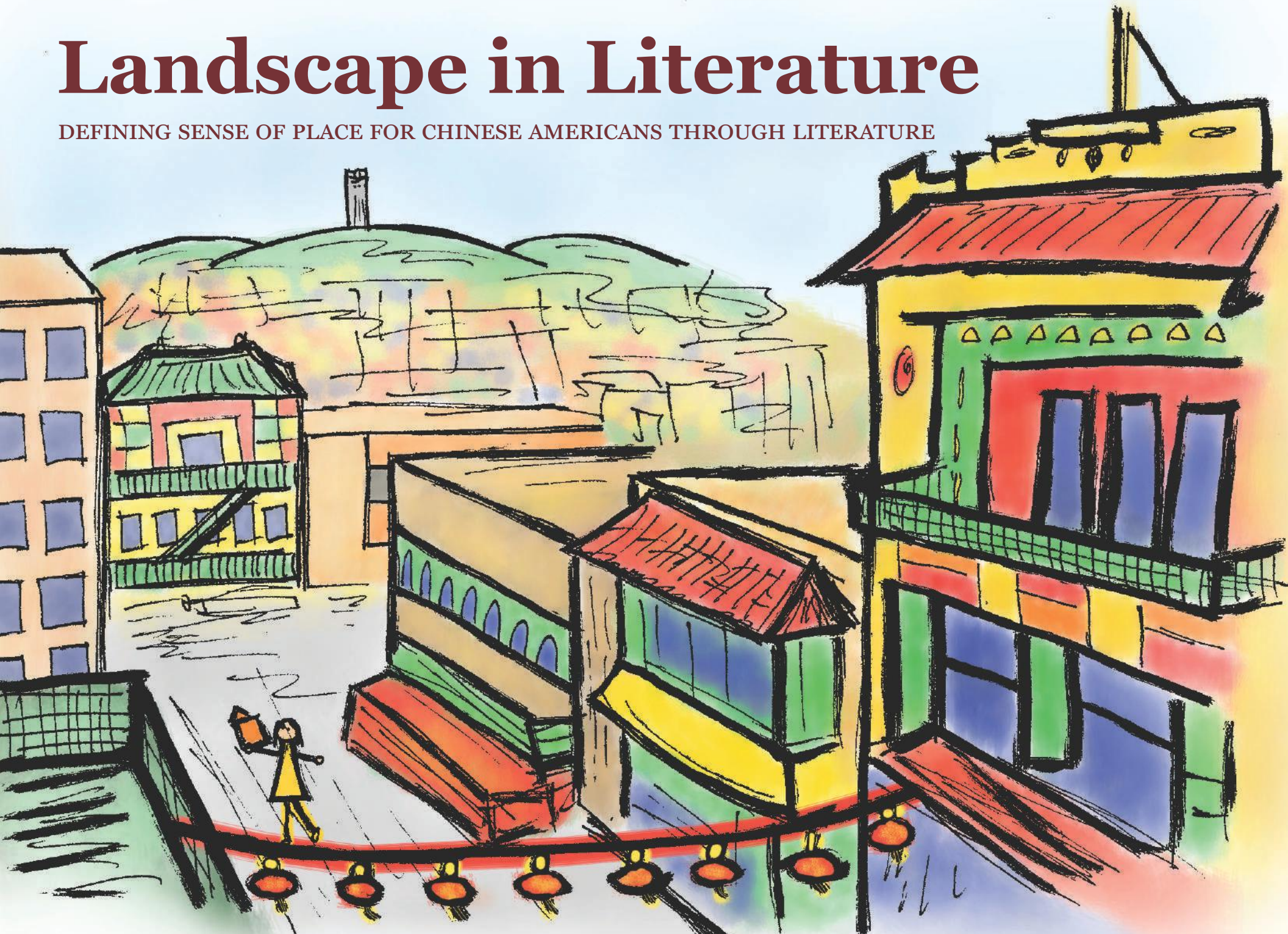


Landscape in Literature

DEFINING SENSE OF PLACE FOR CHINESE AMERICANS THROUGH LITERATURE



Landscape in Literature:
Defining Sense of Place for Chinese Americans Through Literature
by Steffi Christine Sin

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abstract

THE LANDSCAPE OF SAN FRANCISCO has shaped Chinese communities. This is especially evident in Chinese-American literature since authors' interpretations of their reality and the environment are exaggerated using literary devices. Because identity is fundamentally linked with the sense of belonging, how does the landscape impact the "Sense of Place" to which literary characters are subjected? How can an analysis of literature written by Chinese-American authors reveal the perception of "Sense of Place" in San Francisco's Chinese communities, and how can analysis influence design recommendations in urban planning and landscape architecture? Selected literary works include: *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, *Bone* by Fae Myenne Ng, and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Jade Snow Wong. Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* guides the analysis of literature. Data collection consists of selecting passages based on landscape patterns and by using "Sense of Place" as a literary lens. A traditional literary analysis exploring linguistic, formal, contextual, and personal meaning will be conducted where appropriate. A landscape architectural lens will also be used to draw conclusions from the literature. Findings will then inform design recommendations and influence the creation of a pattern book.

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*ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEFFI SIN (AUTHOR) UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.

**“Over the years,
she told me the same story,
except for the ending,
which grew darker,
casting long shadows into her life,
and eventually into mine”** *(Tan 7).*

“The endings always changed” *(Tan 12).*

**FOR MY GRANDMOTHER,
who has accepted America as home
and walked too many miles
on the streets of Chinatown
with me on her back.**



Figure 1: GRANDMOTHER IN KITCHEN

***“I want to tell her this:
We are lost, she and I, unseen and not seeing,
unheard and not hearing, unknown by others”*** *(Tan 64).*

**“My mother says that we,
like the ghosts, have no memories”** *(Kingston 167).*

***“I can never remember things
I didn’t understand in the first place”***
(Tan 6).

acknowledgements

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**The fact that I
am writing to you
in English
already falsifies what I
wanted to tell you.
My subject:
how to explain to you that I
don't belong to English
though I belong nowhere else,
if not here
in English.**

-Gustavo Pérez Firmat

**The analysis and subsequent design recommendations
are solely based on literature and its portrayal
of the landscape and the public realm
from a female Chinese-American perspective.**

**“Only her skin and her hair are Chinese.
Inside- she is all American-made”**
(Tan 289).

The purpose of this study is to explore how sense of place is defined in Chinese-American literature in order to associate them with patterns to create a pattern language in which people can design for Chinese communities in a way that addresses and lessens the feelings of cultural homelessness in the future. “Sense of Place” is an emotional quality that is well-represented in literature where descriptions are exaggerated to convey the author’s perception of the landscape. Chinese-American literature depicts the experiences of growing up Chinese in America, and the genre has grown in popularity since the 1970’s due to Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*. This study also looks into the works of Jade Snow Wong, Amy Tan, and Fae Myenne Ng. “Sense of Place” and Christopher Alexander’s *A Pattern Language* will guide the selection of passages for analysis, which would then reveal elements that define communities or elements that might be lacking in order to inform recommendations for the creation of a pattern book.

“They know you do not belong” (Tan 288).



Figure 2: CAT READING

How can an analysis of literature written by female Chinese-American authors reveal the perception of “Sense of Place” in San Francisco’s Chinese communities, and how can this analysis influence design recommendations?

research question

“A girl can never ask, only listen”
(Tan 68).

- 1** How will a focus on Chinese-American literature written by female authors contribute to this study?
- 2** How do literary devices help portray landscapes and Chinese communities?
- 3** What elements define sense of place?
- 4** Using “Sense of Place” as a literary lens, what patterns are prevalent in literature?
- 5** How can the conclusions drawn from literary analyses inform design recommendations?

methodology

“Seeking out the particular, the emotional and the ephemeral cannot be done through scientific means.” -Stephanie Rolley

To answer the main research question of how sense of place is represented in Chinese-American literature, fiction and nonfiction novels act as a dialogue in depicting sense of place. Sense of place can be defined through the relationships between people and place due to experiences using the physical senses. Because sense of place is experienced through the senses, descriptions of landscape can be used to define it. The novels then reveal the author’s sense of belonging while uncovering elements that define their sense of place. Descriptions can be either literal or an interpretation of the landscape by the author (Salter and Lloyd 3). The selection of passages is also informed by the selected patterns from *A Pattern Language* and “Sense of Place” as a literary lens. Patterns provide a framework and a lens with which to analyze literature and form design recommendations. Data collection entails note-taking, transcribing, organizing, and categorizing passages describing the landscape or landscape elements. Each novel is evaluated and reflected upon base on its contributions to the literary genre, its explorations of identity and sense of place and any recurring patterns and themes.

LITERARY MEANING CAN BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD by uncovering themes. Analysis of literature differs depending on the person, but the different interpretations do not mean one is “more true than another” (van Manen 94). Once themes are selected, thematic statements can then be composed. Themes in Chinese-American literature include but are not limited to: cultural values and identity, generation gap, alienation from Chinese communities (Yin 119), and the American Dream (Yin 232). There are three approaches in composing thematic statements: wholistic, selective, and detailed. The wholistic or sententious approach consists of reading and finding phrases that capture the meaning and main significance of the text. The selective or highlighting approach includes reading the text several times in order to find phrases that are particularly essential and revealing about the phenomenon or experienced described. The detailed or line-by-line approach involves looking at every single sentence to uncover an aspect of the sentence that reveals the phenomenon or experience described (van Manen 94). These approaches are adapted and applied to the process of uncovering landscape patterns as well as the development of themes within the patterns.

Meaning is categorized into linguistic, formal, contextual, and personal meaning (Teeple 113). Linguistic meaning comes from the words the author uses. Formal meaning is derived from the analysis of metaphors and other literary devices authors employ. Contextual meaning is outside of the literary work, delving into social and historical context in which it was written. Personal meaning is gained from an analysis of the author’s perspective and motivations. The methods of analysis for these different kinds of meaning are traditionally used in literary analysis (Teeple 98).

ANOTHER STRATEGY OF ANALYSIS uses a landscape architectural lens where passages are selected based on descriptions of line, form, patterns, textures, color, light, and spatial guidelines of the landscape. The role and treatment of landscape would then inform how the author chooses to represent landscape in literature and their perception and attitude towards it (Rolley 92). Data can be further categorized by the senses of sight, smell, sounds, etc. (Teeple 118). Landscapes signatures found can be categorized into “Landscapes of Livelihood”, “Signatures of Sacred Space”, “Transportation Signatures”, “Behavioral Signatures”, and “Signatures of Personal Action”, (Salter and Lloyd 7).

“How do they translate?” (Kingston 88)

“It translated well” (Kingston 209).

case studies

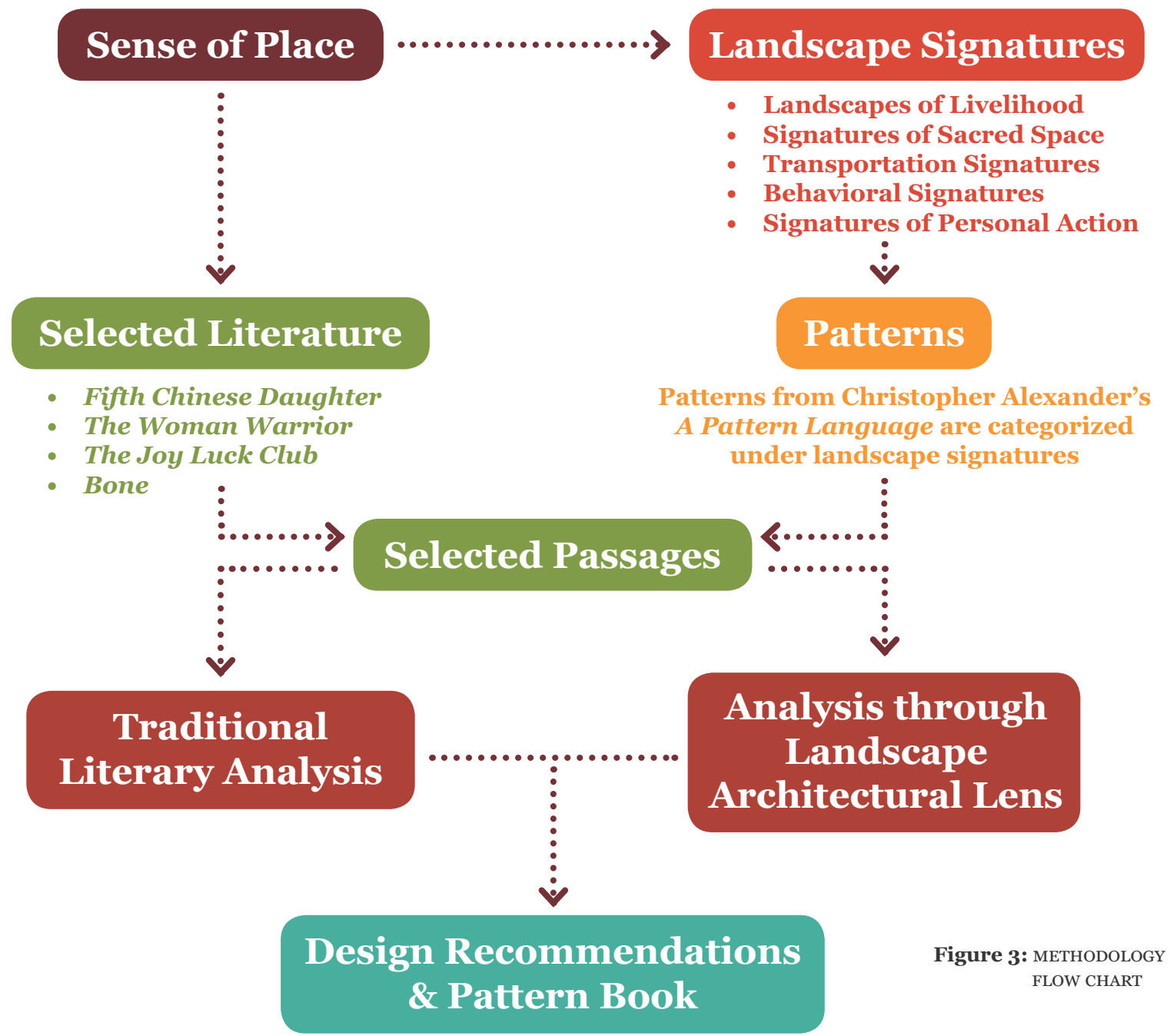


Figure 3: METHODOLOGY FLOW CHART

The three case studies listed below explore the role of landscape in literature.

JOHN TEEPLE'S DISSERTATION "Geography on Foot and at Hand: Senses of Place in American Nature Writing" discusses the contributions of American Nature Writing to the field of geography in defining sense of place. In using literature as a dialogue in an interpretive framework for his study, Teeple explores ten texts written across the 19th and 20th Centuries by authors with diverse backgrounds to have an even sampling of data. The paper looks into the history of American Nature Writing, research design, methodology, and data collection. In answering his research question, he first defines sense of place and determines the kind of literary descriptions he needs to support his research. After selecting passages, he then develops themes prevalent in literature and analyzes them using a traditional form of literary analysis.

"80° OF SEPARATION: LANDSCAPES IN LITERATURE" is a paper by Stephanie Rolley comparing the landscapes of New Zealand farmland and American tallgrass prairie through the literary works of Katherine Mansfield and Willa Cather using a Landscape Architectural perspective. Rolley focuses her analysis on descriptions of line, form, pattern, texture, color, light, and spatial qualities of landscape (Rolley 91). She argues the portrayal and role of landscape in literature reveals the attitude of the writer and the character towards a place (Rolley 94-95).

CHRISTOPHER SALTER AND WILLIAM LLOYD'S resource paper *Landscape in Literature* explores the different roles of landscape in literature while drawing upon multiple literary works across genres and centuries. Their categorization of "Landscape Signatures" into five different groups is used as an outline in this study. The purpose of these categories is to analyze the devices authors use to convey emotion and the sense of place characters experience (Salter and Lloyd 7).



Figure 4: MAGNIFYING GLASS

san francisco's chinatown

Historical context can be used to understand the “process by which native-born Chinese evolved from a denial of self to finding a self-image and consciousness” (Yin 121) and the evolution towards multiculturalism. Chinese immigrants first arrived in California during the 1849 Gold Rush in search



Figure 5: SACRAMENTO ST., 1866. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

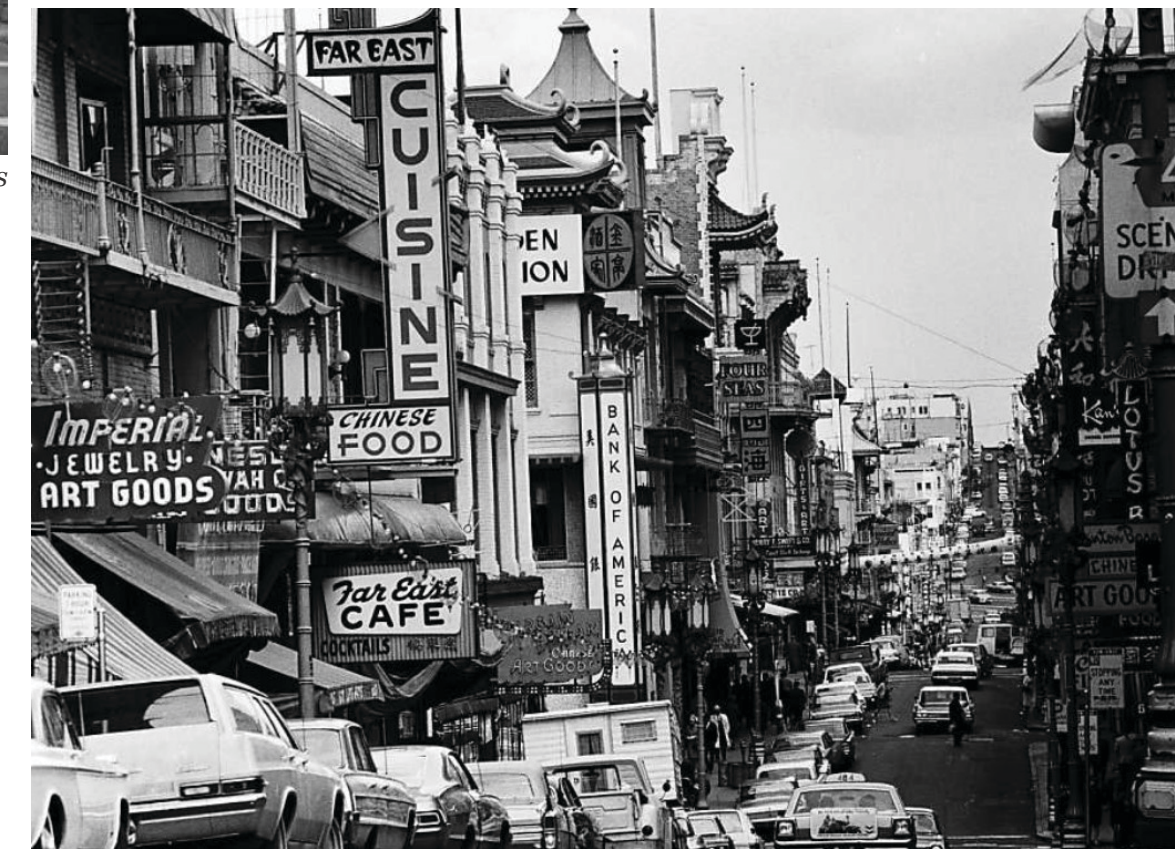
of wealth and were subsequently rejected by American society due to the perception of Chinese as “aliens”. First-generation immigrants struggled with alienation and pressures of assimilation. The Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882 barred Chinese from entering the United States. Since the Chinese were segregated and forced to live and work within the Chinatown boundary, organized crime grew rampant in the neighborhood. The 1906 earthquake in San Francisco worsened the situation for Chinese immigrants when most of Chinatown burned down. Non-Chinese architects were then hired to redesign Chinatown to attract tourists, and as a result, many pagoda buildings were created to mimic “Chinese” design. The first playground in Chinatown, Willie “Woo Woo” Wong Playground, was built in 1927. Eventually, after years of being marginalized and ostracized, the Chinese were allowed once again to enter the United States and gain citizenship through the 1943 Magnuson Act (Huntley 44-45). Immigrants, who sought after the American Dream, harbored dreams of one day going back and maintained close contact with relatives back in China. As the population of Chinese in San Francisco grew, Nam Ping Yuen, the first Chinatown housing project, was built in 1951.



Figure 7: GRANT STREET BANNER (ABOVE). ORLANDO, GETTY IMAGES

Figure 6: CHINATOWN SIGNS, 1967 (BELOW).

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES, GETTY IMAGES



Chinese nightclubs became popular after WWII and drew many people, including celebrities of that era.

