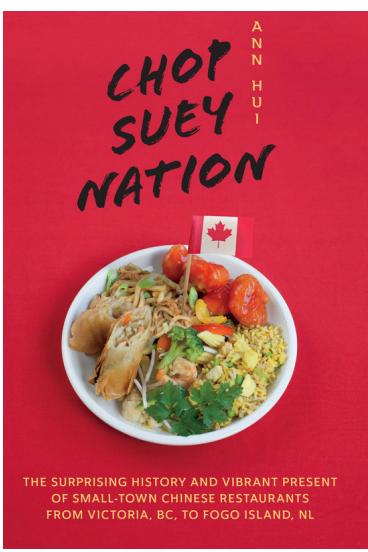


Race and Food Event Series

THE ISSUE
 The preconceptions of the meaning of authenticity and how local environments can be "authentic" or not in relation to Chinese cuisine and Canadian Chinese-cuisine.



BACKGROUND

hua foundation is a youth-driven non-profit based in Vancouver dedicated to bringing together the worlds of cultural heritage and social change with an socio-environmental lens.

Our group collaborated with the hua foundation for the Chop Suey book launch and panelist dinner event with the purpose of facilitating a conversation about how experiences of race, identity, appropriation, racism, and more intersect with food.

Total Attendees
 Chop Suey Nation Book Launch: 110
 Dinner and guest panelist event: 90

Target Population:
 Audiences that were interested in Canadian history and stories.

- SIGNIFICANCE**
- Interestingly, Chop Suey is not even known in China as a dish. It is a North American invention, thought to be an authentic cuisine from China (1).
 - Authenticity depends on how well local restaurants can modify their plates to tailor the preferences of the local population while retaining characteristics of the traditional cuisine (3).
 - Canadian Chinese-dishes, such as "Chop Suey" dishes are a result of discrimination and the compromise of having to use local ingredients and cater to North American preferences (4).
 - The demographics of Metro Vancouver's food discourses and institutions are predominantly white and affluent and do not represent the economic, racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in the area (5).
 - Understanding the influences and local and diasporic history (and food history) such as chop suey cuisine can contribute to a society and a food system that is more culturally accepting in terms of food practices and knowledge.

THE OBJECTIVE
 To collect feedback from attendees about how the the book Chop Suey Nation and the race and food event series have contributed to their understanding of "authenticity", "local" and "Canadian".

THE PURPOSE
 Advance public discourse on how race, culture, and heritage shapes and impacts community food systems.

Cultural Acceptability: A food system that is culturally acceptable addresses non-nutrient based values of food, eating, and feeding, and acknowledges multiple situated knowledges regarding bodily nourishment and human-land relationships.

METHODS FINDINGS

- Book Reviews**
 Analyzed 16 Book Reviews of Chop Suey Nation from news articles, social media, and published book critiques.
- Field Notes**
 Notes from 6 group members during the book launch and dinner event, February 24th and 25th
- Topics of interest:
 Thoughts about the book Chop Suey Nation
 Feedback about the Race and Food Event Series
 Feelings about the Vancouver food system
- Conversations about the effectiveness of the events with the Executive Director of the hua foundation**

- Book reviews and attendees expressed that:**
- before reading Chop Suey Nation or attending the Race and Food Event Series, they would usually classify "authentic" Chinese cuisine as only those dishes originating in China and made with traditional ingredients and practices.
 - chop suey is a significant part of Canadian history and authenticity exists within every Chinese family owned restaurant and their menus despite many hurdles (2).
 - they realized the reason why even chop suey cuisine varies across the country is because it was influenced by the assets of local, community food systems.
 - Chop Suey Nation and the Race and Food Event Series showcased how many people relate to the stories of restaurant kids across Canada, shedding light on the important contributions of Chinese-Canadians in community food systems.

CONCLUSION

The 'Race and Food Event Series' was successful because it:

- raised awareness that chop suey cuisine is a North American cuisine, influenced by local ingredients, preferences, and historic discrimination.
- facilitated a conversation about honouring the notable contributions which Chinese-Canadians have made to many community food systems across Canada.
- Highlighted that in a society that is often influenced by Eurocentric settler views, it is important to consider other practices as valid in order to obtain a food system that is representative and accepting of all cultures, their practices, and their knowledge.

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