Figure 8: NEON LIGHTS IN 1950'S CHINATOWN (BELOW).
CURT TEICH POSTCARD ARCHIVES, GETTY IMAGES

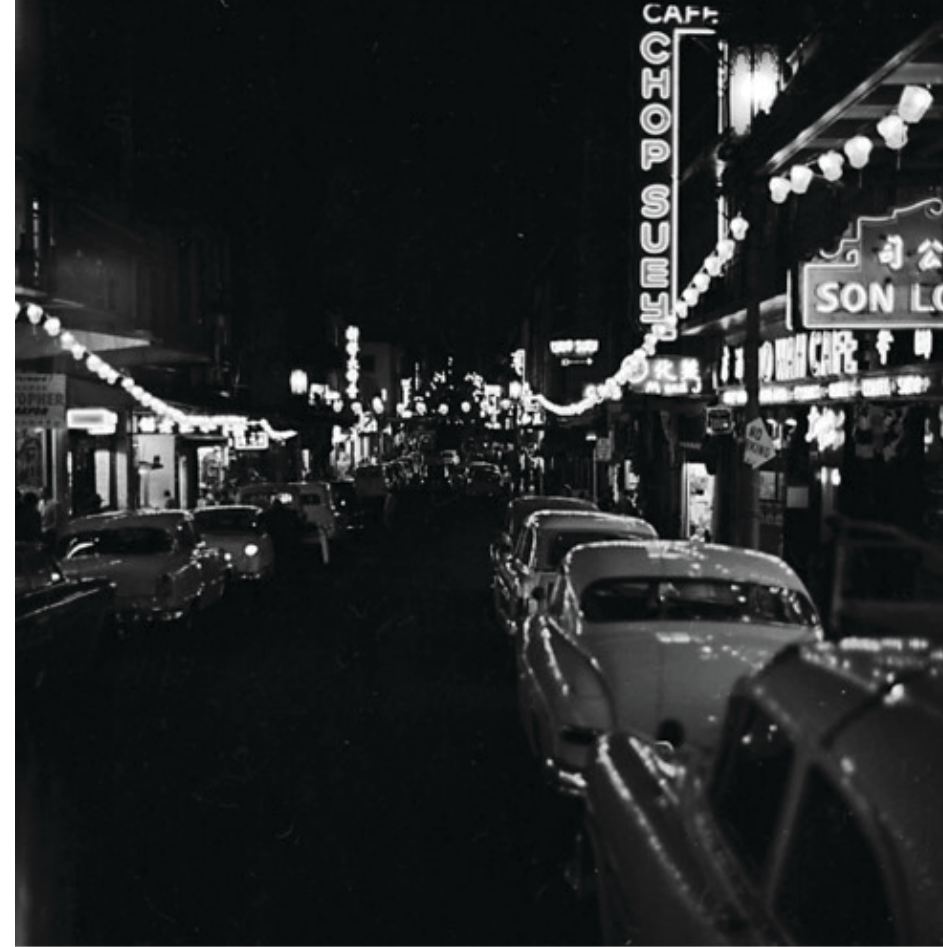
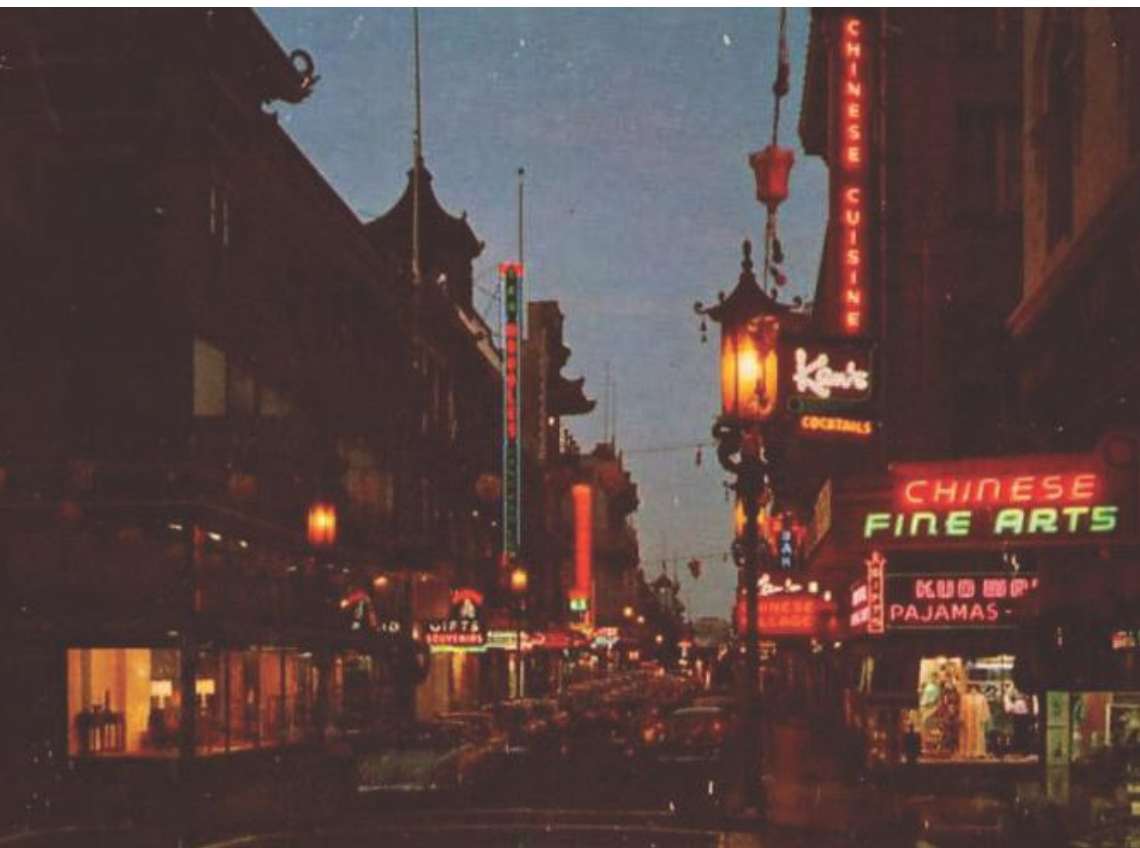


Figure 9: NEON LIGHTS ALONG GRANT AVENUE, 1955 (ABOVE).
ORLANDO, GETTY IMAGES

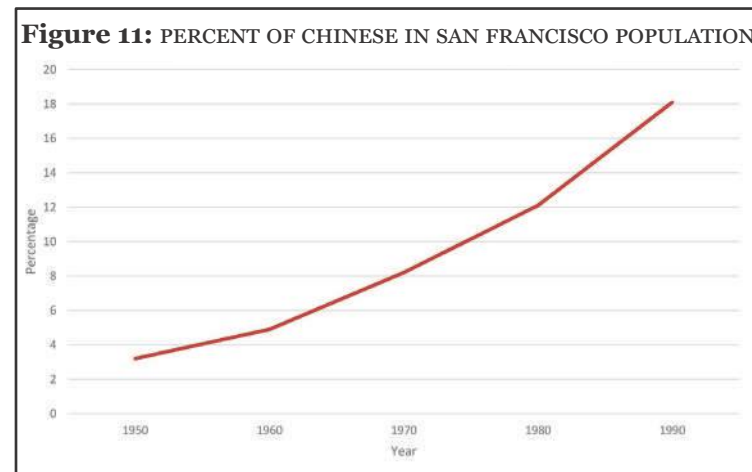
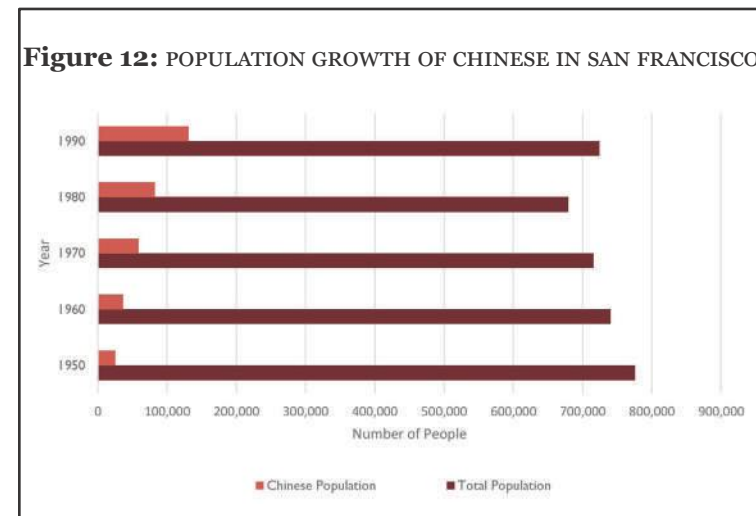
**“Grant Avenue
glittered like a
Hollywood
movie set”**

(Ng 139).



Figure 10: CHINATOWN'S DRAGON GATE, 1971. *AP PHOTO*

“Those in the emigrant generations who could not reassert brute survival died young and far from home. Those of us in the first American generations have had to figure out how the invisible world the emigrants built around our childhoods fits in solid America”
(Kingston 5).



SAN FRANCISCO'S CHINESE POPULATION has steadily risen over the years. The second generation consists of American-born Chinese who felt “foreign” and displaced since they looked different from Caucasian Americans but were not connected to their Chinese ancestors like their parents. Their parents, the first generation, are from China, but to Chinese born in America, both China and America are unfamiliar. As a result, a sense of placelessness is common among Chinese Americans. This generation grew up with American culture, and as a result, some would rather be more American than Chinese while first-generation immigrants believed Chinese culture to be superior to American culture (Yin 118).

“I’m the stepdaughter of a paper son and I’ve inherited this whole suitcase of lies”
(Ng 58).



Figure 13: SUITCASE

“There were secrets never to be said in front of the ghosts; immigration secrets whose telling could get us sent back to China”
(Kingston 183).

“We graduated from keeping their secrets to keeping our own”
(Ng 109).



Figure 14: BULLDOZER

“When urban renewal tore down my parents’ laundry and paved over our slum for a parking lot, I only made up gun and knife fantasies and did nothing useful” (Kingston 48).

urban renewal

“Those Urban Renewal Ghosts gave us moving money. It took us seventeen years to get our customers. How could we start all over on moving money, as if we two old people had another seventeen years in us?”
(Kingston 104).

Urban renewal took place after World War II and affected Chinese communities negatively. Jade Snow Wong and Maxine Hong Kingston’s memoirs, which were published in 1945 and 1976, are the only selected literary works in this study that mention urban renewal because the authors were directly affected by its impacts.

“There had first been talk about, and finally action, in choosing certain properties in Chinatown for a Federal housing project. This property included the factory-home where the Wongs lived. Daddy foresaw that whenever the housing authority decided to condemn the property, he would lose his entire investment in improvements in the store and would be left with only his movable machinery” (J. Wong 183).

“I’ve learned exactly who the enemy are... business-suited in their modern American executive guise, each boss two feet taller than I am and impossible to meet eye to eye”
(Kingston 48).

“If I took the sword, which my hate must surely have forged out of the air, and gutted him, I would put color and wrinkles into his shirt. It’s not just the stupid racists that I have to do something about, but the tyrants who for whatever reason can deny my family food and work. My job is my own only land”
(Kingston 49).

AS DESCRIBED IN THESE PASSAGES, many Chinese harbored resentment and hatred as a result of racism and discrimination directed towards them.



Figure 15: SWORD

San Francisco, CA

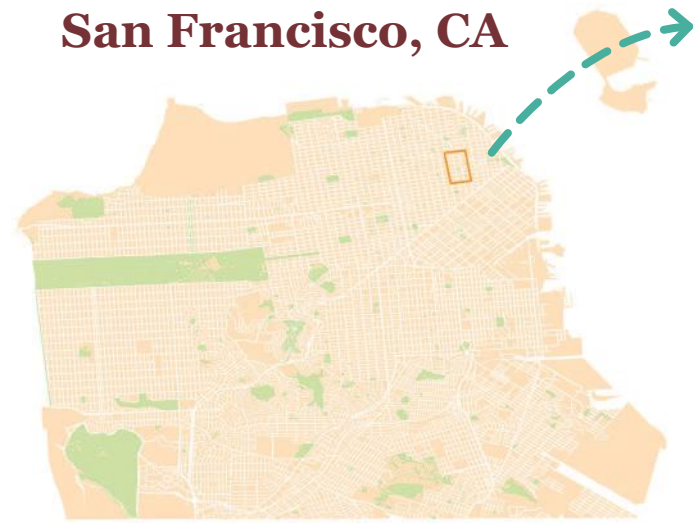


Figure 16: MAP OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA

“We were a city of leftovers mixed together”
 (Tan 8).

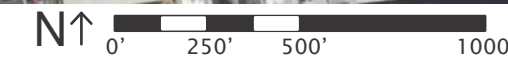
CHINATOWN LAND USE MAP



AERIAL IMAGERY, 1938



AERIAL IMAGERY, 2017



selected literature

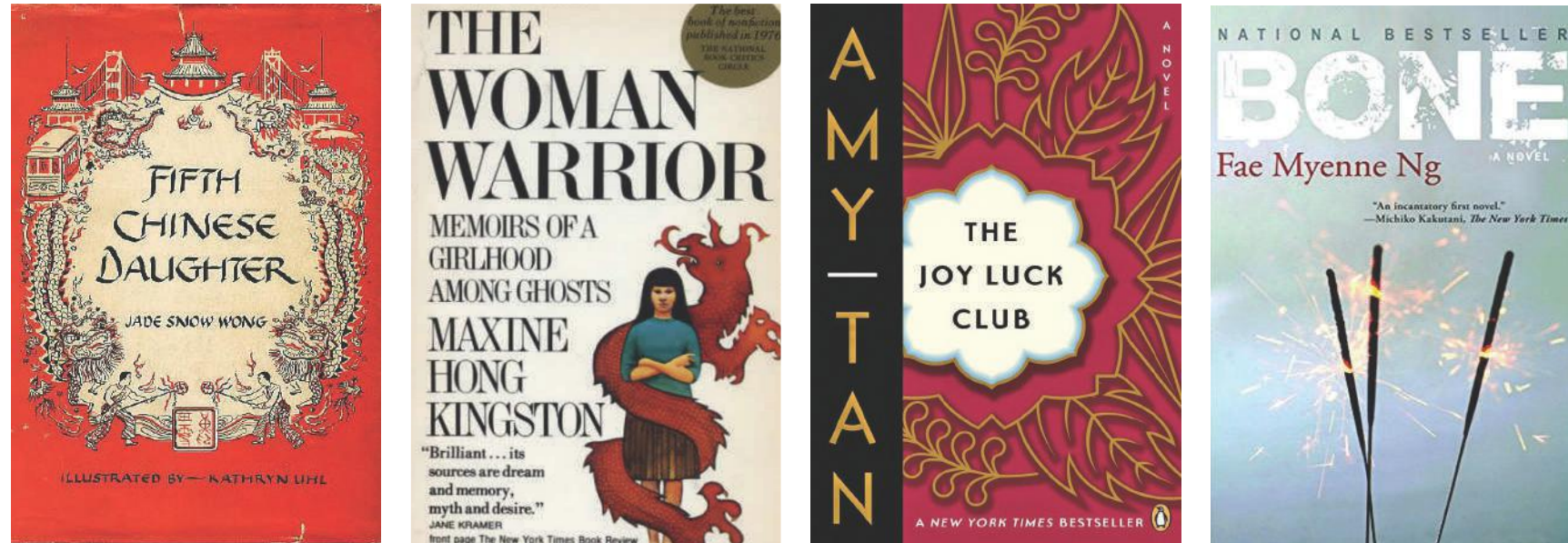


Figure 20: BOOK COVERS OF SELECTED LITERARY WORKS

“I had genuine thoughts inside that no one could see, that no one could ever take away from me” (Tan 53).

Asian American literature is defined as “the creative work of writers of Asian descent who identify themselves as Americans and who view their own experiences and the world through the dual lenses of their American identities and their ethnic roots” (Huntley 44). Writers view the world through the dual lens of both cultures and translate their experiences creatively. The Asian American literary genre is known for its “fictional narratives that embrace elements of biography and autobiography, history and mythology, folk tale and Asian talk-story, personal reminiscence and memoir” (Huntley 43).

**“And suddenly
I got very confused and lonely
because I was at that moment
telling her my list, and
in the telling, it grew.
No higher listener.
No listener but myself”**
(Kingston 204).

**“She said I was always telling stories
the way she couldn’t stand to hear”** (Ng 30).

Female Chinese-American authors have heavily influenced the history and development of the Asian American literary genre. In 1945, Jade Snow Wong sparked a rise in the popularity of Asian American literature and introduced it to the American public through her memoir *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (Huntley 48). When Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* was published in 1976, it was hugely successful and solidified the platform for future writers. Many credit Chinese-American women writers, namely Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan, for the success and popularity of Asian American literature, which was made even more difficult since Chinese-American women were "almost an invisible minority" until Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* was published (Huntley 51). The Asian American literary genre was then catapulted into the mainstream American audience when Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* topped bestseller lists (Huntley 51).

**"It was probably a girl;
there is some hope
of forgiveness for boys"**

(Kingston 15).

NOT ONLY ARE THE MOST WELL-KNOWN and notably works in Asian American literature written by Chinese Americans, they are also written by female authors. For Asian American women writers, the act of writing serves the purpose of exerting control on their world, and "a special attention to Asian American woman autobiographers will contribute to the study of Asian American experience as a whole" (Suttilagsana 124-125). Since poetry is not as widely representative of the Chinese-American experience, this study focuses solely on fiction and nonfiction novels. Because authors native to a place are able to provide "a qualitative, personal perspective that is founded in both the intuitive and the learned knowledge" (Rolley 92), selected novels are set in San Francisco's Chinatown, which is the site for this study since the city was instrumental in shaping Chinese-American history. In order to gather data where a collection of Chinese-American voices are well-represented over time, selected literary works include *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945), *The Woman Warrior* (1976), *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), and *Bone* (1993). The novels of Chinese-American female authors are used for the purpose of data collection and analysis in order to assess the perception of sense of place and later inform future design recommendations.

Like many Asian American autobiographical literature, *The Woman Warrior* sparks controversy in its label as a "memoir". Many critics point out the stories of Fa Mu Lan and other folk tales are entirely fictional, especially as Kingston puts her own twist to the ending. Others disagree, arguing that Kingston does this intentionally to create her own endings to stories for which her mother had provided the beginnings. Audiences and critics are forced to question what constitutes an "autobiography" and whether there is a gray area within the label that novels such as Kingston's can claim a place (S. Wong 249). American-born Chinese writers are "removed from Chinese culture in China by their ancestor's emigration", but "American-born autobiographers may still capitalize on white curiosity by conducting the literary equivalent of a guided Chinatown tour" (S. Wong 262). An example is shown through Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

"I knew the silence had to do with being a Chinese girl" *(Kingston 166).*

The narrator returns to Chinatown and does so with "selective enthusiasm". She reassesses the landscapes of her childhood "according to their acceptability to white tastes". The purpose of an autobiography in this sense is to provide readers with a feeling of "privileged access" to the experiences of Chinese in America. There are many dangers of reading autobiographies for their "cultural authenticity" due to the many complexities of the culture (S. Wong 264-265). Kingston addresses this in her memoir by explaining there is "no higher listener" but herself (Kingston 204). Through the act of writing, authors recognize their self, and readers are an audience to the experience. Thus, autobiographies are representative of the authors' experiences and do not represent all experiences of people belonging to the culture (Suttilagsana 123). "The so-called distortions of traditional Chinese culture found in the text are simply indications of how far removed from it the protagonist has become" (S. Wong 268). Through her memoir, Kingston strives to define what it means to be a Chinese-American woman, and in doing so, stretches the boundaries and definition of an autobiography (S. Wong 271).

**"No, it's not true
what some Chinese say
about girl babies being worthless.
It depends on what kind of girl baby you are"** *(Tan 44).*

Fifth Chinese Daughter

BY JADE SNOW WONG, 1945

In 1945, Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* was the first notable work of a Chinese-American author to be introduced to the mainstream American public. It drew the fascination of a predominantly white audience to the genre of Asian American literature, opening the platform for later writers such as Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan. The memoir depicts Wong's upbringing in a Chinese family living in San Francisco's Chinatown, giving readers many snapshots of Chinese cultures and traditions. One analysis of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* points out that the memoir is written in third person, which is untraditional in American autobiographies, but for the Chinese, it is traditional to refer to themselves this way. Some critics have termed the novel as "a stilted, emotionally strangled work" due to the impersonal nature of the narration. Although some claim the novel "caters to the stereotypes and myths of the majority" about the Chinese, Wong was the most well-known Chinese-American author in Asian American literature before Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* was published in 1976 (Ling 73-75).



Figure 21: RICE BOWL

"She was trapped in a mesh of tradition woven thousands of miles away by ancestors who had had no knowledge that someday one generation of their progeny might be raised in another culture" (J. Wong 110).

The Woman Warrior: MEMOIRS OF A GIRLHOOD AMONG GHOSTS

BY MAXINE HONG KINGSTON, 1976

Maxine Hong Kingston's memoir *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* is comprised of five short stories. Notably, "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe" is about the author's own life (Kingston 161). It describes specific moments in her childhood that have been impacted by both Chinese and American culture through her interactions with other people, especially her mother. As the novel explores themes on feminism, tradition, language, and identity, the narrator struggles with defining her identity and feels as if she is neither American nor Chinese. The feeling of displacement is translated into the author's descriptions of roaming the city without destination (Kingston 168). As the memoir juxtaposes the landscape of China with the landscape of America, it illustrates the experiences of growing up Chinese-American. The memoir contains what is termed as a "provocative silence" (Cheung 75). The many interpretations of the use of silence and gaps in the literature explore the possibilities of finding meaning in what authors choose not to write about. It points towards the silence of Kingston's landscape, forcing her audience to become aware of what she chooses not to voice. In the story of Fa Mu Lan, the fantasy landscape is vivid as Kingston's heroine journeys across lands (Cheung 86). This could point to a lack

of liveliness in the landscapes of the narrator's reality that she needs to compensate using her imagination. In one scene, the narrator confesses a harbored list of sins to her mother, comparing the experience to concrete pouring out of her mouth "to cover the forests with freeways and sidewalks" (Kingston 204). This further contributes to the silencing of Kingston's landscape through the symbolic silence and oppression of concrete (Cheung 93). Maxine Hong Kingston's mixture of styles and genres in *The Woman Warrior* embodies the contradiction and complementarity of two "distinct and complex cultures" and shows a "rejection of traditional linear fictional narrative structure" (Huntley 53). In her negotiation of her cultural identity, the "personal and creative transposing of Chinese culture from a distinctly Chinese-American perspective and in a hybrid idiom" illustrates Kingston's assertion of herself in both Chinese and American cultures rather than picking one or the other (Cheung 96-97, 125).

"When my sisters and I ate at their house, there we would be- six girls eating. The old man opened his eyes wide at us... 'Maggots!' He shouted. 'Maggots!' Where are my grandsons?" (Kingston 191).

Figure 22: SWORD



The Joy Luck Club

BY AMY TAN, 1989

The *Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan is a collection of short stories revolving around two generations of eight women: four mothers and four daughters. The novel was instrumental in introducing Asian American literature to a mainstream American audience. It was not long after the publication of Amy Tan's novel that Asian American literature was required reading for literature courses. Themes in the novel explore the generation gap in mother-daughter relationships, the assimilation of the Chinese-American daughters to American culture, the concept of Chinese beliefs and traditions versus Christianity, the discovery of strength in independence, conforming to "American rules", and striving for the American Dream. A review of Tan's first novel points out the significance

of fictional landscapes in depicting the clash between Chinese and American culture. Landscapes in literature personify an author's perception of their environment. Literary critics correlate the problems in mother-daughter relationships in the novel to the inability of the characters to share the meaning of their stories, which are not geographically linked. The mothers attempt to impart lessons they have learned in their lives, but the daughters "do not share the geographical landscape from which those cultural stories originate" (Wood 83) and thus fail to grasp the true meanings of their mother's stories. Thus, Tan's individual first-person narratives illustrate the connection between unique geographical landscapes and individual identity" (Wood 89).

"In me, they see their own daughters... who grow up impatient when their mothers talk in Chinese, who think they are stupid when they explain things in fractured English. They see that joy and luck do not mean the same to their daughters, that to these closed American-born minds "joy luck" is not a word, it does not exist" (Tan 31).

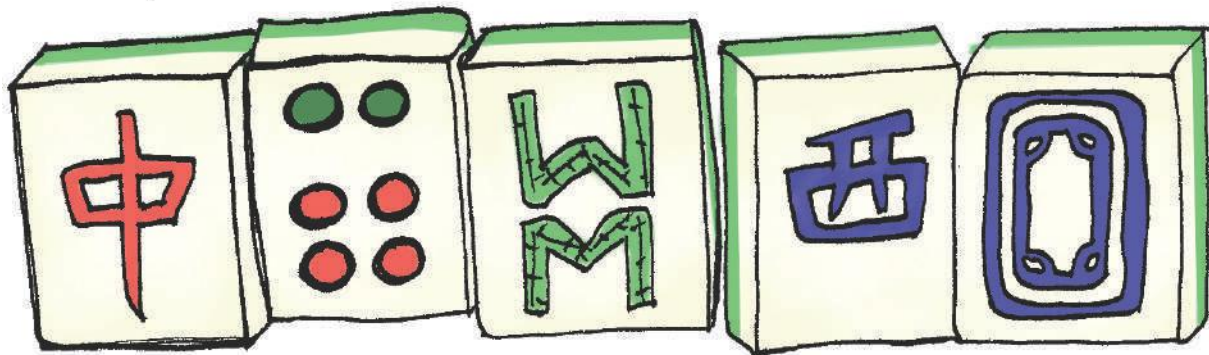


Figure 23: MAH JONG TILES

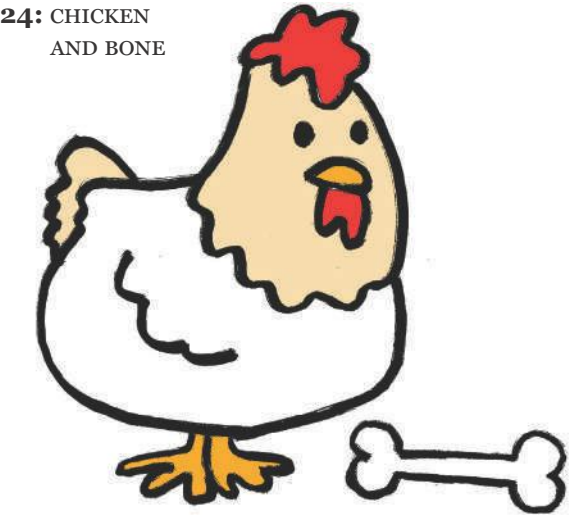
Bone

BY FAE MYENNE NG, 1993

Written by Fae Myenne Ng, *Bone* is a work of fiction about a Chinese family in San Francisco. It focuses on three Chinese-American daughters: Leila, Ona, and Nina. Leila narrates her family's story in a nonlinear timeline. Laden with many depictions of Chinatown, the novel revolves around Leila's struggle with belonging to the Chinatown she grew up in and the world outside of it, which is embodied in her relationship with her mother, father, and her boyfriend Mason. While cultural context is provided through her parents' various occupations (Ng 14), the novel offers a perspective into how Chinese Americans treat Chinese customs and traditions through the decisions and actions of the three sisters. Using prose ranging from Chinese New Year in Chinatown (Ng 104) to the rise and fall of the American Dream (Ng 101), the author uncovers what it means to have a home and what constitutes a home for people who are born between two different cultures.

THE DEPICTION OF SAN FRANCISCO contributes to the question of which aspects of landscape influences a character's sense of belonging. Critics assert that Ng's novel forces readers to question the silence of the characters and its purpose towards the meaning of the novel as a whole. The landscape is also given a voice

Figure 24: CHICKEN AND BONE



conditionally through the narrator's perception and her control over what she chooses to silence. Through Leila's father's magnetism to the ocean, Leon's identity is "shown as not one of culture but one of place" (Ferguson 250). He is restless on land without a sense of place. As for Leila's sisters, they manage to escape Chinatown, but it is only made possible through violence, one by committing suicide and the other by getting an abortion. In both cases, there was a loss of a form of life, thus denoting the harmful, fatal nature of the landscape and environment that surrounds Chinese-American women (Ferguson 251).

the american dream

**“My mother believed
you could be anything you wanted to be
in America”** (Tan 141).

**“When she left Hong Kong,
everyone called her lucky;
to live in America was to have a fortune”**
(Ng 22).

“America was where all my mother’s hopes lay” (Tan 141).

**“For unlike my mother,
I did not believe
I could be anything I wanted to be.
I could only be me”**
(Tan 154).

The American Dream is a recurring theme among the selected literature. Many Chinese immigrants arrived in America with dreams of success. Due to exclusion and alienation from American society, the Chinese were only given jobs Americans did not want. Despite their struggles in America, most Chinese still sent money back to their relatives in China. Later on, the American Dream was then passed on to the second generation of Chinese Americans, who were forced to negotiate between their own dreams and the dreams of their parents.

**“And after seeing my mother’s disappointed face once again,
something inside of me began to die”** (Tan 144).

lost in translation

“My mother and I never really understood one another.

We translated each other’s meanings and I seemed to hear less than what was said, while my mother heard more” *(Tan 27).*

“These kinds of explanations made me feel my mother and I spoke two different languages, which we did.

I talked to her in English,
she answered back in Chinese”
(Tan 23).

“I have a whole different vocabulary of feeling in English than in Chinese, and not everything can be translated” *(Ng 16).*

The divide between two languages can be attributed to why meanings are lost in translation. Along with these misunderstandings, the generation gap featured in *The Joy Luck Club* also contributes to familial conflicts.

**“What could I say?
Using Chinese words was my undoing.
She had a world of words that were beyond me”**
(Ng 20).

negotiation of cultural identity

E “I could not figure out what was my village” (Kingston 45).

motional attachments are formed between people and places through their experience of place using the physical senses. Environmental psychologists and sociologists believe “Sense of Place” is determined by people’s attachments to place and can be quantified. Geographers, on the other hand, have defined “Sense of Place” as part of the character of a place and does not necessarily consider how people feel in the space. Teeple argues that “Sense of Place” is determined by people’s interactions and relationships with place, and a character’s sense of place can be gathered through their sensations and experiences (Teeple 170-171). The levels of attachment people have with a place is determined by their interactions, feelings,

“I think about our two faces...

Which one is American?

Which one is Chinese?

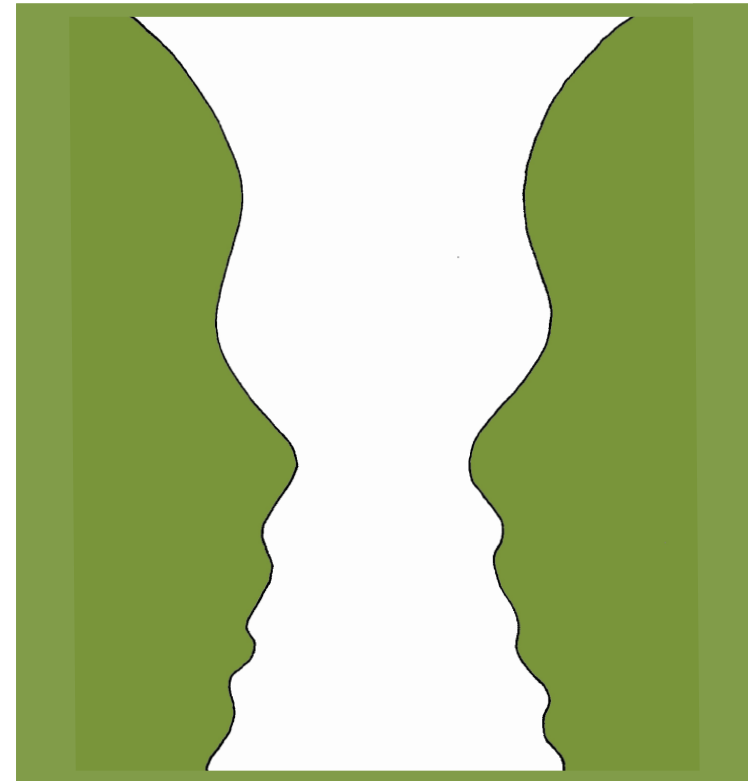
Which one is better?

**If you show one, you must
always sacrifice the other”**

(Tan 304).

Figure 25: TWO FACES

and treatment of place, as shown through literature’s ability to capture the ephemeral nature of moments and feelings (Teeple 174). Additionally, sense of place can be categorized into three levels: place awareness, place attachment, and place responsibility.



I “Why do you blame your culture, your ethnicity?” (Tan 170).

Identity negotiation theory applies to immigrant communities searching for a sense of place and belonging and is determined by the degree of “bicultural exposure” (Liu 27). People who live and move between cultures find it challenging to find a cultural home and are often left with a feeling of cultural homelessness when identity negotiations are unsuccessful. Boundaries are important for cultures to coexist without merging, which then enables people to move between cultures without feeling disoriented. Negotiations of identity are successful when people are able to adapt to different cultural environments (Liu 34).

“And that’s why I named you Waverly. It was the name of the street we lived on. And I wanted you to think, This is where I belong. But I also know if I named you after this street, soon you would grow up, leave this place, and take a piece of me with you” (Tan 303).

“Can you imagine how it is, to want to be neither inside nor outside, to want to be nowhere and disappear?” (Tan 9).

CULTURAL IDENTITY CAN BE DEFINED using the sense of place, which goes beyond language and appearances. For Chinese raised in bicultural environments, the sense of belonging is caught between two cultures. The negotiation of cultural identity causes a back-and-forth switch between two cultures, resulting in a fluid and dynamic identity. In effect, some negotiate their identity by choosing, sometimes unsuccessfully, the parts of the two cultures they favor in order to create their own hybrid identity. In other cases, it is important for some to create clear distinctions between their two cultural identities. Identity can be negotiated and constructed through interactions with the community (Liu 28-29). People in-between one or more cultures have three choices according to Liu. They can either pick one and ignore the others, negotiate a hyphenated identity, or become stuck with a “cultural homelessness” (Liu 31-32).

**“Chinese-Americans,
when you try to understand what things you are in Chinese,
how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood,
to poverty, insanities, one family,
your mother who marked your growing with stories,
from what is Chinese?
What is Chinese tradition
and what is the movies?”**
(Kingston 5-6).

In the selected literature, authors comment on the American landscape, critiquing and discussing urban forms. Jade Snow Wong, whose novel was published in 1945, has been heavily criticized by Asian American literary academics as an incomplete portrayal of Chinese in America (Ling 73-75). The descriptions of landscape in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are picturesque, and some argue it is the result of a literary work that caters to a Caucasian-American audience. As the narrator familiarizes herself with the city, the urban landscape is portrayed with a magical quality. She terms the city “beautiful” more than once, and is often in awe of it spread below her in a sea of twinkling lights and bold skyscrapers. Her Chinatown is quaint, almost as if the character is a tourist herself, and the audience is merely rediscovering the narrator’s home alongside her. There is distinct awareness of the existence of Chinatown’s boundaries, which is prominent in all four novels. At times when she is unsure of herself, she finds comfort in wandering alone on the streets, which become a safe haven of sorts. The outpouring of Wong’s fantastical adjectives in describing the city can even be attributed to a pattern not included in this project: MAGIC IN THE CITY. On the other hand, an unsuspecting audience might not catch the author’s

subtle criticisms of the urban landscape skillfully woven into the text. Amongst these criticisms is a simple comment on the fact that she has only ever seen one park in the city with plants and insects. (See ACCESSIBLE GREEN.) The reserved statement is presented as a fact to readers, and because it carries no emotion, it is easy to fail to recognize the author is using her character’s perspective to make a point. Children are not accustomed to coming across plants or green spaces in the city except in empty lots where weeds grow. By stating this in a simple manner, the author is making it clear that this is a reality to which people have become complacent.

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON, who followed in the footsteps of Jade Snow Wong, used the landscape very differently in her literary work. Although *The Woman Warrior* was heavily criticized, often by less successful, male, Asian American writers, it was accused of being an inaccurate depiction of Chinese cultures and traditions in America because the memoir employs the use of fantasy landscapes and illustrative memoirs. Approximately half of Kingston’s novel is comprised of folk tales featuring heroines travelling across natural, rugged, mountainous landscapes. The scenes are depicted as wild and free as the narrator

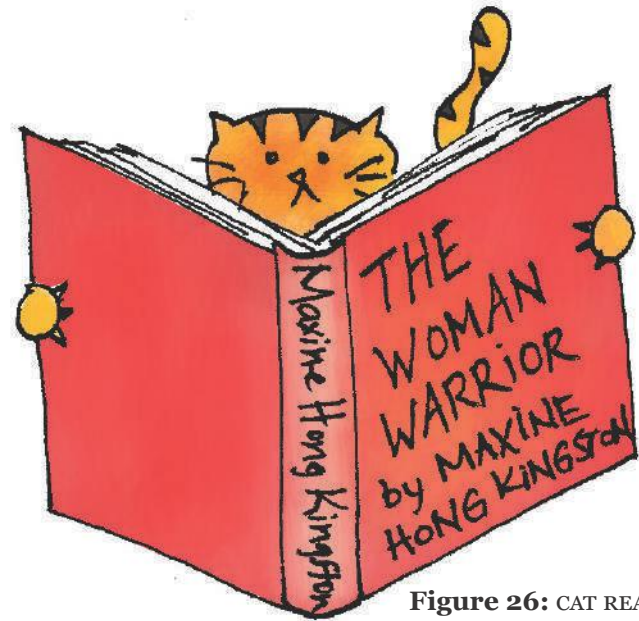


Figure 26: CAT READING

herself, and the landscapes of the folk tales exist in the rural China of the author's imagination. Yet, in describing the American landscape, Kingston uses concrete in metaphors. (See NETWORKS OF PATHS AND CARS.) Her words- her English words, are as heavy and absolute as concrete as it covers the trees with sidewalks and freeways. Here, the metaphor shows the dominance of American societal pressures. To be American is to have nature smothered in concrete, to pave over businesses to create parking lots, to choke on the metaphorical ghosts, the literal chemicals and pollution from cars. America is concrete. In America, transportation is king. And China is wild and free.

AMY TAN'S USE OF THE LANDSCAPE IN LITERATURE is multi-faceted. Similar to Kingston, Tan juxtaposes the landscapes of China and America. The Chinese villages and landscape, experienced through the first generation of aunties, are associated with natural elements such as rivers and rugged topography. In contrast, the American urban landscape is described with many convoluted networks of streets. (See NETWORKS OF PATHS AND CARS.) The aunties often compare Chinese and American architectural forms. Their opinions of Americans are reflected in the descriptions of urban forms. (See FOUR-STORY LIMIT, SACRED SITES.) In one specific case, a skyscraper towering over the shorter buildings on the edge of Chinatown personifies the generalized derisiveness of Americans towards the Chinese. In addition, they assert how the American mimicry of Chinese pagodas and temples come off as "cheap" and fake, pondering why Americans didn't design more natural forms in the gardens created for Chinese-American users. The only wild American landscape exists in one narrator's dreams, where the weeds in her garden take over. (See ACCESSIBLE GREEN, GARDEN GROWING WILD.) The weeds personify how Chinese Americans have adapted and thrived in America despite their foreign roots and alienation from American society. In continuation,

the narrator points out the fact that wild landscapes are viewed as a sign of neglect. Through her character, the author changes this perception. The existence of wild landscapes in dreams thus hint at a subconscious need for wildness and natural forms in gardens.

FOR FAE MYENNE NG'S NOVEL, her disdain towards the use of public spaces and parks by gamblers is obvious. She disapproves, remarking with both disgust and pity. The narrator often experiences the city with a degree of detachedness, metaphorically shown through her observations from inside the car with the window separating her. (See IDENTIFIABLE NEIGHBORHOOD.) She experiences Chinatown by attempting to view it as a tourist would, noting the dissonance of colors combinations and foreign words on storefront signs. Part of this dissonance contributes to the identity of the Chinatown neighborhood, and similar to Jade Snow Wong, Ng often leans positively in her opinion of the "Chinese" design elements enforcing the identity of the community, unlike Tan's characters. Also, the narrator suffers from feelings of claustrophobia induced by the crowdedness of the city. (See ACCESSIBLE GREEN.) The harshness of the bright sunlight glares off metal surfaces, hurting her eyes. In this regard, Ng's portrayal of the urban fabric is similar to Kingston's use of concrete.

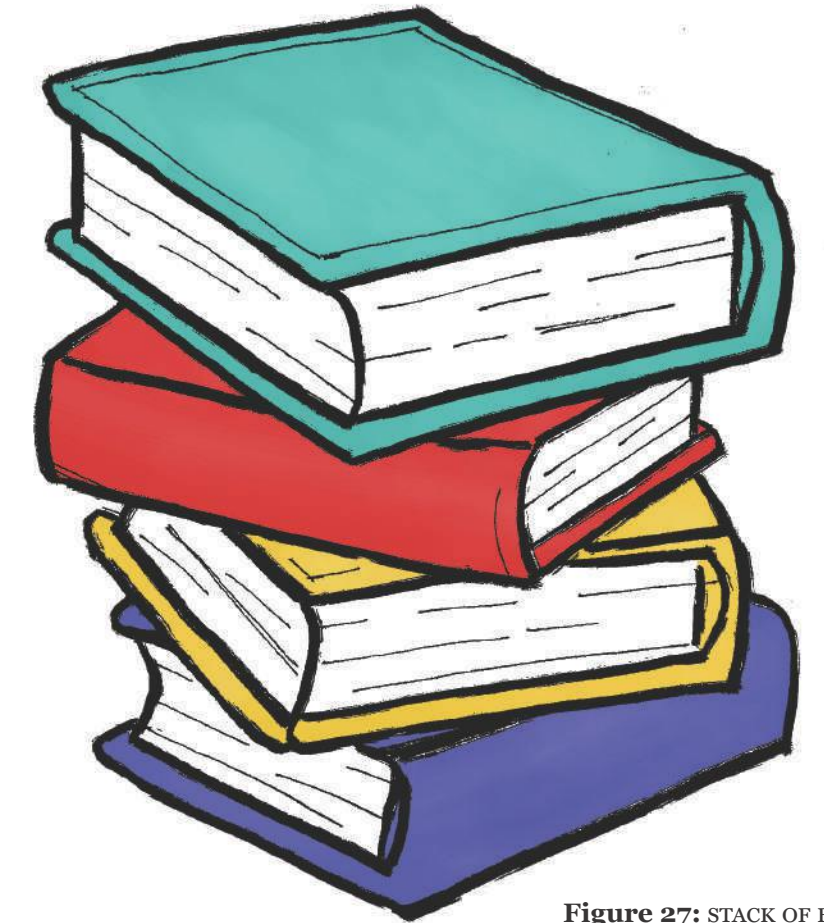


Figure 27: STACK OF BOOKS

anatomy of the pattern book

Patterns are at the “core of any sensible human pattern language” and the “archetypal core of all possible pattern languages, which can make people feel alive and human” (Alexander xvii-xviii). Landscapes speak through literature, and much can be interpreted from altered and enhanced fictional landscapes. Patterns exist in the landscapes of literature and reveal signatures that further people’s comprehension of their reality (Salter and Lloyd 28).

THE PROPOSED PATTERN BOOK WILL BE DIVIDED into Landscape Signatures: Landscapes of Livelihood, Signatures of Sacred Space, Transportation Signatures, Behavioral Signatures, and Signatures of Personal Action (Salter and Lloyd). Landscapes of Livelihood include the physical descriptions of landscape features, identifying characteristics of a place, and evidence of human activities. Signatures of Sacred Space explore locations and symbolism with religious connections. Transportation Signatures focus on the networks and circulation in the literary landscape, including the impacts of transportation systems.

Behavioral Signatures are shown through the shaping of personal space where insight into individuals and their families illustrate a larger pattern within the community. Signatures of Personal Action include unique places with special meaning, mysterious and exotic landscapes, and places chosen for entertainment and recreational purposes.

LANDSCAPE SIGNATURES THEN CORRESPOND with patterns from Christopher Alexander’s *A Pattern Language*. Under these sections, patterns from *A Pattern Language* commonly found in Chinese-American literature are listed. Each pattern will be illustrated through selected passages from literary works and a drawing depicting the pattern. A traditional literary analysis along with an analysis using landscape architectural lens will reveal a characteristic about the pattern that will go on to inform design recommendations. The creation of a pattern book contributes by noting patterns among Chinese-American communities as illustrated in literature and offering solutions or ways of mediating problems of placelessness.

how to use the pattern book

landscape pattern

Paragraph explaining and describing pattern, along with literary analysis.

Design Recommendations:
GOAL:
• OBJECTIVE:
-GUIDELINE:



Fig. 0: Image depicting landscape pattern.

THE
Pattern Book

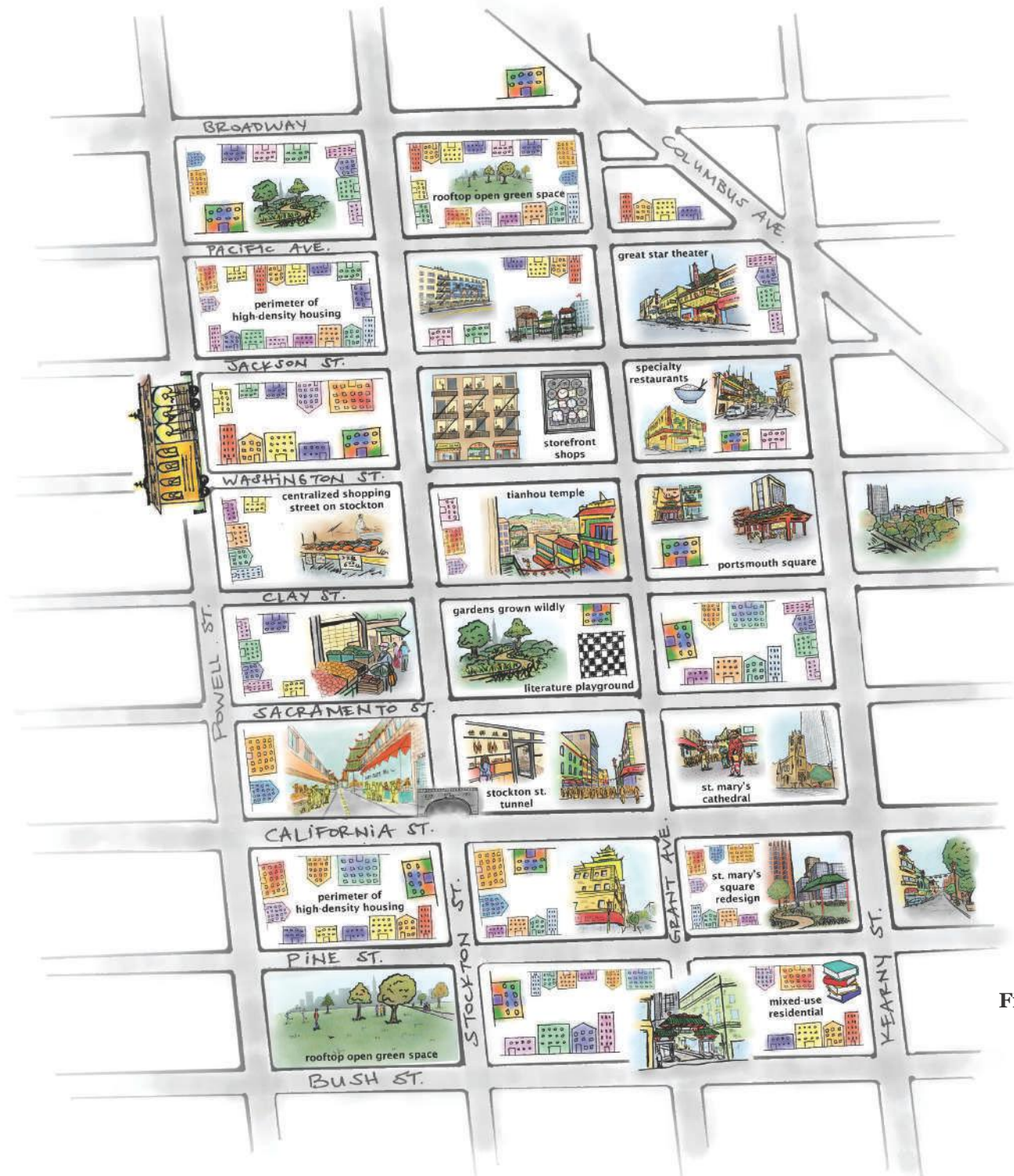


Figure 29: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN OF CHINATOWN REIMAGINED

Landscapes of Livelihood

- Identifiable Neighborhood
 - Shopping Street
 - Shopfront Schools
 - Dancing in the Street
- Main Gateway
- Work Community
- Four-Story Limit

Signatures of Sacred Space

- Sacred Sites
- Grave Sites
- Access to Water

Transportation Signatures

- Network of Paths and Cars
- Road Crossing
- Activity Nodes
 - Public Outdoor Room

Behavioral Signatures

- Accessible Green
 - Garden Growing Wild
- Stair Seats
- House for a Small Family
 - Degrees of Publicness

Signatures of Personal Action

- Children in the City
 - Adventure Playground
 - Secret Place
- High Places

Landscapes *of* Livelihood

Landscapes of Livelihood include literal descriptions of the landscape and identifying characteristics as well as the role and significance of spaces.

Patterns:

- **Identifiable Neighborhood**
 - Shopping Street
 - Shopfront Schools
 - Dancing in the Street
- **Main Gateway**
- **Work Community**
- **Four-Story Limit**

identifiable neighborhood

“[People] want to be able to identify the part of the city where they live as distinct from all others” (Alexander 81).



Figure 30: RESTAURANT BALCONY AND EAVES

“I looked out at the streets and saw the spidery writing on the store signs, the dressed-up street lamps with their pagoda tops, the oddly matched colors: red with green, green with aqua blue, yellow with pink... So this is what Chinatown looks like from inside those dark Greyhound buses; this slow view, these strange color combinations, these narrow streets, this is what tourists come to see” (Ng 141).

IDENTIFIABLE NEIGHBORHOOD:

shopping street



Shops along Chinatown streets are a defining aspect of the neighborhood. The network of shopping streets is a social and economic hub of the community.

Figure 31: STOCKTON STREET MARKETS

“I walked through Alfredo’s lot onto Mason Street and then down Broadway to Powell. I said good morning to Chuck Lee, who was setting out his vegetables. I waved to the noodle maker next door, and just like every other school morning, he raised a floured hand back. On Stockton, the butchers at Hop Sing’s ran from the truck into the store, flesh-pink pigs thrown across their shoulders. A man in a short-sleeved shirt carried a stack of bread trays. Live fish poured from a rust-colored truck into huge plastic containers while men in rubber aprons watched, squinting over their cigarettes” (Ng 112).

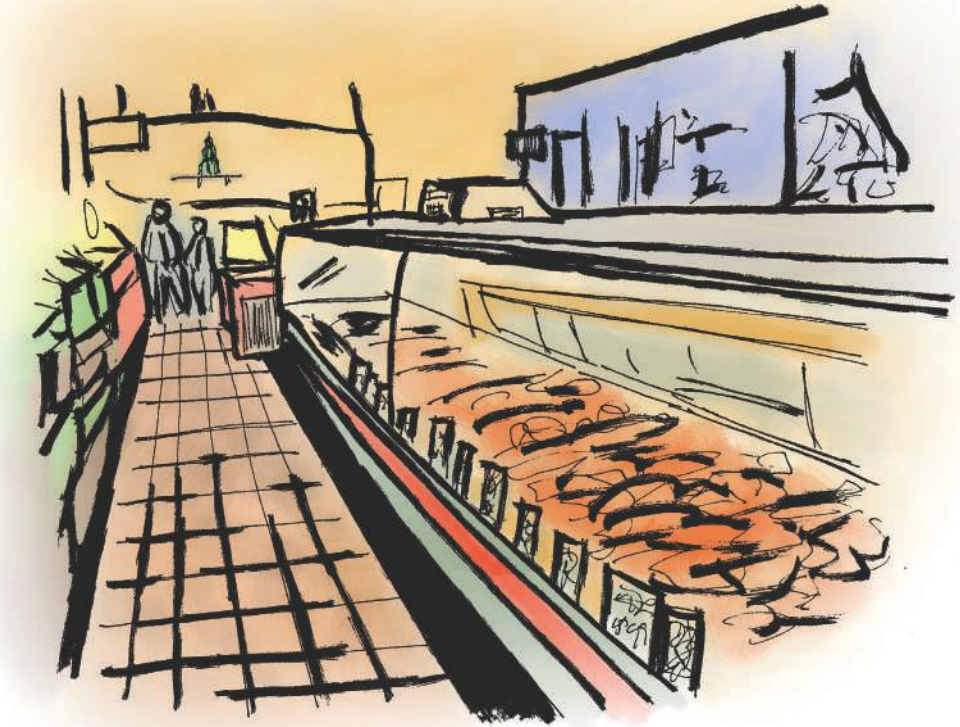


Figure 32: MEAT MARKET

“We would inspect the crates of live frogs and crabs which we were warned not to poke, boxes of dried cattlefish, and row upon row of iced prawns, squid, and slippery fish” (Tan 91).

“In line by dawn, we waited at the butcher’s, listening for the slow, churning motor of the trucks. We watched the live fish flushing out of the tanks into the garbage pails. We smelled the honey-brushed cha-sui buns. And when the white laundry truck turned into Wentworth Alley with its puffing trail of feathers, a stench of chicken waste and rotting food filled the alley. Old ladies squeezed in around the truck, reaching into the crates to tug out the plumpest pigeons” (Ng 28).



Figure 33: SHOPPING STREET

The markets are the social core of the community, and adults would bring children along in order to show them off, telling stories about their accomplishments.

“But there was one duty I couldn’t avoid. I had to accompany my mother on Saturday market days... My mother would proudly walk with me, visiting many shops, buying very little... ‘Why do you have to use me to show off?’ ”
(Tan 101).

“When he heard girls’ voices, he turned on us and roared, ‘No girls!’ and left my sisters and me hanging our coats back up, not looking at one another. The boys came back with candy and new toys. When they walked through Chinatown, the people must have said, ‘A boy- and another boy- and another boy!’ ” (Kingston 47).

IDENTIFIABLE NEIGHBORHOOD:

shopfront schools



Figure 34: FISH MARKET

“Farther down the street was Ping Yuen Fish Market. The front window displayed a tank crowded with doomed fish and turtles struggling to gain footing on the slimy sides... Inside, the butchers with their bloodstained white smocks deftly gutted the fish”

(Tan 90-91).

By observing the people working behind shop windows, children are able to learn about the different facets of the community. Large shopfront windows allow passerby, especially children and tourists, to observe and learn what goes on inside the shops. People are naturally curious. Wong describes her experience at a shopfront window, “Jade Snow discovered that one had only to get into a window to attract spectators... Soon the curious spectators began to murmur aloud, conjecturing as to the nature of the equipment in the elevated display” (J. Wong 243). “From the time she first threw down a ball of clay on the wheel, the street was packed. There were even people on the balconies across the street, and clinging to the telephone pole... Jade Snow could have an audience any time of the day or night on that busy street” (J. Wong 244). If there is a window and there is something to watch, people will gather.

“My brother and I would peer into the medicinal herb shop, watching old Li dole out onto a stiff sheet of white paper the right amount of insect shells, saffron-colored seeds, and pungent leaves for his ailing customers” (Tan 90).

Figure 35: WINDOW DISPLAY OF CLOCKS

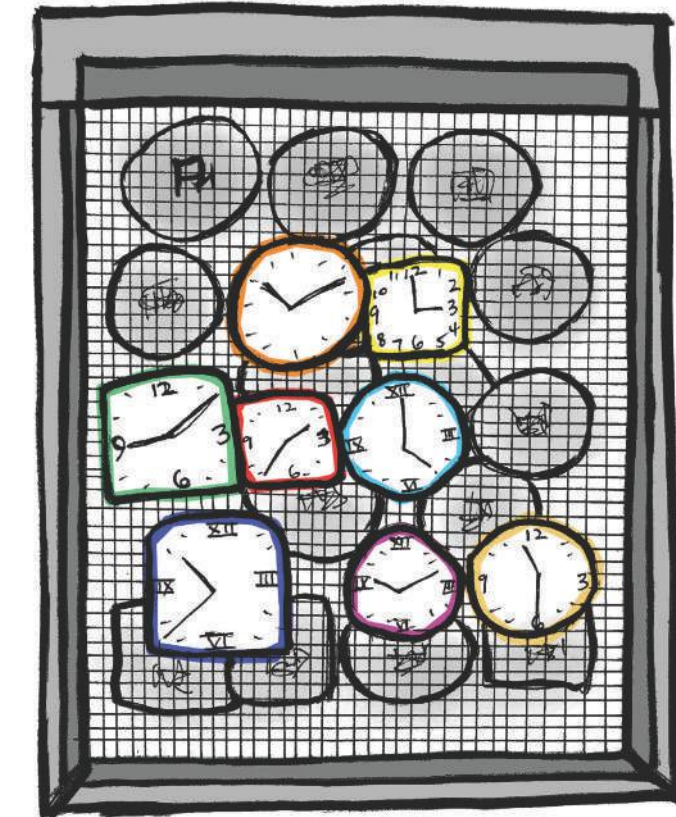




Figure 36: WINDOW DISPLAY OF DUCKS

“Ona was in Hop Sing’s, having a fun tour of the big refrigerator, where she touched a floppy pig ear and saw pig snouts and cow tongues. A butcher showed her how he twisted the square of pink paper into a smooth cone container. He carried her into a room with whistling blades and showed her an oxtail cut into chunks”
(Ng 127).



Figure 37: GATED STOREFRONTS AT NIGHT

BUT THERE IS A SIDE TO THESE SHOPS in Chinatown that tourists and visitors don't see. Tan uncovers the reality of working in those shops, writing, "I fled down an alley, past dark, curtained shops and merchants washing grime off their windows" (Tan 102). When the tourists and cameras have all gone for the day and the shops close down, the streets get dark. The windows are "curtained" and locked with gates to deter vandalism. And there is a layer of "grime" and dirt that needs to be cleaned off the windows at the end of the work day.

Design Recommendations:

- GOAL:** Strengthen appeal of streetscape to provide an engaging and unique pedestrian experience.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Maintain a strong network of shopping streets to support the social and economic values of the community.
 - GUIDELINE:** Protect existing commercial land uses and small businesses through planning practices and zoning laws.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Activate the street environment with shopfront windows.
 - GUIDELINE:** Maximize shopfront windows by creating intriguing and vibrant displays.
 - GUIDELINE:** Align heights of windows to allow for children to observe from the street.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Assess and manage the amount of pedestrian traffic on arterial streets.
 - GUIDELINE:** See NETWORK OF PATHS AND CARS.
 - GUIDELINE:** Create fluid road crossings between shopping streets. See ROAD CROSSING.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Update and implement sanitation standards of commercial businesses, especially markets selling and distributing food products.

dancing in the street



Figure 38: NEW YEAR'S LION DANCES

“There were **Lion Dances** daily on the streets... They used a large and ferocious-looking but very colorful ‘lion’s head’, fitted with bright eyes on springs, and a jaw on hinges. From this head there hung a fancy satin ‘body’ and ‘tail’ piece, sewn together with different-colored scalloped strips of coral, turquoise, red, green, and blue silk. One man who set the tempo for the dance manipulated the head, holding it up in both hands, with only his brightly trousered and slippered legs showing below. As the huge Chinese drums beat in quickening tempo, he danced hard, raised the head high, and jerked it from side to side in an inquiring and delightful manner... [They] followed the lion’s trail, treading the red fragments of burnt firecracker wrappings which carpeted the gray sidewalks... The firecrackers were set off to frighten away any lingering evil spirits, and to make the New Year fresh and clean” (J. Wong 41-42).

chinese new year



Figure 39: CHINESE NEW YEAR CROWDS

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS are a significant aspect of Chinese culture and tradition. “The streets, narrow to begin with, were now made even narrower by the displays; they were also jammed by shoppers looking for choice purchases. The busy hum of the crowd and the merchants’ cries created an undercurrent of excitement” (J. Wong 38).

“The red and green colors, the fruit, the green plants, the flowering branches, the seeds, the sweets—all were propitious: they meant life, new life, a fruitful life, and a sweet life”

(J. Wong 39).

“The sidewalks on both sides of Grant Avenue were lined with colorful exhibits”

(J. Wong 38).

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Create a vibrant and unique neighborhood character that helps facilitate community interactions.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Demonstrate cultural identity through design elements.
 - GUIDELINE:** Identify design and landscape elements that contribute to the cultural identity of the neighborhood and the community.
 - GUIDELINE:** Advocate for public involvement from community in the design process to avoid cultural appropriation.
 - GUIDELINE:** Express the cultural identity of the community through diverse designs. Some elements include decorative balconies which also serve as gathering spaces, decorations (ie. lanterns, flags, etc.), signage, color combinations, lighting, decorative motifs, carvings, symbols, statues, pagodas, etc.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Anticipate the use of street elements in celebratory traditions such as dancing in the street when designing for the community.

main gateway

Designed by a Chinese-American architect, the gateway to Chinatown was built in the 1970's.



Figure 40: MAIN GATEWAY OF CHINATOWN

Gateways “mark the point where a path crosses a boundary and help maintain the boundary” (Alexander 277-278). In the selected literature, the main gateway of Chinatown is not mentioned though it is a tourist attraction. The gateway is designed to mimic a “Chinese” design with green-tiled eaves and sculptures of symbolic animals such as lions or dragons. These gateways serve a symbolic purpose as “entrances” to Chinatown, but are not literal entrances. People who are familiar with the community do not use them as the only entrance to the neighborhood. Since the gateway is an important landmark that contributes to the identity of the neighborhood, it is included here in the pattern book.

Design Recommendations:

- GOAL:** Accentuate main entrances to neighborhoods with culturally-appropriate, welcoming, attractive, and unique gateway designs.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Establish the use of main gateways as an attraction for tourists and a method of defining the character and the edges of the neighborhood.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Evaluate places along the neighborhood boundary where gateways would be most well-incorporated.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Design with input from the community in order to reflect the cultural identity of the neighborhood.
 - GUIDELINE:** Employ consistent yet diverse designs.
 - GUIDELINE:** See IDENTIFIABLE NEIGHBORHOOD.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Orient gateways to frame views inside and outside neighborhoods.

work community

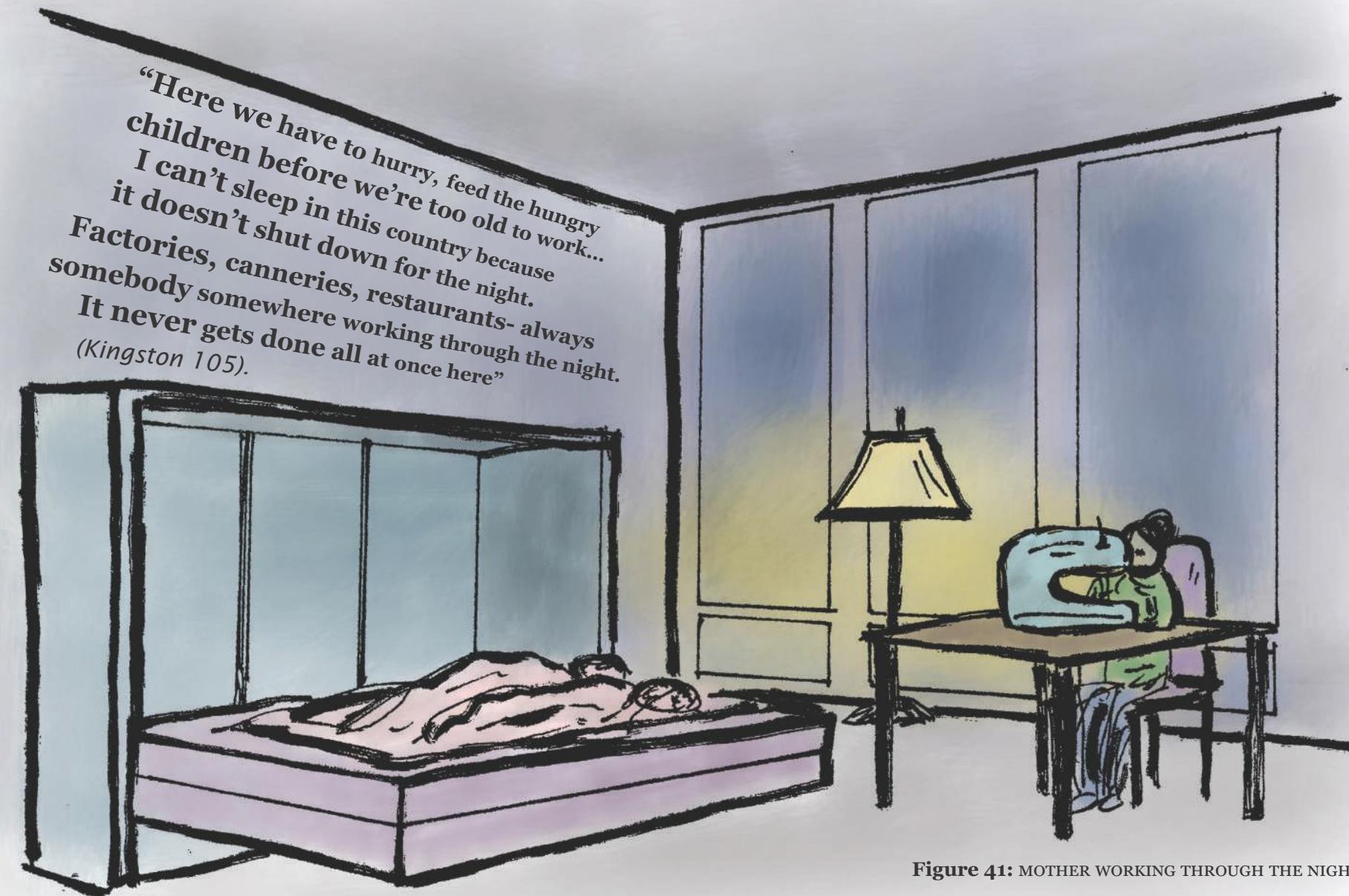


Figure 41: MOTHER WORKING THROUGH THE NIGHT

“When we pulled down the Murphy bed, she was still there, sewing. The hot lamp made all the stitches blur together; the street noises stopped long before she did. And in the morning, long before any of us awoke, she was already there, at work” (Ng 32).

“Starching the shirts for the next day’s pressing was probably my mother’s time to ride off with the people in her own mind. That would explain why she was so far away and did not want to listen to me” (Kingston 200).

“I’d watched the years of working in the sweatshops change her body. Her neck softened. Her shoulders grew heavy. Work was her whole life, and every forward stitch marked time passing. She wanted to get out before her whole life passed under the stamping needle” (Ng 160).

Non-English speaking Chinese immigrants were marginalized and subjected to racism. They often worked blue-collar jobs that were available to them. People often brought work home with them when they could, and the children would often help to lighten the work load. Immigrants chased after their American Dream for years until they realized they'd been disillusioned. The prince had "turned into a toad". The fairytale was only an illusion, and not everyone found the success and wealth they wanted.

"Twenty-five years in the land of gold and good fortune, and then she returned to tell her story: the years spent in sweatshops, the prince of the Gold Mountain turned into a toad, and three daughters: one unmarried, another who-cares-where, one dead" (Ng 22).

"He blamed all of America for making big promises and breaking every one. Where was the good job he'd heard about as a young man? Where was the successful business? He'd kept his end of the bargain: he'd worked hard... But where was his happiness?"
(Ng 100).

Figure 42: LINES AT UNION OFFICE



Design Recommendations:

- GOAL:** Enforce healthy, productive, and safe work environments to foster positive community interactions.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Minimize the commute distance between home and the work place.
 - GUIDELINE:** Locate work communities in close proximity to residential areas by providing more opportunities for neighborhood residents.
 - **OBJECTIVE:** Provide safe and positive work environments with sufficient light and ventilation.

four-story limit

In the core areas of Chinatown, “Above the shops, buildings rose three and v stories, topped by red-tiled eaves and yellow and green pagoda corners” (J. Wong 74). This is the building height inhabitants are comfortable with. Along the edges of Chinatown, buildings in San Francisco’s Financial District are a jarring contrast as they tower over the much shorter buildings. Tan writes, “Today that church is the same size, but where that short bank used to be, now there is a tall building, fifty stories high, where you and your husband-to-be work and look down on everybody” (Tan 296). The character perceives the skyscrapers as a personification of how big businesses and corporations “look down” on her community with condescension. Overshadowing other buildings of equal importance, such as the church beside it, the fifty-story building is portrayed negatively with a tinge of resentment from the narrator. But inside Chinatown, not all buildings keep a four-story limit. “Next to the school is the Nam Ping Yuen, the last of the four housing projects built in Chinatown... My middle sister, Ona, jumped off the M floor of the Nam” (Ng 12). The narrator’s sister uses the buildings to commit suicide by jumping off the thirteenth floor. The author uses this as a violent depiction of how living in such tall buildings can



Figure 43: TOWERING SKYSCRAPER

“There is abundant evidence to show that high buildings make people crazy” (Alexander 115).

drive people to extreme measures. In conclusion, high buildings are negatively portrayed in literature, and it can have detrimental effects on its users.

CHINATOWN BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

Figure 44



Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Reinforce a four-story limit within the Chinatown boundary except for cultural and/or historic landmarks.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Determine and preserve places of cultural and historical importance.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Evaluate the effects of tall buildings (over four stories) with the exception of cultural and historic buildings on the community and the surrounding environment.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Alleviate the negative effects of tall buildings in areas where necessary.
-**GUIDELINE:** Designate setbacks to allow more light to reach the ground plane.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Buffer edges of the neighborhood boundary with gradual increases in building height using design solutions such as building setbacks.

Signatures *of* Sacred Space

Sacred spaces are established by the author. They are places with religious, cultural, or sometimes personal meaning, which can include grave sites or other special ground that contributes to the depiction of a character's attitudes or beliefs.

Patterns:

- Sacred Sites
- Grave Sites
- Access to Water

sacred sites

Sacred sites often carry symbolic meaning through certain features or designs, and the purpose of establishing and preserving sacred sites is to maintain a spiritual and emotional connection to the past. An example is shown through the symbolism of the carousel pony in Bone. Ng describes, “An old carousel pony with a gouged eye and chipped tail stands in front of the store like a guard looking out onto Grand Avenue” (Ng 18). Its endearing flaws such as the “gouged eye and chipped tail” helps define place, especially when it personifies a “guard” at the doorway as it looks out onto the busy shopping street. Objects such as these go on to be defining characteristics of a place as people grow emotionally attached over time. Ng narrates, “As I passed Mah’s carousel pony, I touched its old worn head- my superstitious habit- and pushed through the double glass doors” (Ng 139). She sees the pony as a symbol of luck and strength, and the act of touching its “old worn head” gives her a sense of control over her life. Superstitions are tied to people’s beliefs, so certain symbols can be seen as sacred.

**“Save Today for Tomorrow,
at Bank of America.’
And I thought to myself,
This is where American
people worship” (Tan 296).**



Figure 45: BANK OF AMERICA LOGO

In Chinese-American literature, authors make it clear that Christianity is not part of traditional Chinese culture or religion. Kingston details her experiences with people who try to force religion on her and other people in her community: “And the nuns who kept stopping us in the park, which was across the street from Chinese school, to tell us that if we didn’t get baptized, we’d go to hell like one of the nine Taoist hells forever” (Kingston 197). The nuns are portrayed to stake out the Chinese school as if they are waiting for the children to be let out for the day so they can harass and condemn them. Kingston then compares the Christian hell to the Taoist hell with which she is more familiar. Even churches, which are architectural symbols, were given different names by the Chinese community based on recognizable features of the building. Wong mentions, “old St. Mary’s Church, which the Chinese called ‘The Building of the Big Clock’ because of this feature... In America, the role of human beings is performed with eyes on the clock” (J. Wong 76). Without religious meaning, churches might be perceived as simply buildings. The defining characteristic of St. Mary’s is the big clock, and thus, to the Chinese community, it is “The Building of the Big Clock”. For new immigrants, Christianity takes on a different meaning. Tan writes, “Under the church



Figure 46: ST. MARY'S CHURCH

sign, in handwritten Chinese characters, someone had added: ‘A Chinese Ceremony to Save Ghost from Spiritual Unrest 7 A.M. and 8:30 A.M.’ I memorized this information in case the authorities asked me where I worshipped my religion” (Tan 296). In this context, religion is perceived by Chinese communities as a way to convince immigration officers whether or not someone is “American” enough to stay in the county. The narrator turns to Christianity, to the church sign, as a defense against deportation. This idea seems logical because to the Chinese immigrants, Americans can be defined by the Christian religion. If someone is Christian, then the person must be American.



Figure 47: NUNS STOPPING KIDS IN ST. MARY'S SQUARE

Americans designed the architecture in Chinatown to reflect what they believe the community wants. Tan details, “I saw two pagodas, one on each side of the street, as though they were the entrance to a great Buddha temple. But when I looked carefully, I saw the pagoda was really just a building topped with stacks of tile roofs, no walls, nothing else under its head. I was surprised how they tried to make everything look like an old imperial city or an emperor’s tomb. But if you looked on either side of these pretend-pagodas, you could see the streets became narrow and crowded, dark, and dirty. I thought to myself, why did they choose only the worst Chinese parts for the inside? Why didn’t they build gardens and ponds instead? Oh, here and there was the look of a Chinese opera. But inside it was always the same cheap stuff” (Tan

297). The buildings are only an illusion of a “great Buddha temple”, and upon closer inspection, there are “no walls” and “nothing else under its head”. It is without substance, attempting to be something it can never be. The mimicry of “an old imperial city” or “an emperor’s tomb” shows how Americans perceive the Chinese, the cultural significance of their history, and their cultural values. As a result, the “pretend-pagodas” lining the “dirty”, “crowded”, and “narrow” streets come off as “cheap”. This is not what Chinese immigrants or Chinese Americans want. These “pretend-pagodas” are scattered around Chinatown. Ng states, “Grant Avenue glittered like a Hollywood movie set” (Ng 139). Like a Hollywood movie set, the buildings are set up to look this way, “glittering”, gaudy, and ostentatious. They are fake, not real.



Figure 48: FAR EAST BANK PAGODA

Built in 1909 after the earthquake, this pagoda building currently houses the Far East Bank.

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Establish and preserve the sanctity of sacred sites, especially ones with cultural significance.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Respect beliefs and traditions of the community by identifying sacred sites using input from the community.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Protect sacred sites to preserve its role and importance to the culture.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Reinforce the identity of the neighborhood through expression of beliefs using symbols, carvings, and other design elements.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Avoid cultural appropriation and designation of “sacred” sites.

grave sites

“No people who turn their backs on death can be alive. The presence of the dead among the living will be a daily fact in any society which encourages its people to live”
(Alexander 354).

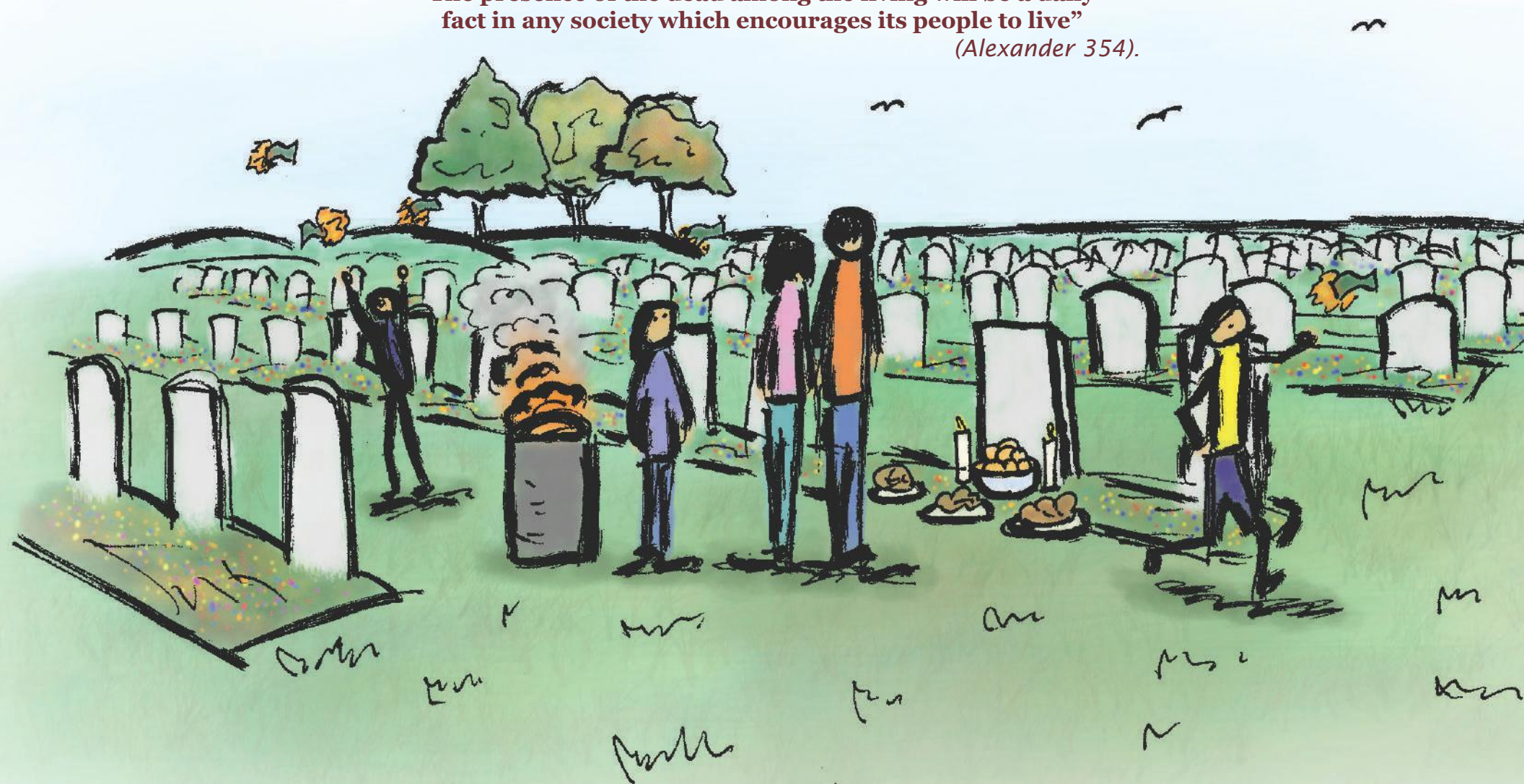


Figure 49: TRADITIONAL BURNING OF FAKE MONEY AT CEMETERY

“The cemetery was full- three generations in every cluster- grandparents and parents talking loud, kids playing chess games. It was more crowded than Portsmouth Square, and I had the odd feeling that this was like a school field trip- the hot sun, the wide sky, and especially the minty eucalyptus smell, all so different from Chinatown”
(Ng 83).

The openness of the cemetery is so drastically different from the city that one narrator feels as if she is on a “school field trip”. The “wide sky” gapes above them, and they can even smell the trees. The newness with which cemeteries are regarded indicate the lack of exposure to nature in urban areas.

“It was a messy-looking place, with overflowing garbage cans and half-singed funeral papers from Chinese burning rituals stuck in the bushes”
(Ng 69).

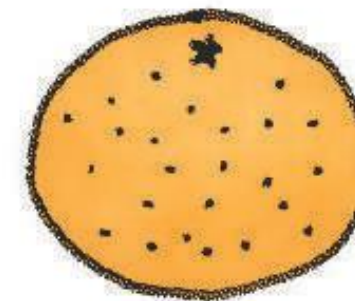


Figure 50: AN ORANGE

THE MESSINESS and “overflowing garbage cans” could be a result of the amount of use during cemetery visits or neglect of grave sites.

“Mah stacked the oranges and laid out the grave food: a dried fish, a whole chicken, and some steamed sticky cakes. Leon started a fire in a large tin canister, slipping paper money into the weak flames. When the wind snatched the dollars up, we ran to catch back the half-singed hell notes” (Ng 83).

“How to get the bones back?” ...

The man shook his head. “Too late.” (Ng 74-75)

It is part of Chinese culture and tradition to visit the graves of ancestors and relatives, but most immigrants buried in temporary graves were moved and then displaced.

“The unclaimed graves were disinterred and the bones grouped by family surnames and then reburied”

(Ng 74).

“When Chinese immigrants had died in the United States, they were considered to be buried here only temporarily. In six or seven years, their family associations automatically arranged to have their bones dug up, boxed, and returned to their closest relatives in China, where they would be permanently reburied in their family grounds”

(J. Wong 84-85).

“I told him how upset Leon was, getting lost looking for the cemetery and then finding the cemetery but not being able to find the grave” (Ng 73).



Figure 51: PEOPLE LOST AT CEMETERY

“I think about all the different ways we leave people in this world. Cheerily waving goodbye to some at airports, knowing we’ll never see each other again. Leaving others on the side of the road, hoping that we will. Finding my mother in my father’s story and saying goodbye before I have a chance to know her better”
(Tan 330).

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Ensure the sanctity of grave sites.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Resolve issues of displacement among grave sites of immigrants.
 - GUIDELINE:** Alleviate current feelings of frustration and helplessness as a result of lost ancestors due to temporary grave sites.
 - GUIDELINE:** Eliminate confusion by devising a reliable process of locating grave sites of loved ones.
 - GUIDELINE:** Prevent future displacement with streamlined system of organization.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Design cemeteries with considerations to cultural identity.
 - GUIDELINE:** Acknowledge and respect Chinese culture and traditions with regards to grave sites.
 - GUIDELINE:** Program areas and facilities for rituals and celebrations.
 - GUIDELINE:** Design individual grave sites to reflect cultural identity.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure consistent maintenance of grave sites to avoid signs of neglect.

access to water

The recurring use of water in metaphors acts as a motif unifying the Chinese-American literary genre. Jade Snow Wong most succinctly explains, “Chinatown in San Francisco teems with haunting memories, for it is wrapped in the atmosphere, customs, and the manners of a land across the sea. The same Pacific Ocean laves the shores of both worlds, a tangible link between old and new, past and present, Orient and Occident” (J. Wong 1). There is an ocean of difference between Chinese and American culture. The people of Chinatown have “wrapped” themselves in the Chinese customs they brought with them to America, but the constant reminders of their home country have become “haunting memories”. The link, the “same Pacific Ocean”, will never be severed, but the Chinese immigrants are forced to face the reality that the water separating them from their past will always be there. The dual nature of water is also exemplified through literary characters. Tan narrates, “I raised a daughter, watching her from another shore. I accepted her American ways” (Tan 286). Here, the author uses water in a metaphor to describe the generation gap

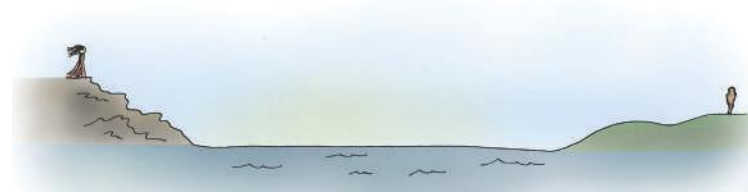


Figure 52: WATCHING FROM OPPOSITE SHORES

mother-daughter relationships. The mother who watches “from another shore” is only able to see her daughter across the ocean separating them. The mother “accepted” her daughter’s “American ways”, but she yearns to fully understand her and is unable to due to the cultural and generational differences. From the daughter’s perspective, Tan writes, “A spider headache spreads out in fine branches over my skull. She is etching spider legs into the icy bone. She pries open my head and my fists and crams into them responsibility for intervening oceans” (Tan 108). As a Chinese American, the character feels a “responsibility” for both countries weighing on her. Her mother makes her the link, the ocean bridging two different languages and two different cultures, and she is forced to accept both sides. Water is portrayed as both a link and a source of separation.

*“An ancestor of ours once stole water from a sacred well.
Now the water is trying to steal back” (Tan 137).*

WATER IS PORTRAYED NEGATIVELY as it becomes an entity that “steals” from people. An example can be found in *The Joy Luck Club*: “I was so much like my mother. This was before our circumstances separated us: a flood that caused my family to leave me behind, my first marriage to a family that did not want me, a war from all sides, and later, an ocean that took me to a new country” (Tan 293). The water separates her from her family, and the flood is blamed for the loss of her home and her family. It takes everything important to her, and later, water forces her across an ocean to a foreign country, stealing her away from her home. After arriving in America, Tan’s characters struggle to hold on to their identity, which is tied to their culture and their past. One of the aunties chooses to marry a Caucasian-American who gives her a new name upon coming to America. She says, “From his palms water always poured, even after we married. He was clean and pleasant. But he smelled like a foreigner, a lamb-smell stink that can never be washed away” (Tan 284). The water pouring from his hands, palms out in a gesture of generosity, symbolizes the American ways with which he believes he is gifting her. But the water, along with the American influences, takes away her sense of self and steals her identity. Water is also used violently as it steals someone’s life. As one family visits the beach, she details, “I remember

that this beach cove was a terrible place, full of wet shadows that chilled us and invisible specks that flew into our eyes and made it hard for us to see the dangers. We were all blind with the newness of this experience: a Chinese family trying to act like a typical American family at the beach” (Tan 130). Water is cloaked with the illusion of serenity, though the air of impending tragedy looms close. The water steals their vision, and they are blinded to the dangers. She continues, describing, “Bing walks one, two, three steps. His little body is moving so quickly, as if he spotted something wonderful by the water’s edge. And I think, He’s going to fall in. I’m expecting it. And just as I think this, his feet are already in the air, in a moment of balance, before he splashes into the sea and disappears without leaving so much as a ripple in the water” (Tan 133). Her brother is drawn to the edge, foolishly believing there might be “something wonderful” there. The narrator can only watch as her ability to act and to stop her brother from falling in is stolen from her. When he falls in, the action is shown with “splashes” and not “even so much as a ripple in the water”. The power of water is in how little effort is needed for it to swallow her brother. In the end, water drowns her brother, stealing him from her and then killing him.

On the contrary, the selected literature also mentions a yearning for the openness of water, and water plays a role in characters' experiences of discovery and renewal. In some examples, the openness of water and the opportunities it offers is sought after as a reprieve from the chaos of reality: "I headed back toward my car, but Chinatown felt claustrophobic, so I drove down to the Wharf; but that reminded me of all the times we came down here to say goodbye to Leon. I wanted to be near water so I headed toward the Marina. When I saw the kites in the air and the sailboats in the distance and the gray mound that was Alcatraz, I felt better" (Ng 123). "Yes, fishing was a pleasure out of this world! There within smell of the salt water, with the bay breezes and the sunshine joining forces to brown one's skin, one could forget about housework, homework, family problems, and all other troubles for at least a part of a day" (J. Wong 100-101). A sense of wonder and newness is attached to these experiences as described by Amy Tan: "I had never seen a sunset like that: a bright orange flame touching the water's edge and then fanning out, warming the sea. When it became dark, the boats turned their yellow orbs on and bounced up and down on the dark shiny water" (Tan 134).

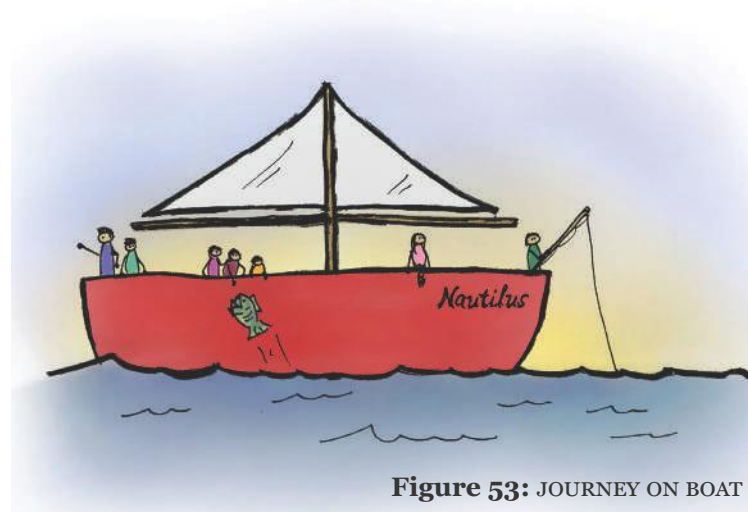


Figure 53: JOURNEY ON BOAT

IN CONCLUSION, water is perceived both positively and negatively in Chinese-American literature. As a motif, it causes a separation and steals from people. On the other hand, people are drawn to the openness of the water and see it as a source of escape from the claustrophobia-inducing urban fabric.

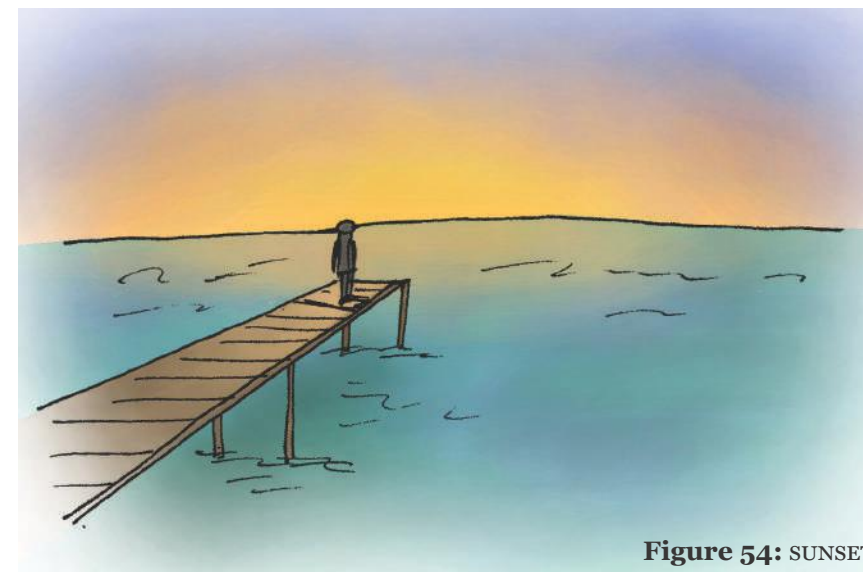


Figure 54: SUNSET

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Provide safe access to water for recreational purposes while respecting its symbolism in Chinese culture.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Incorporate the needs of the community such as small bodies of water in designing spaces of relaxation.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Create a restful yet entertaining recreational destinations with access to water.
 - GUIDELINE:** Prioritize safety of users when interacting with bodies of water.
 - GUIDELINE:** Provide access to recreational destinations featuring scenic views of water.
 - GUIDELINE:** Promote recreational water activities.

Transportation Signatures

Transportation Signatures can be defined by systems and networks of circulation, including modes of transportation and hierarchy of paths, as well as the impact of transportation technologies.

Patterns:

- Network of Paths and Cars
- Road Crossing
- Activity Nodes
 - Public Outdoor Room

network of paths and cars

Concrete symbolizes American culture and is portrayed with oppressive qualities. Ng states, “The overpass from the Holiday Inn to Portsmouth Square cast a broad shadow over the playground” (Ng 6). The “broad shadow” creates a darkness over a place where people gather. The overpass can also be seen as a connection between Chinese and American cultures, symbolized by the Holiday Inn, an American hotel chain and Portsmouth Square, an iconic playground for Chinese-American children. It was designed by Americans, and since it is portrayed negatively in *Bone*, the author argues, through the use of literary devices, that the way American have attempted to bridge the cultural gap are perceived negatively by Chinese Americans and have not been successful. Furthermore, Kingston writes, “Concrete pours out of my mouth to cover the forests with freeways and sidewalks” (Kingston 204). She uses concrete in a metaphor for the English words pouring out of her in a confessional to her mother. Her words are a defense against the things her mother have told her, spoken in Mandarin, which is represented by the forests covered by concrete “freeways and sidewalks”. The suppression of Chinese culture is thus depicted by the silencing of nature by man-made networks of paths.

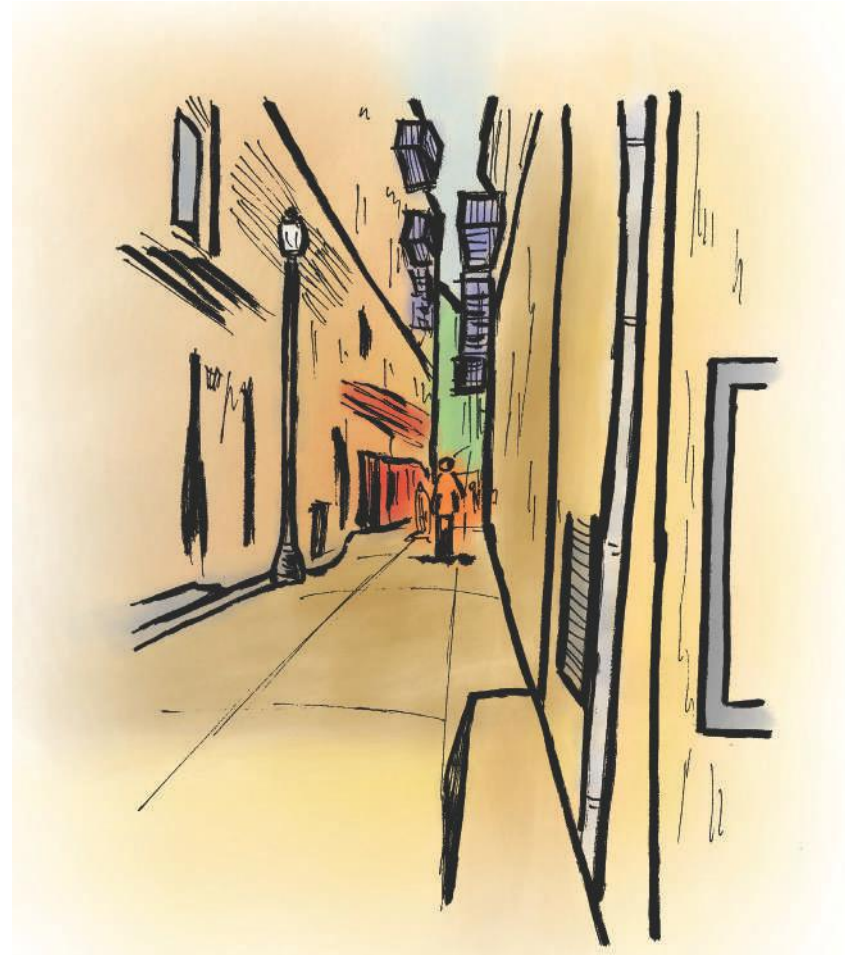


Figure 55: DARK ALLEYWAY

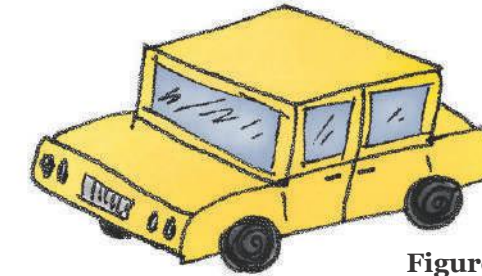


Figure 56: CAR

The network of streets is perceived both positively and negatively in Chinese-American literature. In *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, Wong narrates, “It had left her with the habit of walking, and in moments of loneliness she found comfort and sometimes the answers to problems by wandering through odd parts of San Francisco, a city she loved with an ever increasing affection” (J. Wong 133). Some people find comfort in the act of wandering. Others look to escape and to numb themselves in the frenzy of human activity from the streets. An example can be found in *Bone*, where the narrator says, “And I’ve always wished for the street noises, as if in the traffic of sound I could escape” (Ng 32). She wishes for a reprieve from her parents’ arguments and wishes the sounds of traffic could numb her hearing. In these examples, the streets and the noises serve as an escape and are perceived in a positive light. Conversely, the network of streets are also portrayed negatively as people find themselves lost and confused. Kingston states, “The emigrants confused the gods by diverting their curses, misleading them with crooked streets” (Kingston 5). Tan describes the streets as “narrow and crowded, dark, and dirty” (Tan 297). The way streets are planned not only confuse people, but they

“The streets were familiar, but I felt like a stranger” (Ng 63).

are also not wide enough for the number of people using them. Because the streets are too narrow, not enough sunlight reaches people on the ground due to the obstruction of buildings. Furthermore, Tan’s character explains, “I fled down an alley, past dark, curtained shops and merchants washing the grime off their windows. I sped into the sunlight, into a large street crowded with tourists examining trinkets and souvenirs. I ducked into another dark alley, down another street, up another alley. I ran until it hurt and I realized I had nowhere to go, that I was not running from anything. The alleys contained no escape routes” (Tan 102). Again, the system of streets, especially with alleyways and dead ends, are convoluted and frustrating. The character literally struggles to find a way out of Chinatown but realizes a number of the alleys are dead ends. In addition, this passage describes streets with varying degrees of publicness. In the quiet, under-used alleys, the shops are “curtained” and there is a layer of “grime” over the windows. On the other hand, larger streets are wide enough for sunlight to reach, but the narrator describes them by the users, which are the tourists, and does not feel as if she belongs in those streets.

MAP OF CHINATOWN STREETS



IN SUMMARY, when discussing networks of paths and cars in conjunction with the sense of place, the system of streets can be something a person might wish to escape and also a source of escape. Similarly, Chinese-American literature has portrayed the networks as a source of confusion and displacement for some characters and as a place to find solace and answers for others.

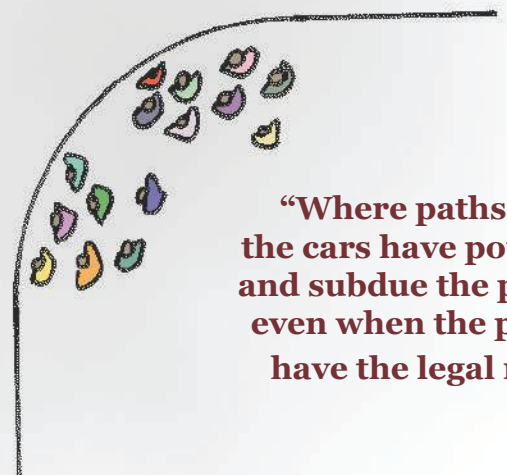
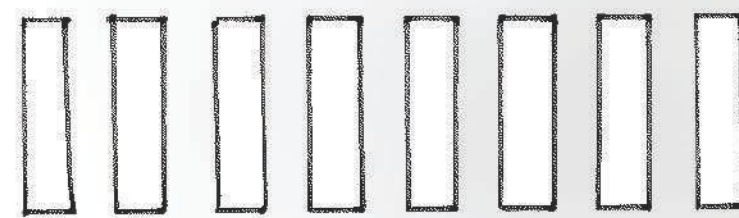
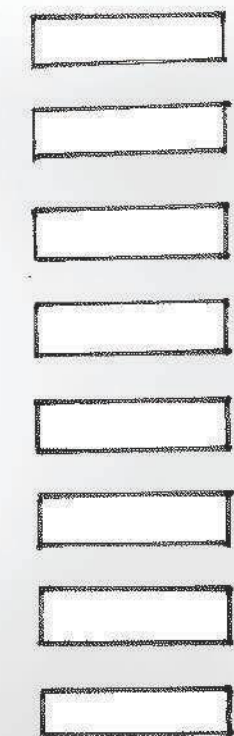
Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Coordinate efficient and consistent circulation systems for pedestrian and vehicular users.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Prioritize the needs and safety of pedestrians.
 - GUIDELINE:** Provide bilingual/ universal and directional signage to minimize confusion.
 - GUIDELINE:** See ROAD CROSSING.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Align streets in an appropriate grid to ensure accessibility.
 - GUIDELINE:** Create varying degrees of publicness to protect people’s exposure to the public realm.
 - GUIDELINE:** Avoid confusing street systems and dead-end alleyways.
 - GUIDELINE:** Design street widths to allow for truck loading.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Accentuate the ground plane to promote an engaging and unique user experience.
 - GUIDELINE:** See SHOPPING STREET, ACTIVITY NODES
- **OBJECTIVE:** Incorporate natural elements to offset oppressive quality of concrete.
 - GUIDELINE:** See ACCESSIBLE GREEN.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure consistent cleaning and maintenance of streets.

road crossing

The safety of pedestrians on road crossings is non-negotiable. One author says, “Mason pulled all four wheels onto the sidewalk and cut the engine” (Ng 139). Drivers, people who can afford cars, often are not people who live in Chinatown since everything inside its boundary is within walking distance. Ng observes, “On Stockton Street, everything seemed speeded up. An Impala ran a red light. The bus lurched to a stop. People moved with the jerky motion of puppets” (Ng 134). Pedestrians are helpless to the reckless decisions and actions of drivers as the Impala runs the red light. As a result, the people, along with the bus, are forced to move in a “jerky” motion. Additionally, there is an underlying wish for vehicles to slow down. “Everything seemed speeded up”, and when cars whiz by sidewalks at high speeds, the safety of the community is at risk. Vehicular speeds must be slowed because the safety of pedestrians, especially as they cross streets, is paramount.



“Where paths cross roads, the cars have power to frighten and subdue the people walking, even when the people walking have the legal right-of-way”

Figure 58: PEDESTRIANS ON STREET CORNER



Figure 59: ROAD CROSSING

*“Once upon a time the world was so thick with ghosts,
I could hardly breathe; I could hardly walk,
limping my way around the White Ghosts and their cars”*
(Kingston 97).

THE AIR that is “thick with ghosts” could be interpreted as a metaphor for the pollution cars emit into the environment that makes it hard for people to breathe.

*“I watched everything carefully as
we drove up Washington. The streets
were familiar, but I felt like a stranger.
On Stockton, we stopped at a red light;
an old woman dragged a little girl across
the street. They passed so close I saw the
child’s crooked collar, her blue barrette”*
(Ng 63).



Figure 60: PORTSMOUTH SQUARE PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

“She breathed health from the air, though it was full of gasoline fumes”
(Kingston 147).

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Improve safety of road crossings to foster a pedestrian-friendly public realm.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Prioritize the safety of pedestrians.
 - GUIDELINE:** Enforce heavier fines for reckless drivers.
 - GUIDELINE:** Employ traffic-calming measures by installing tactile warning strips and/or speed cushions to slow vehicular speeds.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement effective signage to warn drivers of pedestrians crossing.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement effective, bilingual, and universal signage to warn pedestrians of oncoming vehicles.
 - GUIDELINE:** Mark all pedestrian road crossings.
 - GUIDELINE:** Install bollards on pedestrian-only streets.
 - GUIDELINE:** Raise road crossings or enhance paving to alert drivers to pedestrians.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Assess and evaluate the needs of pedestrians.
 - GUIDELINE:** With considerations towards the intensity of pedestrian traffic, allow enough time on signals for pedestrians to cross streets.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement diagonal pedestrian crossings in appropriate intersections to alleviate heavy pedestrian traffic.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement mid-block crossings where appropriate.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement directional and bilingual/ universal signage.

activity nodes



Figure 61: ACTIVITY ON STOCKTON STREET

WHEN BUSY STREETS SUCH AS GRANT AVENUE are too narrow, people walking around Chinatown succumb to claustrophobia. Centralize streets teeming with users to control the amount of activity and sounds to certain areas of a community. This way, there would be a balance between busy places and quiet areas.

Chinese operas are a crucial part of Chinese culture. Wong claims, “Some of the old inhabitants of Chinatown came regularly every night, for the opera was the center of their social life” (J. Wong 215). Even as a child, “she delighted in the brilliant costumes, the bizarre make-up, snow-white or jet-black artificial hair and beards, and jeweled headdresses” (J. Wong 215). The younger generation should be exposed to traditional Chinese culture. In this case, they should be given the chance to learn and observe traditional Chinese operas since the performances are a cultural cornerstone and a major source of entertainment. Within small communities, the establishment of a theater is important in facilitating social interactions and celebrating cultural diversity.

“I could hear the cymbals and bugles and gongs and the shrieking of the Cantonese opera from down the alley”
(Ng 174).

“His store was on Grant Avenue, the main thoroughfare of Chinatown”
(J. Wong 213).



Figure 62: GREAT STAR THEATER

public outdoor room

Public outdoor rooms are partially enclosed spaces where people can congregate. A well-known example of this is found in Portsmouth Square. Ng describes, “I followed the sliver of sunlight along the east side, crowded with grandmothers and young children. A group of old men stood at the base of the stairs playing cards... When I walked past the chess table, more old guys turned, more stares. I never liked being the only girl on the upper level of the park” (Ng 6). “The truth was I hated the thought of him hanging around with those fleabags at Portsmouth Square” (Ng 14). There are two separate groups: grandmothers with children and “old guys”. The men gathering together for mentally stimulating activities such as chess and cards, but are portrayed very negatively as “fleabags”. As the narrator walks past them, she feels uneasy as they stare at her. She stands out as the “only girl on the upper level of the park”. She even mentions instances where men have propositioned her in the park, and she calls them “pathetic” (Ng 6). Thus, the narrator has a negative perception of Portsmouth Square because of the men who hang around the area. Another public outdoor room is described in *The Joy Luck Club*. Tan writes, “At the end of our two-block alley was a small sandlot playground with swings and slides well-shined down the middle with use. The

play area was bordered by wood-slat benches where old-country people sat cracking roasted watermelon seeds with their golden teeth and scattering the husks to an impatient gathering of gurgling pigeons” (Tan 90). The playground equipment is well-used, yet there are no descriptions of children playing on them. The only people shown are the “old-country people” using the playground as a gathering space to socialize with others in the community. The character finds herself using the small park as a shortcut and playing chess with the old men more often than she uses the playground equipment. The author continues, “I detoured through the playground at the end of our alley. I saw a group of old men, two seated across a folding table playing a game of chess, others smoking pipes, eating peanuts, and watching” (Tan 96). Again, games such as chess are mentioned as a unifying activity that also allow people to converse with one another and socialize while playing. In this example, only two are seated across from each other and playing chess. The others simply observe. When designing public outdoor rooms, it is important to create different areas for different groups together and also to designate adequate space for people to watch the action unfold.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE lacks a sufficient amount of seating for people playing board games or cards. As a result, people gathering in playgrounds bring their own stools or crates to sit on.

Figure 63: PORTSMOUTH SQUARE GAMBLERS





IN CONCLUSION, public outdoor rooms allow a chance for people to socialize, but in some cases, they also create an uncomfortable space for both females and children when large groups of older men gather.

Figure 64: PORTSMOUTH SQUARE MUSICIANS

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Using density rings and public outdoor rooms, centralize activity nodes to form a gradient and balance of activity.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Identify the major arterial streets for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Establish and implement a gradient of activity where appropriate through planning practices with consideration towards existing uses.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Identify places such as public outdoor rooms in the community that serve as gathering spaces.
 - GUIDELINE:** Employ design elements such as trellises to create the illusion of an outdoor room.
 - GUIDELINE:** Through design, arrange seating and planting areas to create separate spaces for different groups gathering.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Design interim public plazas that incorporate art installations, performance and activity areas, and space for vendors and markets.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Modify and enhance the design of public outdoor rooms to accommodate different groups of users to cultivate comfortable and inviting gathering places.

Behavioral Signatures

Behavioral signatures show how people shape their personal space, which include the home, gardens, and private spaces.

Patterns:

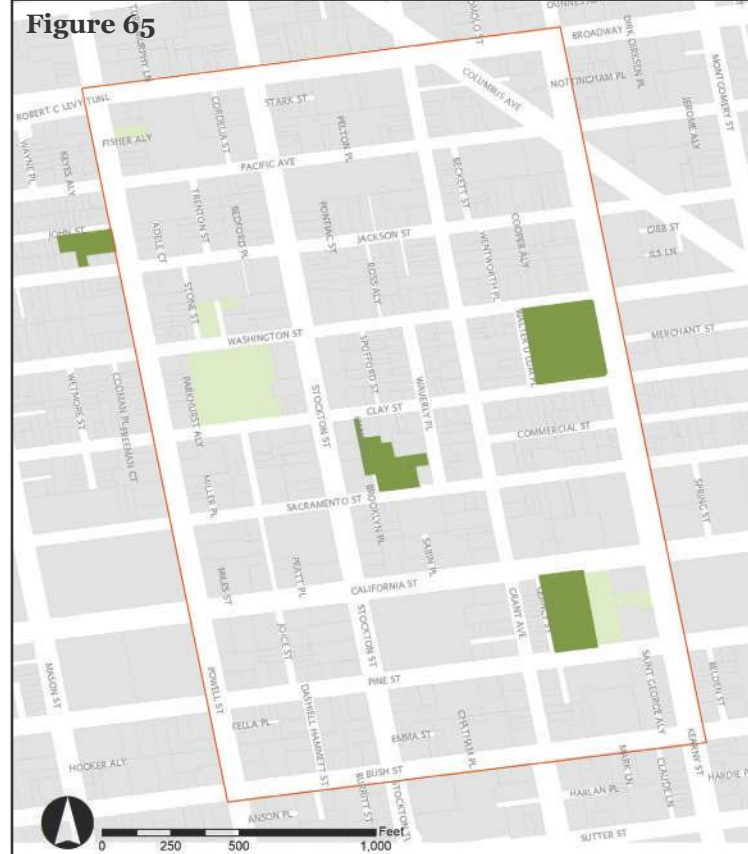
- Accessible Green
 - Garden Growing Wild
- Stair Seats
- House for a Small Family
 - Degrees of Publicness

accessible green

Green spaces are used as a place for relaxation and fun where people allow themselves to be carefree. In a scene where Wong visits a park with her siblings, she narrates, “there was a wonderful sloping lawn. Jade Snow and her sister and brother loved to start at the top of the incline and roll over and over as fast as they could until they came to the bottom; with the smell of grass on their clothes and in their disordered black hair, they would lie there breathless and laughing, blinking in the bright sun” (J. Wong 77). The green space is described as “wonderful”, and her brother “loved” playing there. The topography captivates the children as they roll down the slope, adding excitement to the enjoyable experience.

NG’S CHARACTER IS SUBJECTED to feelings of claustrophobia in Chinatown. She states, “Outside, the light was aggressive. Every shining surface caught the sun: the chain link fence, car mirrors, windows, streets signs, a man’s watch, parking meters, water running in the gutter, the flash of a woman’s glasses. I felt chased by it; the light hurt my eyes and I kept blinking” (Ng 134). The harshness of the urban fabric is reflected in the interaction between sunlight and materials such as metal and glass. The glare of light physically hurts her eyes.

GREEN OPEN SPACE IN CHINATOWN



She seeks a reprieve as it chases her and she feels harassed by it. Other writers also share this feeling. Wong even mentions, “Sometimes they played in a nearby empty lot where it was interesting to explore all kinds of weeds and bugs. Only one other place in Jade Snow’s early experience had any growing plants” (J. Wong 5). This example continues to show a lack of and need for accessible green spaces.



Figure 66: GREEN OPEN SPACE

garden growing wild

Along with a wish for traditional open spaces such as lawns and grassy hills, Chinese-American authors have also highlighted a yearning for gardens grown wildly. Wong says, “Sometimes they played in a nearby empty lot where it was interesting to explore all kinds of weeds and bugs. Only one other place in Jade Snow’s early experience had any growing plants” (J. Wong 5), showing people’s curiosity for exploration and a fascination with nature. The juxtaposition of traditional grassy open spaces with landscapes designed by Americans for Chinese is evident when Tan writes, “Why did they choose only the worst Chinese parts for the inside? Why didn’t they build gardens and ponds instead? Oh, here and there was the look of a famous ancient cave or a Chinese opera. But inside it was always the same cheap stuff” (Tan 297). Chinese communities are dissatisfied with the landscapes Americans have designed for them. When Kingston ponders, “Will American flowers smell good now?” (Kingston 107), she establishes a clear distinction between Chinese and American landscapes in the minds of the Chinese. Places were designed to imitate what American believed landscapes in China looks like, but instead, they fell short. Tan voices the

wish for accessible green spaces such as gardens and ponds while conveying how designed spaces forced to look natural are negatively perceived as the “same cheap stuff”.



Figure 67: WILD GARDEN

Typically, wild landscapes are considered a product of neglect. Tan writes, “I looked out the window and saw the calla lilies had fallen and turned brown, the daisies had been crushed down by their own weight, the lettuce gone to seed. Runner weeds were growing between the flagstone walkways that wound between the planter boxes. The whole thing had grown wild from months of neglect” (Tan 215). The plants in her garden are in various states of growth. The lilies are decomposing, the daisies have grown too big, and the lettuce is seeding to reproduce. The weeds are wild, and because the landscape is imperfect, the narrator adopts the perception of seeing wildness as neglect. The results of this mindset is shown through the actions of her narrator: “I quickly walked down to the garden shed, looking for pesticides and weed killer, as if the amount left in the bottle, the expiration date, anything would give me some idea of what was happening in my life. And then I put the bottle down. I had the sense someone was watching me and laughing” (Tan 215). She changes her decision as she realizes her battle to suppress the weeds is pointless. In actuality, the various stages of the plants hint at a need for gardens to be self-sustaining, and

the wildness embodies a wish for more natural, less controlled and regimented landscapes. The wildness of the landscape shows a wish for a specific style of garden, but it also symbolizes the Chinese side of the Chinese-American identity. In literary criticisms of the novel, many have asserted the weeds symbolize how the Chinese have acclimated to a new country and learned to thrive. The character works against the weeds, clinging onto her American identity, but it doesn’t work. The weeds, which symbolize her Chinese identity, always returns, refusing to be ignored or silenced. In continuation, when she later learns to stand up to her soon-to-be ex-husband, she explains, “That night I dreamt I was wandering through the garden. The trees and bushes were covered with mist... And below the heimongmong, all along the ground, were weeds already spilling out over the edges, running wild in every direction” (Tan 219-220). In her subconscious, she accepts and embraces the Chinese side of her identity, allowing it to finally flourish. This challenges the idea that wild gardens are a result of neglect, when instead, they can be perceived as beautiful.

stair seats

Thus, according to a review of Chinese-American literature, there is a lack of and need for more accessible green spaces. Spaces should be designed with input from the Chinese community to avoid creating spaces that come off as synthetic and harsh. Open spaces act as a contrast to the sharpness of city buildings, providing a place of solace and reprieve. According

to the literature, people in Chinese communities find variations in topography challenging and exciting. Gardens, especially ones grown wildly in a less traditional and formal manner, and ponds might also be preferred. Most importantly, the landscape should be designed to appeal to people's curiosity and fascination with nature.

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Create more active accessible green spaces to foster a welcoming and use-friendly experience.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Increase the number of accessible green spaces.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Ensure the accessibility of green spaces to users.
 - GUIDELINE:** Locate more parks on street level to improve accessibility, visibility, and usage.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Evaluate and respond to the needs of users.
 - GUIDELINE:** Advocate for community input in the design process.
 - GUIDELINE:** Align design with principles used in Chinese gardens and open spaces.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Design dynamic and inviting landscapes.
 - GUIDELINE:** Diversify the types of green spaces through varying textures and materials.
 - GUIDELINE:** Balance different degrees of openness.
 - GUIDELINE:** Provide adequate seating areas and gathering spaces. See PUBLIC OUTDOOR ROOM.
 - GUIDELINE:** Express cultural identity in designs by adding elements of Chinese gardens using input from the community.

“I sat down on the stoop to wait.

Mah would say I looked like a beggar girl,

but I didn't care. It felt good to sit in the sun for a while” (Ng 138).

Chinese consider people sitting on the front steps to be beggars, so people avoid using stair seats. In the instances where stair seats are mentioned in the selected literature, they are used as a place of rest as someone is waiting. In *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan narrates, “My breath came out like angry smoke. It was cold. I sat down on an upturned plastic pail next to a stack of empty boxes, cupping my chin with my hands, thinking hard” (Tan 102). It is used as a place to think, a safe place where children might find themselves as they dread returning home. It is a transition area between public and private space. In other cases, a few steps at the act as a vantage point to look out on the street. People sitting on these steps create an inviting environment, encouraging personal interactions. Jade Snow Wong uses stair seats in an example, and the negative connotations associated with stair seats are tied to her character's humiliating experience. As she sits on the stairs, she incites the curiosity and questions from passersby. The seats then act as a stage, allowing people to watch her, as she waits for the man she stole from to return. In effect, the sunlight, as it grows hotter and hotter on her, is then a substitute for a spotlight. These instances occur in both day and night, suggesting the flexible use of stairs as seats.

STAIR SEATS ARE A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF DESIGN although its users are traditionally perceived negatively by Chinese people. Chinese Americans, on the other hand, are open to using stair seats as shown in the excerpts above. Stair seats are an opportunity and can be used as a transition area between public and private space. They also provide a space for people to rest or think and can be used to facilitate community interactions.



Figure 68: STAIR SEATS

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Provide stair seats as a method of facilitating personal interactions.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Explore the perception of stair seats as an opportunity.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Encourage the use of stair seats where appropriate.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Dedicate areas for stair seats with varying degrees of exposure to the public realm.

house for a small family

IN CHINATOWN, most buildings are zoned for both residential and commercial use. Apartments sometimes overlook stores, restaurants, and busy streets with varying degrees of publicness.

DEGREES OF PUBLICNESS:



“My father lived a short time with Mah in a small one-bedroom overlooking Pacific Avenue. What I remember about that apartment is the traffic sounds and the constant rumble of Tommie Hom’s sweatshop downstairs” (Ng 48).

“We lived on Waverly Place, in a warm, clean, two-bedroom flat that sat above a small Chinese bakery” (Tan 90).

“The Wongs lived at the back of their father’s overall factory on Stockton between Clay and Sacramento streets. The factory-home was huge” (J. Wong 3).

There is a great difference between a house and a home. The sense of belonging, which this project addresses, is fundamentally linked with the idea of home. Problems of displacement are common in Chinese communities. Characters in *The Joy Luck Club* personify this feeling: “I could sense the unspoken terrors that surrounded our house, the ones that chased my mother until she hid in a secret dark corner of her mind. And still they found her. I watched, over the years, as they devoured her, piece by piece, until she disappeared and became a ghost” (Tan 105). The narrator’s mother, who has moved to America and had her name changed by her Caucasian-American husband, is displaced. Due to a clash of cultures, she struggles to negotiate her identity, and the two sides of her eventually destroy her “until she disappeared and became a ghost”. Her identity is lost, and she fails to establish roots in a new country, resulting in her isolation from the Chinese community depicted metaphorically by the “terrors” that have her surrounded. Amy Tan defines sense of place using both the literal place and what ties people to that place. She writes, “Maybe it was seeing you as a baby, how you looked so much like me,

and this made me dissatisfied with my life. I wanted everything for you to be better. I wanted you to have the best circumstances, the best character. I didn’t want you to regret anything. And that’s why I named you Waverly. It was the name of the street we lived on. And I wanted you to think, This is where I belong. But I also knew if I named you after this street, soon you would grow up, leave this place, and take a piece of me with you” (Tan 303). Waverly’s name and identity is associated with Waverly Place because her mother, who was born in China, wanted to gift her with a sense of belonging she herself will never be able to find. The sense of belonging runs deeper than a place where someone is born. Sense of place is defined by the personal interactions, experiences, and the people of a place. The narrator accepts her daughter will grow up to leave her, but she strives to embed a piece of herself with her daughter no matter where she might end up. With these roots, her daughter might be less susceptible to feelings of placelessness. Ergo, Tan’s example asserts sense of place is defined by the people and experiences associated with the place and also by the sense of belonging.

THERE ARE ABSENCES of sounds, smells, and sights of the world outside the house in the example of the factory-home. Since the living quarters are placed in the back, it is tucked away and isolated from the rest of their community. Other apartments with views of the street are more exposed to the public dimension. Sound pollution, which can possibly be alleviated through design, is a common issue that arises in these settings. In the selected Chinese-American literature, the descriptions of houses for small families are portrayed negatively. Ng writes, “He walked around the apartment, taking an inventory of everything that had broken down... A jammed door remained stuck, a leaking faucet wasn’t used. We piled on sweaters when the radiator was broken” (Ng 177). This depiction of the apartment conveys the family’s low economic status by highlighting the things that had to remain broken because they could not afford to have them fixed. Tan narrates, “The Hsus’ house feels heavy with greasy odors. Too many Chinese meals cooked in a too small kitchen, too many once fragrant smells compressed onto a thin layer of

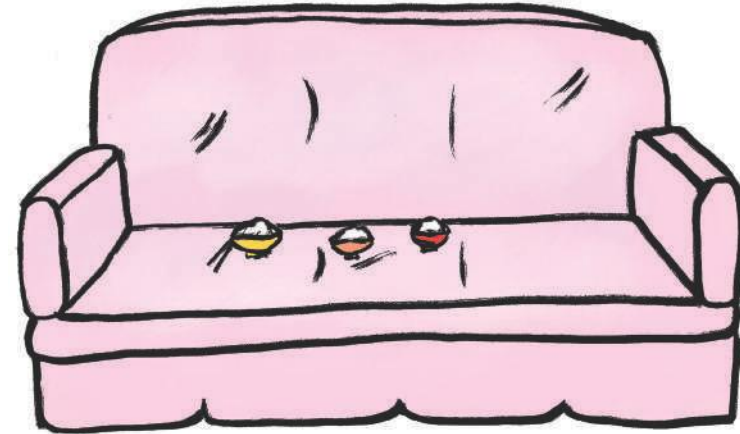


Figure 69: COUCH

invisible grease” (Tan 15). The kitchen, the center of the house, is “too small”. There is not enough space to accommodate the amount of activity and use. The lack of air circulation results in the heaviness of stale smells in the air, which feels “greasy”. Designing houses with an adequate number of windows will help ensure good air circulation. This change, along with creating houses with larger kitchens to reflect the role of food and cooking in Chinese culture and traditions, will affect the health of Chinese communities.

The role of popular culture is used to depict the negotiation of a Chinese-American identity. Kingston asks, “What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?” (Kingston 6). As children, Chinese Americans struggle to define their identity. They hear stories from their parents and learn about Chinese traditions, but they also attend school with Caucasian Americans. Kingston continues, “Whenever we did frivolous things, we used up energy; we flew high kites. We children came up off the ground over the melting cones our parent brought home from work and the American movie on New Year’s Day” (Kingston 6). American culture enters the Chinese household in the form of popular culture, and the exposure of Chinese Americans to popular culture influences how they define their hyphenated identity. Ng narrates an example in *Bone*: “Nina called their parenting chop suey, a little of everything. There were nights we had to speak Chinese at the dinner table and there were other nights we could laugh and talk English all we wanted and even take our bowls out to the front room and eat while watching *I Love Lucy*” (Ng 107). Parents have a great effect on the identity of their children,



Figure 70: TELEVISION SET

and the switch between the two languages spoken at the dinner table shows how both Chinese parents and Chinese-American children struggle with negotiating their identity, especially in homes where Chinese and American cultures often clash. The author compares it to “chop suey”, a mix of both Chinese and American cultures. Furthermore, Chinese traditionally eat rice out of bowls, and when the sisters eat out of them “while watching *I Love Lucy*”, it personifies the idea of Chinese-American children being fed Chinese cultures and traditions by their parents, while their minds are fed by the exposure to popular culture in homes.

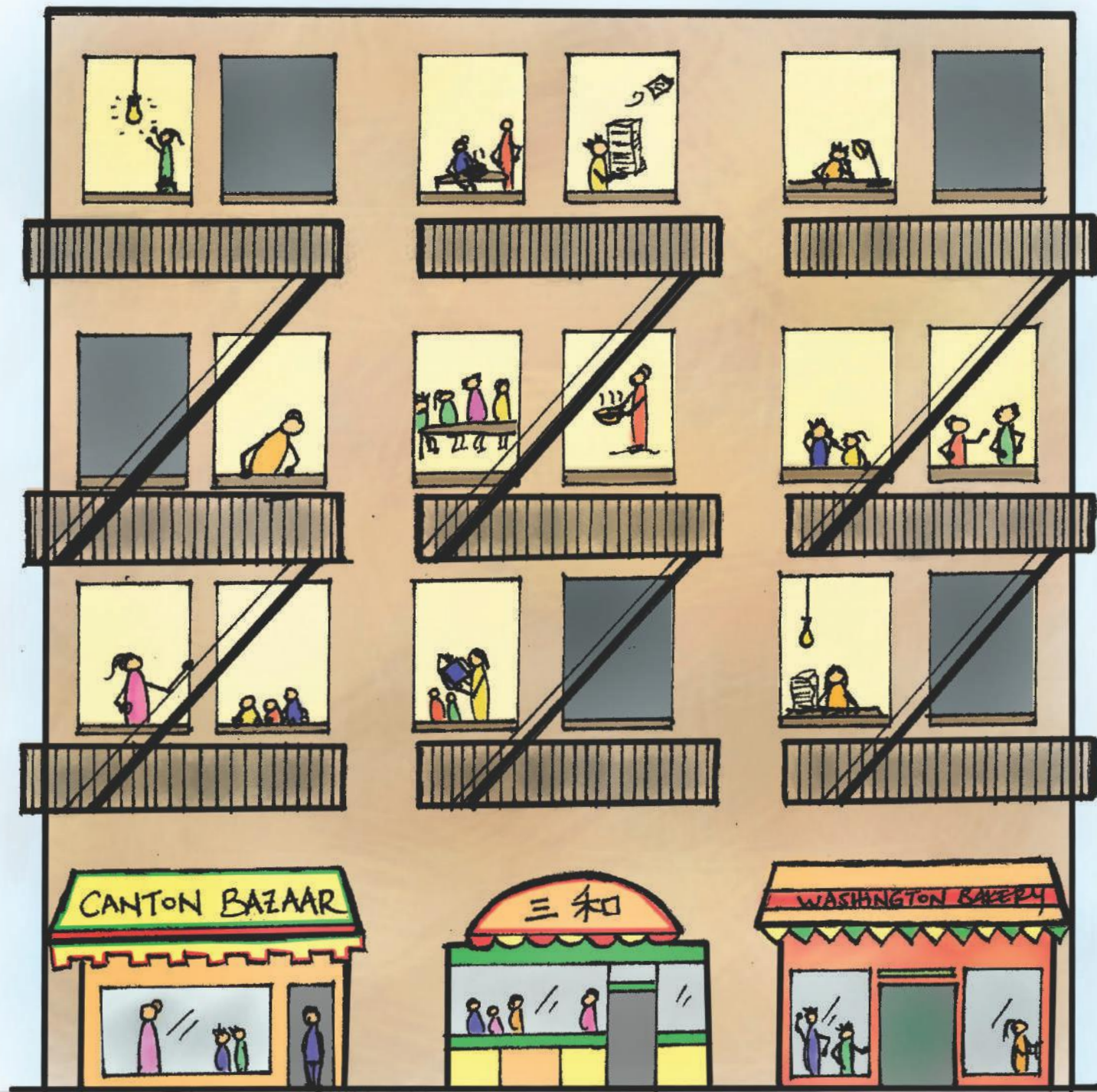


Figure 71: APARTMENT BUILDING SECTION

**“I remember the three of us in this room together,
giggling and crying and fighting and making up.
Four thin walls and a world of feeling” (Ng 126).**

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Provide suitable housing for all families to promote positive interactions and cultivate a unique sense of place.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Advocate for the fundamental needs of families through community input in design.
 - GUIDELINE:** Provide a sufficient amount of affordable housing to meet the current and projected needs of the community.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Prioritize the health of families.
 - GUIDELINE:** Ensure adequate ventilation is in place.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Design houses with various degrees of publicness.
 - GUIDELINE:** Facilitate community interactions by orienting balconies to face streets.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Allocate space to accommodate the amount of activity and use in certain aspects of the household.

Signatures *of* Personal Action

Signatures of Personal Action are places designated for the purpose of entertainment or recreation. It also includes unique places, fantasy and mysterious landscapes, and exotic landscapes.

Patterns:

- Children in the City
 - Adventure Playground
 - Secret Place
- High Places

children in the city

Children need a place in the city, and it is the job of designers to create places that attract the attention of children and engage their interests. Many existing playgrounds are devoid of activity and sit mostly unused. Children need a place they can play, a place they can express their identity and interact with others in their community in order to develop their own sense of place and belonging. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND and SECRET PLACE are two patterns that address this issue and provide a place for children in the city.

THE SELECTED LITERATURE portrays how Chinese-American children perceive the landscape. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* follows the childhood of Jade Snow Wong as she grows up in San Francisco's Chinatown. *The Woman Warrior* is composed of vignettes that provide readers with snapshots of pivotal moments in Maxine Hong Kingston's childhood. *The Joy Luck Club* gives each character a unique voice, and Amy Tan writes from the perspective of the characters as children and also as adults. Fae Myenne Ng's *Bone* offers flashbacks into the narrator's upbringing. Thus, all four novels provide criticisms of urban forms from the perspectives of children.



Figure 72: EMPTY PLAYGROUND
AT ST. MARY'S SQUARE

adventure playground

P “She loved the fun of getting close to the danger and the thrill of getting away” (Ng 127).
 Playgrounds are scattered across the city, but children are drawn to places that pose a sense of challenge and adventure. In this regard, adventure playgrounds are determined through its use by children and do not necessarily include places labeled as “parks”. One author states, “most of the time she was playing with the other children in the factory or on the street” (J. Wong 29), and “At the end of our two-block alley was a small sandlot playground with swings and slides well-shined down the middle with use. The play area was bordered by wood-slat benches where old-country people sat... The best playground, however, was the dark alley itself. It was crammed with daily mysteries and adventures” (Tan 90). The darkness of the alley offers excitement, giving children a sought-after thrill, but Tan continues, “Like most of the other Chinese children who played in the back alleys of restaurants and curio shops, I didn’t think we were poor” (Tan 90). Neither the children nor the parents consider playing in alleyways a problem. This reflects on the economic status of the Chinatown population and its effects on the accessibility of playgrounds. It could also go on to explain why existing playgrounds

do not appeal to or provide for the needs of children in Chinese communities. In the alleys, fire escapes are specifically used in lieu of standard playground equipment. Kingston describes this experience: “I looked out and, seeing no one in the schoolyard, ran outside to climb the fire escape upside down, hanging on to the metal stairs with fingers and toes. I did a flip off the fire escape and ran across the schoolyard” (Kingston 174). She uses the bars and rungs of fire escapes the way kids play on monkey bars. She hangs upside down and even does a “flip off the fire escape”, chasing after the element of risk. Children need to feel challenged, and in this case, they need to feel as if they are pushing their own physical limits. The underlying thrill of playing in unorthodox landscapes is shown in these examples. The fact that children do not turn to places designated as a “park” to play depicts a need for designers to create parks that appeal to children’s sense of adventure. In summary, adventure playgrounds feed the need for challenge and adventure in youth, and when existing parks do not provide for this, children will look to other places, such as alleys and fire escapes.



Figure 73: FIRE ESCAPE MONKEY BARS

Design Recommendations:

- GOAL:** Create safe, inviting, yet challenging playgrounds that appeal to children.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Shift children’s use of dangerous landscape elements as play equipment towards modified playgrounds.
 - **GUIDELINE:** Identify children’s playground needs.
 - **GUIDELINE:** Modify existing play areas to respond to children’s playground needs.
 - **GUIDELINE:** Ensure children’s accessibility to play areas.

secret place



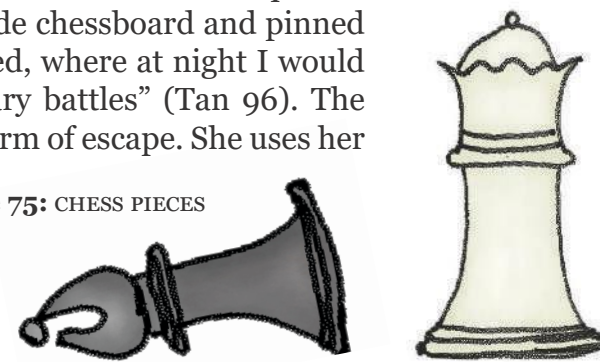
Figure 74: ICE CREAM ON FIRE ESCAPE

The secret place is where a child's need for concealment can be expressed. It is a place kept separate from the rest of the family, where things are "to be lost, and then revealed" (Alexander 930). They are also places that allow children to push the limits of their imagination.

An example of a secret place can be found in *The Joy Luck Club*. Tan narrates, "That night, in my room, I gorged myself. I had stolen a half-gallon of strawberry ice cream from the freezer and I forced spoonful after spoonful down my throat... I sat hunched on the fire escape landing outside my bedroom, retching back into the ice cream container. And I remember wondering why it was that eating something good could make me feel so terrible, while vomiting something terrible could make me feel so good" (Tan 167). Her room affords her the privacy she needs to hide her parentally-disapproved actions. It is the safe space where she is comfortable and where she allows herself to gorge on stolen ice cream. Later, the fire escape is revealed as a secondary secret space. The consequences of her actions, followed by guilt and shame, catch up with her as she throws up back into the container. The secret space she creates for herself is a place she can indulge in forbidden things and also a place she can feel safe to suffer the consequences of her actions without the humiliation of other people finding out. In a moment of self-realization, she wonders why "vomiting something terrible" could make her feel good. After she vomits, she loses a part of her childish innocence, believing that she can eat as much ice cream as she wants

without consequences, but it is also in this secret place that she begins to understand the reality of being human, thus showing how something can be lost and then gained. Another kind of secret place is not literal like a room or the fire escape if a building. Instead, it takes place in a person's imagination. Wong writes, "Jade Snow found in eager reading her greatest source of joy and escape... Temporarily she forgot who she was, or the constant requirements of Chinese life... for in these books there was absolutely nothing resembling her own life" (J. Wong 69). The character finds "joy and escape" in the act of reading and diving into a world that is completely different from her reality. The purpose of her secret place is to provide her with a reprieve from the demands of her reality. She becomes so enraptured with this drastically different world of literature she forgets her responsibilities and even "who she was". Children need secret places as a sanctuary and escape from reality, and imagination can also be used as a source of empowerment. Tan narrates, "I loved the secrets I found within the sixty-four black and white squares. I carefully drew a handmade chessboard and pinned it to the wall next to my bed, where at night I would stare for hours at imaginary battles" (Tan 96). The character uses chess as a form of escape. She uses her

Figure 75: CHESS PIECES



imagination to fight the battles on the board, which provides her with a sense of control as she asserts her power over imagined foes, a substitute for the opposing forces that are a part of her reality. As she wins these battles, she gains a sense of empowerment and a strength to eventually face her reality.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS IDEA, Kingston describes, “The day was a great eye, and it was not paying much attention to me now. I could disappear with the sun; I could turn quickly sideways and slip into a different world. It seemed I could run faster at this time, and by evening I would be able to fly. As the afternoon wore on we could run into the forbidden places” (Kingston 174-175). The sun, the “great eye”, symbolizes the eyes people, especially adults, scrutinizing her every move. When no one watches, she finds the freedom to escape “into a different world” where she is able to test and push the limits of her strength and her imagination. She can “run faster”, and as the sun, the eye, completely disappears, she can fly. Her imagination takes off with full force, and she finds a power she didn’t have when people were watching. Secret places are necessary for children to have the space and privacy to learn about themselves while empowering them to develop their own sense of identity.

Design Recommendations:

- GOAL:** Establish secret places where children have the space to develop their identity.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Advocate for secret places in appropriate contexts.
 - GUIDELINE:** Inform the public on the importance of secret places to a child’s development.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Foster a safe, engaging and inviting environment in secret places.
 - GUIDELINE:** Implement safety measures.
 - GUIDELINE:** Create secret places with varying degrees of publicness to respect children’s need for privacy while ensuring their safety.
 - GUIDELINE:** Diversify forms and elements used in design to create an entertaining and restful environment.



Figure 76: VIEW FROM TIANHOU TEMPLE

high places



Figure 77: VIEW OF PORTSMOUTH SQUARE BRIDGE

People are drawn to grand, spreading views, and the act of climbing provides them with a challenge and a sense of adventure. Wong describes, “Then a right turn and a climb up steep steps brought them breathless to the top of Telegraph Hill and to a magnificent view of sparkling San Francisco Bay” (J. Wong 77). From a great distance, the sense of belonging can sometimes be stronger as it gives people a new and wondrous sense of place. Ng writes, “we moved down the alley into another one of Tommie’s buildings. The rooftop, with its view of the Bay Bridge, was the best thing about it” (Ng 49). People naturally seek high places, and it can be an escape from reality. A character in Tan’s novel exemplifies this: “I rose up into the air and flew out the window. Higher and higher, above the alley, over the tops of tiled roofs, where I was gathered up by the wind and pushed up toward the night sky until everything below me disappeared and I was alone” (Tan 103). Height and distance, along with the wind, a force of nature, allow her to create the illusion of distancing herself from the world below. Her newfound ability to fly “over the tops of tiled roofs” and “up towards the night sky” gifts her with a newfound power and freedom.

Design Recommendations:

GOAL: Allocate high places as opportunities for people to experience the city in new and exciting ways.

- **OBJECTIVE:** Locate high places with unique, vibrant, and engaging views.
 - GUIDELINE:** Enhance under-used high places such as balconies and rooftop terraces to provide opportunities for attractive, welcoming, and exciting recreational destinations.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Provide efficient and appealing methods of access to high places for all users.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Create dynamic environments with unique and intriguing elements.
 - GUIDELINE:** Ensure visibility of views from high places.
 - GUIDELINE:** Frame views with user-oriented design.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Prioritize safety of users.

designing with patterns



Using an analysis of landscape patterns in literature, **Figure 79** (left) depicts a redesign of the existing Chinatown neighborhood. Here, all the patterns are implemented, and existing landmarks are preserved. Notably, more green spaces are created by modifying unused rooftops. The green spaces created for the community are a response to the needs established in literature. The diversity of green spaces include lawns with rolling hills, courtyard gardens grown wildly, balcony gardens, and a playground where ideas in Chinese-American literature are expressed through design. Housing needs are addressed by the perimeter of high-density housing located near amenities. The centralized streets of markets and shops on Stockton are preserved, as are the rings of decreasing density of commercial buildings surrounding it. Building murals are distributed across the neighborhood to foster more active streets, especially at night when stores close. Niches are established to give children a place in the city.

Figure 78: CHINATOWN LAMPOST

Figure 79: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN OF CHINATOWN REIMAGINED

I raised a daughter, watching her from another shore” (Tan 286).

In **ACCESS TO WATER**, the ocean literally and symbolically separates China and America. Imagined landscapes, as well as the landscapes of China, are described to be wild and untamed by Chinese-American authors. In comparison, American landscapes are described to induce claustrophobia. (See **ACCESSIBLE GREEN**). Jade Snow Wong notably describes her impression of the vast lawn areas in American parks. The literary analysis in this book can be interpreted and used symbolically when designing cultural landscapes for Chinese Americans. A literal chessboard could be used to depict how one of Amy Tan’s characters use it as a **SECRET PLACE**.

Design elements such as plant materials, hardscape, water features, etc. can be used to signify the Pacific Ocean. Plantings can be further used to depict the wildness of Chinese landscapes in juxtaposition with the manicured lawns and harsh hardscapes of American landscapes. In continuation with literary symbolism, Chinese-American landscapes can be located in between the Chinese and the American sides as a representation of something new that was created by drawing influences from both sides. The design can include the implementation of some of the patterns mentioned in this book.



Figure 80: DIAGRAM OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

designing with patterns



Figure 81: CHINATOWN STREET SCENE (ABOVE)
Figure 82: RAINBOW PRESCHOOL MURAL (RIGHT)

To articulate the **IDENTITY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD**, employ the use of decorative elements such as lampposts, pagoda-style architecture, tiled eaves, and unique color combinations. In order to design for cultural neighborhoods, use elements that effectively convey the identity of the place. Bright and bold colors of buildings and signs evoke the distinct character of the place (See **Figure 81**). It is imperative to avoid cultural appropriation, and community participation is the first step in this process. Provide creative opportunities for the community to express cultural influences through art, such as in murals (See **Figure 82**). Other design elements include strings of red lanterns along the Chinatown streets and sacred or cultural symbols such as statues of lions or dragons. (See **SACRED SITES**).

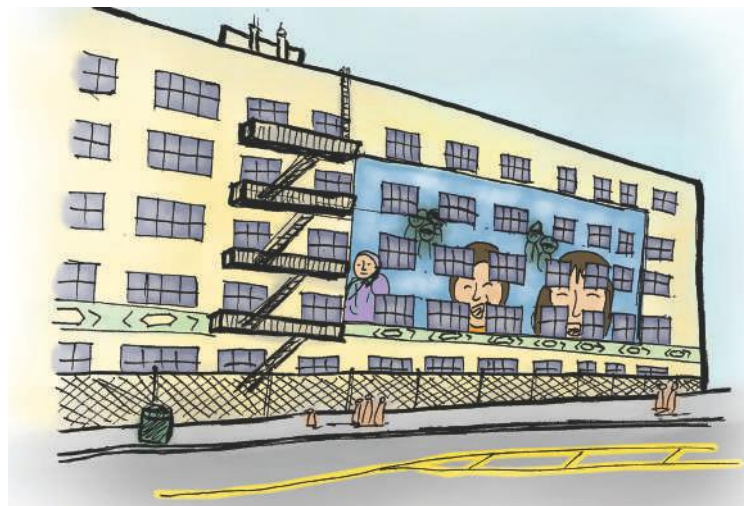


Figure 83: YELLOW PAGODA BUILDING



designing with patterns



Balconies along the side of buildings are a design opportunity to incorporate green spaces, especially **GARDENS GROWN WILD**, with architecture. Balconies also serve as **HIGH PLACES**, providing people with a view of the streets while also serving as a partially enclosed **SECRET PLACE**. Including cultural design elements, such as distinct patterns on balconies in this case, can further strengthen the **IDENTITY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD**.

Figure 84: GARDEN ON BALCONY

Figure 85: RESTAURANT WITH BALCONY SEATING



designing with patterns

Most of the playgrounds in Chinatown are set below street level and are not easily noticed, especially by children. The play structures are left under-used and abandoned most of the time. To create more appealing and entertaining playgrounds, one could simply replace the standard play structures with more modern structures that incorporate complex designs and various play elements. Another approach is to combine **ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND** with **HIGH PLACES** and possibly even accessible green. Elevate playgrounds by placing them on unused rooftops or on top of parking structures similar to the one that exists on Portsmouth Square. The height will meet children's need for excitement, and the view of the city will help foster a sense of place and belonging. When coupled with **ACCESSIBLE GREEN** and **GARDEN GROWING WILD**, adventure playgrounds can also become a **SECRET PLACE** for children. Clever

placement and design of the landscape using various plants and materials can help create this niche. Because children in the city are not often exposed to nature, the selection of plant materials should be done with the goal of furthering the education of children.



Figure 86: ADVENTURE PLAY EQUIPMENT



Figure 87: ROOFTOP PLAY STRUCTURE WITH RED-TILED EAVES

designing with patterns

The illustration shows a possible design incorporating **PUBLIC OUTDOOR ROOMS**, **GARDENS GROWING WILD**, and **HIGH PLACES**. The site is currently hidden behind the playground on St. Mary's Square, and it is paved with concrete. The skyscrapers of the neighboring financial district loom over the square, and this corner sits unused and unnoticed. Enforcement of lower **BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS** surrounding open spaces will help alleviate the shadow impacts. The design of a garden growing wildly will draw the attention of passersby towards the public outdoor room. Implementation of a successful public outdoor room requires moveable furnishings since many Chinese people gather to play board games and cards.

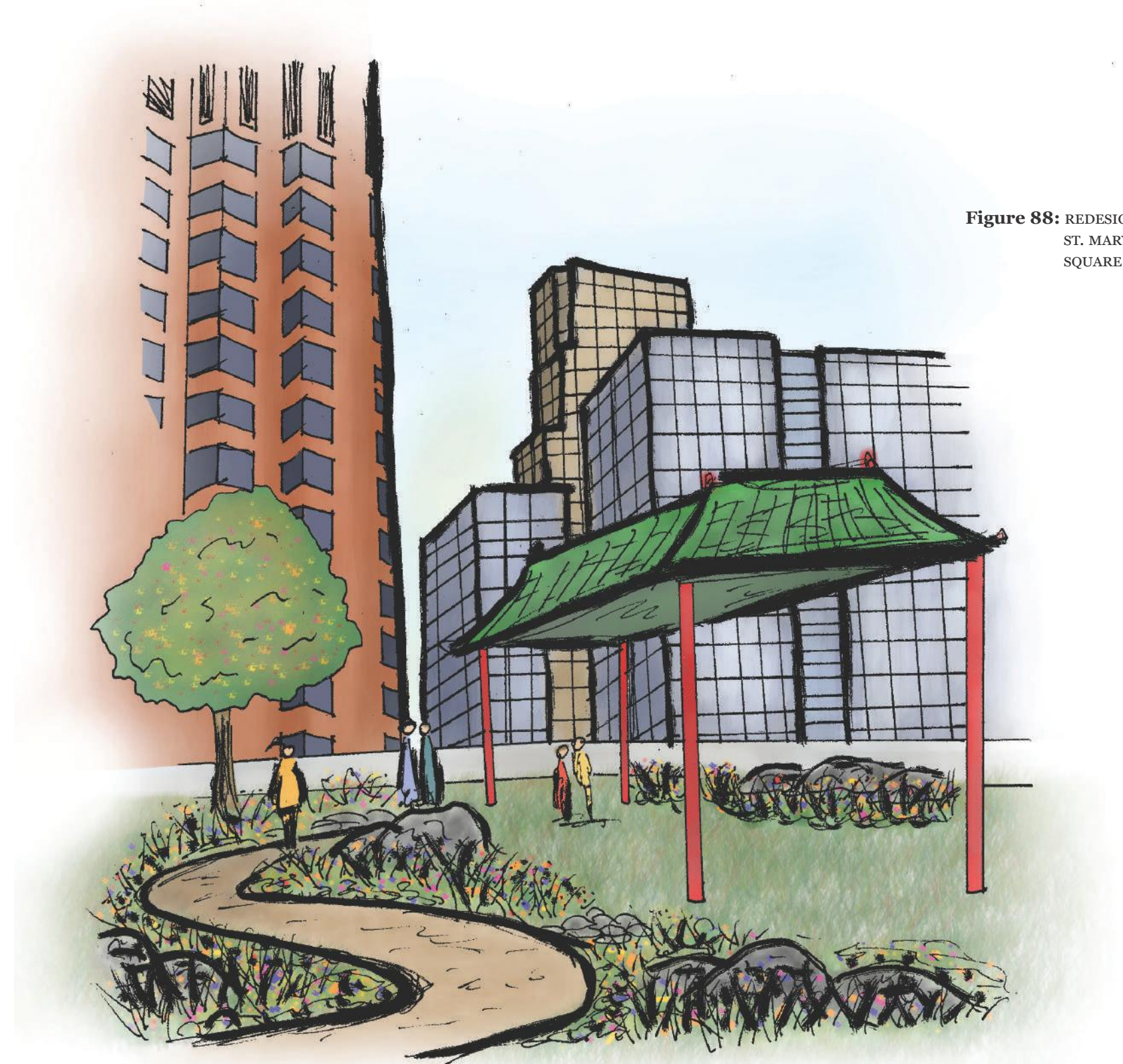


Figure 88: REDESIGN OF ST. MARY'S SQUARE

conclusion

Literature is the design of a cultural narrative; Chinese-American authors express their perception of place and their sense of belonging through writing. The selected literary works successfully encapsulate the perception of female Chinese Americans and their opinions on urban forms and landscapes. This project applies the analysis of literature to a landscape architectural context through the development of patterns and design recommendations in order to uncover how sense of place is defined by Chinese Americans. The design recommendations are applicable to other Chinese communities, and the approach and lens of using literature as a way of researching how design has impacted and shaped communities can be applied to other places.

TO ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTION, the sense of placelessness among Chinese Americans is affected by many variables. The sense of displacement is not simply the result of societal alienation, displacement, or cultural appropriation in design. The negotiation of cultural identity is dynamic and fluid. Design is only one aspect that contributes to defining place and identity, and implementing combined patterns in design creates more effective and dynamic spaces. The patterns and design recommendations are a result of an analysis of how authors portray their sense of place, but intervening and modifying certain patterns will not completely rectify the feelings of cultural homelessness. In conclusion, this project responds to literature by combining patterns in a design that is distinctly Chinese-American.

Figure 89: CALVIN READING WITH HOBBS
BILL WATTERSON



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afterword

I BEGAN THIS PROJECT hoping it would bring me answers, and with it, a sense of belonging which I have yet to find. Along the way, however, I've found pieces of myself hidden in things I used to shy away from. This project has pushed my creative capabilities through the drawings, the composition of the layout, and so much more.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TORN BETWEEN TWO THINGS.

The Chinese and the American.

Cantonese and English.

Landscape Architecture and my love of writing.

I may not know yet where I belong, but as a female Chinese American, I finally understand it's all right to be something in the middle, something wonderfully new and different and not entirely solid.

***“And I have so many words...
that they do not fit on my skin”*** (Kingston 53).

**“To make my waking life American-normal, I turn on the lights
before anything untoward makes an appearance.
I push the deformed into my dreams,
which are in Chinese,
the language of impossible stories”**
(Kingston 87).

**“I felt tired and foolish,
as if I had been running to escape someone chasing me,
only to look behind and discover there was no one there”** (Tan 233).

**“And now I see what part of me is Chinese.
It is obvious. It is my family. It is in our blood.
After all these years, it can finally be let go”** (Tan 331).

“Do you think all this will be enough to be happy?”
(Tan 249).

**“The beginning
is hers,
the ending,
mine.”**

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON