




Curriculum Strategies for Cindy Pon's *Want*

Global Issues Through Literature

February 24, 2022



Why Taiwan
Matters/Bringing Taiwan
into the Classroom

Why Taiwan Matters



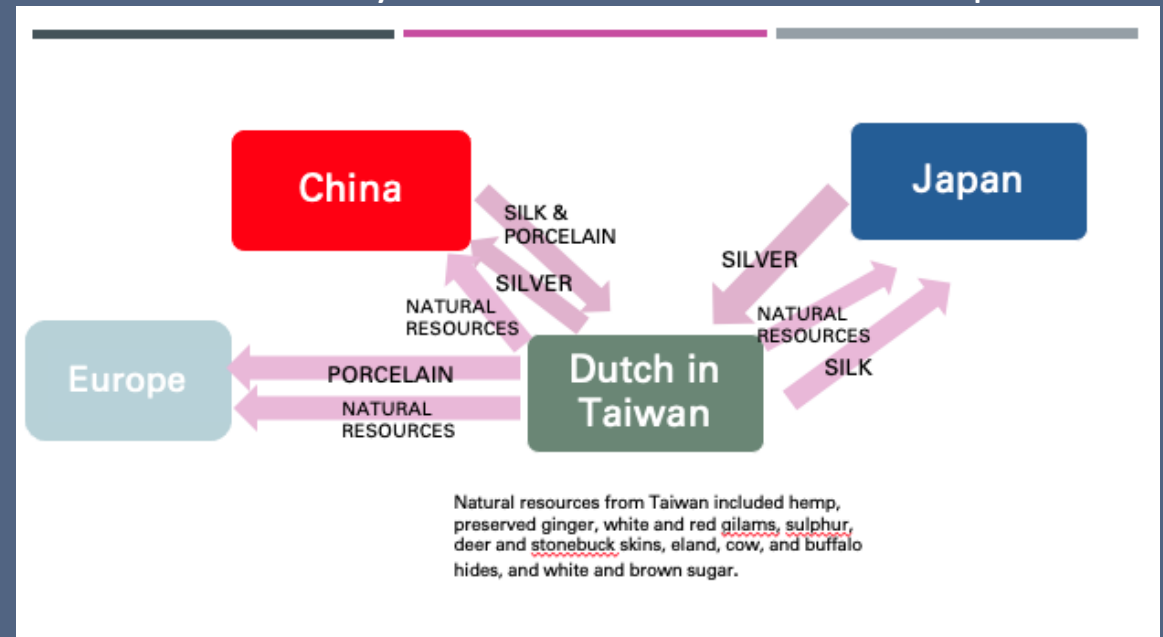
Taiwan is physically located at a geopolitical and economic nexus of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe.

Why Taiwan Matters



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17th century trade between Asia and Europe

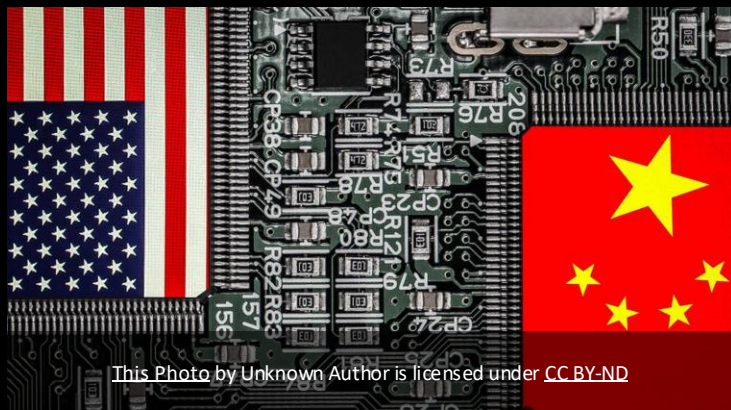


Graphic organizer based on information from Tsai, Shih-shan Henry, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and the West*, p. 35-37.

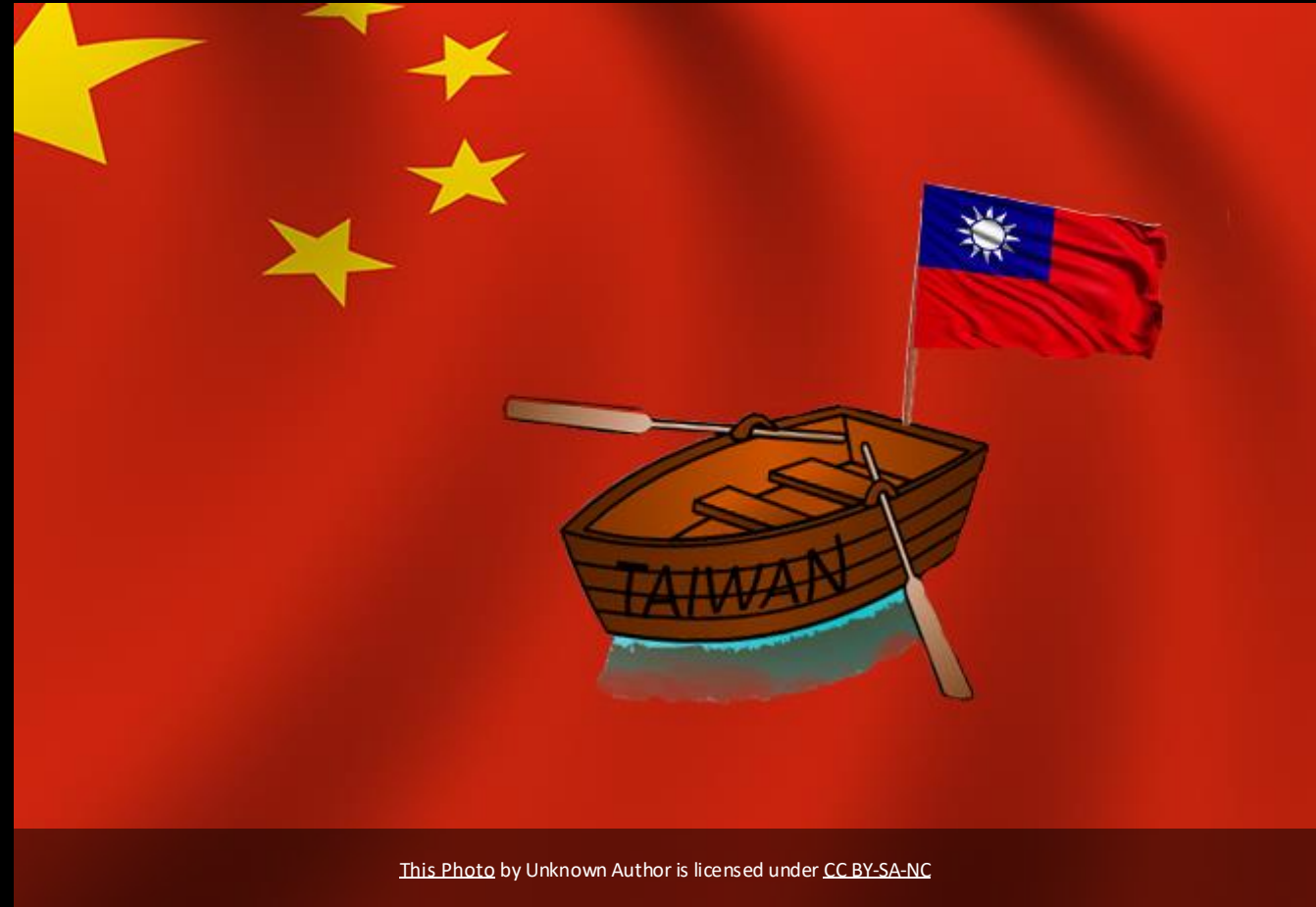
Why Taiwan Matters



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2024 Presidential election results in Taiwan



Hou Yu-ih, KMT, received
33.5% of votes cast



President-elect
Lai Ching-te, DPP, received
40% of votes cast

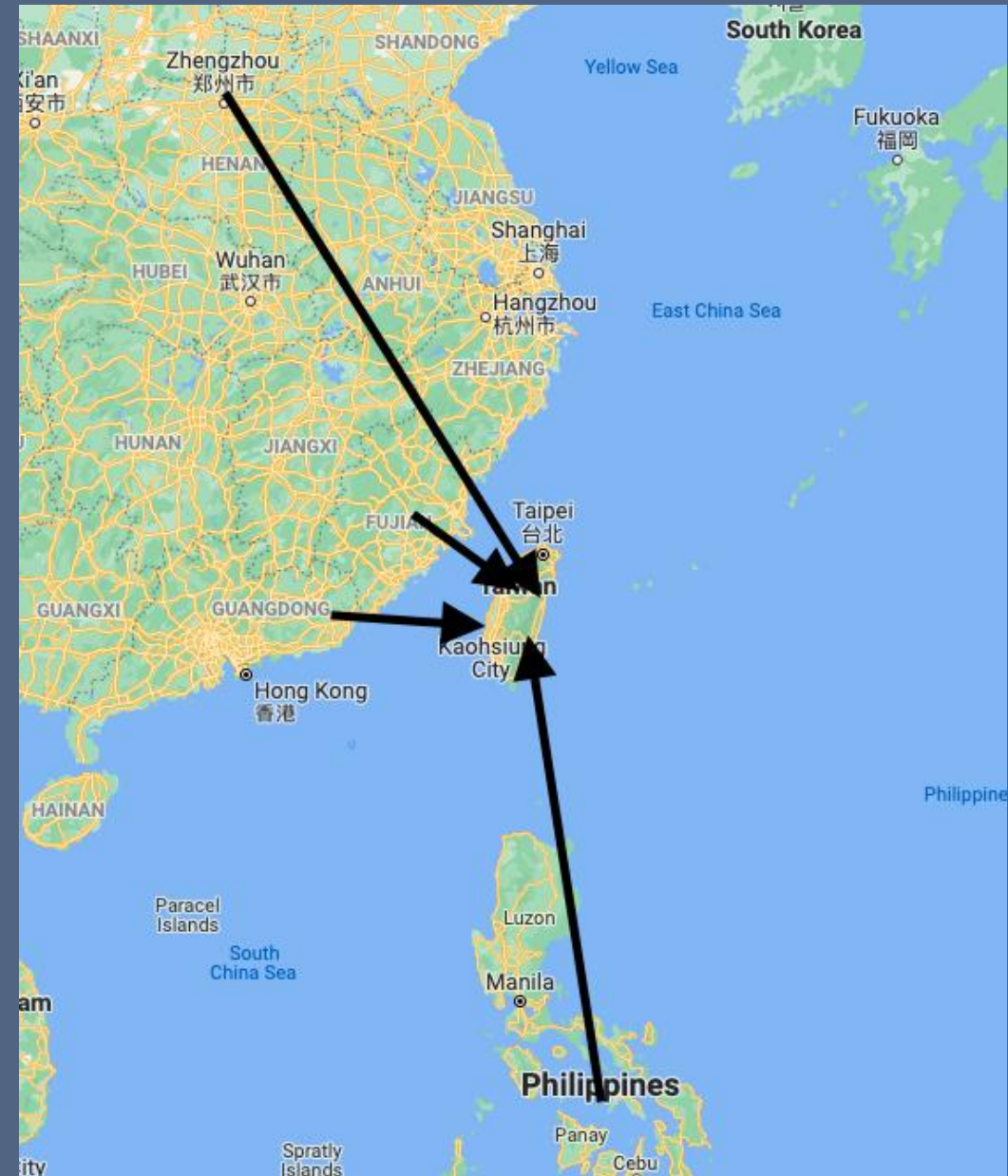


Ko Wen-je, TPP, received
26.5% of votes cast



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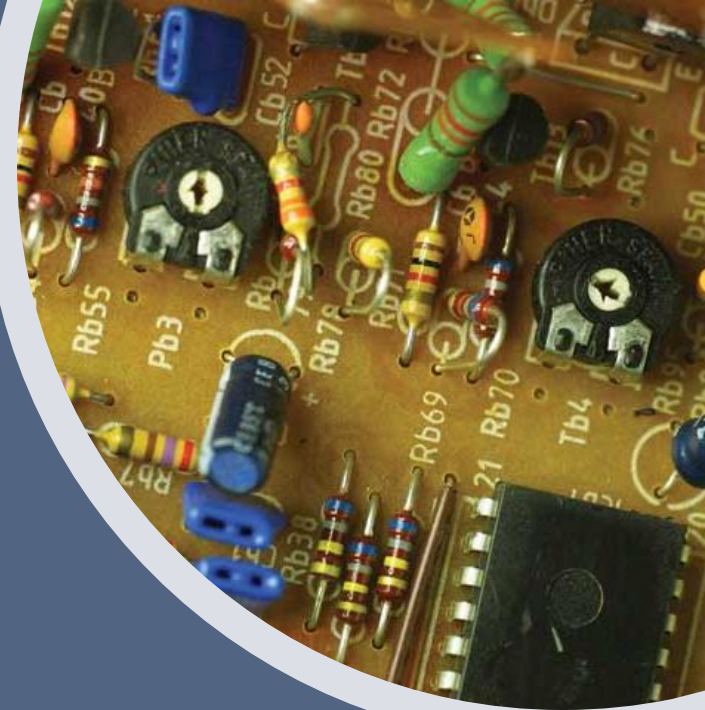
Migration to Taiwan



Migration arrows based on information from Manthorpe, Jonathan, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan*, p.29-38.



GIANT
BICYCLES



The rapid economic growth of Taiwan (both industrial and technology-based) in the last half of the 20th century—known as the “Taiwan Miracle”—places it in the forefront of the 21st century global economy.

Slide based on information from Rigger, Shelley. *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse.*



Cindy Pon was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and her family immigrated to the Los Angeles area in 1980.

She received degrees from the University of California San Diego and New York University and is accomplished in Chinese brush painting.

[\(https://www.fantasticfiction.com/p/cindy-pon/\)](https://www.fantasticfiction.com/p/cindy-pon/)

She is the author of a number of popular Fantasy and Science Fiction books, but says of *Want*, in particular, “I really wanted to bring Taipei alive in *WANT*—it was an ode to my birth city. In the end, I wound up using many locations in actual scenes of places I had visited. I had taken hundreds of photos, visually, everything can be an inspiration, a moment captured in time that I could relate to the reader.”

[\(https://readingasiam.blog/2017/05/08/author-interview-cindy-pon/\)](https://readingasiam.blog/2017/05/08/author-interview-cindy-pon/)

About the author



<https://www.cindypon.com/>



Shilin Night Market in Taipei, Taiwan



The novel's setting



Strategies for incorporating themes and topics from *Want* into the Classroom

- Climate Change in Taiwan
- Income Inequality in Taiwan
- What kind of future do we *Want* ?

Climate Change in Taiwan

THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



- Have students find and discuss 5-7 of the most significant examples of the effects of climate change in the novel *Want*. How, if at all, does this add to the science fiction-fantasy aspect of the novel?
- Have students read about Taiwan's preparations to meet net-zero carbon emissions goal by [2050](#).
- Discuss [Taiwan's status re: UN membership](#)
- Incorporating the topic of Climate Change in Taiwan in the classroom:
 - Have students research the UN's 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) [The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development](#)
 - Ask students to come up with a list of what goals they think present the greatest challenges and greatest hope for achieving these goals in the next 10-20 years and why. How does the U.S. compare to Taiwan (and other large carbon dioxide emitters) in terms of current emissions and goals for reducing emissions?

Income Inequality in Taiwan

- In 2020, income inequality was the highest it has been in eight years, with the top 20 percent of households earning 6.13 times the bottom 20 percent, according to the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS).
- Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, lifestyles in Taiwan have shifted dramatically, disrupting the country's manufacturing operations, hurting consumer confidence and the service industry.
- Incorporating the topic of income inequality in Taiwan in the classroom:
 - Ask students to come up with 5-7 examples of how income inequality is depicted in the novel *Want* (the *yous* and the *meis*). What other novels might they compare *Want* to in terms of the relationship between Jason and Daiyu?
 - Have students conduct research to compare Taiwan's growing income inequality with the U.S.'s and world-wide. What challenges does Taiwan face in addressing income inequality and what strengths does it possess to address these challenges?

What kind of future do we *Want*?

Futuristic aspects of *Want*:

- *You* Suits
- Surgical alterations by "physique surgeons"
- Flying cars
- Voice-and-thought activated devices
- Disease Outbreaks
- Decon pods for the *yous*
- Simulation sickness--"Sim sickness"
- Memory wipes
- Brain wave scans

Scripts for Dispositions Inquiry

- From Donham, Jean, "Scripts for Dispositions of Inquiry." *School Library Connection*. February 2016, schoollibraryconnection.com/content/article/2004819
- **Open-Minded:** *"Yes, but" or "On the other hand..." or "Why might someone disagree?"*
- **Curious:** *"I wonder..."*
- **Strategic:** *"What are my facts?...my thoughts?...my questions?"*
- **Skeptical:** *"Says who?" or "How can I be sure?"*

Quotes to consider for classroom discussion

Climate Change	Income Inequality	The Future
<p>"I lived in an abandoned laboratory that used to belong to Yangmingshan University, an experimental 'home' run on sustainable energy. Back when some thought we could still salvage our planet by 'going green.' We might have, if enough people had cared. But they hadn't." (p.13)</p> <p>"The sky used to be blue. This is what my research on the undernet told me, some sites even displaying actual photographs from another time...I didn't know anyone who had ever seen a blue sky." (p. 18)</p>	<p>"They chatted, probably pulling up info on their com sys, assessing weight, height, and genetic makeup even as they exchanged first names. This is what it meant to be <i>you</i>, to <i>have</i>. To be genetically cultivated as a perfect human specimen before birth--vaccinated and fortified, calibrated and optimized. To have an endless data base of information instantly retrievable within a second of thinking the query and displayed in a helmet. To have the best air, food, and water, ensuring the longest possible life spans as the world went to rot around them. Me, I'm like the other 95 percent of the <i>meis</i> in this country—<i>without</i>. We want and are left wanting. I'd be lucky if I lived to forty." (p. 3)</p> <p>"Leftover food and drinks were discarded everywhere around us...what could feed entire hungry <i>mei</i> families--food better than anything they had ever tasted—thrown into the trash." (p. 110-111)</p>	<p>"The love for all things supernatural, fey, and demonic was the current rage among Taiwan's youth, and the <i>yous</i> took it to the next level, surgically altering their physique, adding horns and tails, scaling their skin, be it mermaid or dragon. They were same-day walk-in alterations at the physique surgeons, the changes cast off in a week or two, replaced by some other trend." (p. 104)</p> <p>"They say money can't buy happiness by those <i>you</i> kids try hard. They spend and spend. Then when things aren't enough, they plug into the sim world so they can create and be whatever they want...<i>You</i> don't know how often a <i>you</i> kid has to be dragged off by ambulance because he's been plugged in for too long. A few have actually died." (p. 66-67)</p>

Discussion questions for GILS

1. Do you currently teach about Taiwan in your curriculum and, if not, based on this evening's presentations, where might you be able to incorporate content related to Taiwan into your curriculum?
2. Discuss 3-5 of examples of the effects of climate change in the novel. How, if at all, does this add to the science fiction-fantasy aspect of the novel?
3. Discuss 3-5 examples of income inequality in the novel. Do you think the author is effective in showing the impact of income inequality? Do you find the relationship of Jason and Daiyu to be credible? With what other novels and plots might you have your students compare and contrast this novel?
4. Discuss 3-5 examples of "an alternate near future" in Taiwan. Is this future already here in some ways and are there good as well as bad aspects to it? What are some ways to act now to avoid the negative aspects of this alternate future?

Resources

- Donham, Jean, "Scripts for Dispositions of Inquiry." *School Library Connection*. February 2016, schoollibraryconnection.com/content/article/2004819
- <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/p/cindy-pon/>
- <https://readingasiam.blog/2017/05/08/author-interview-cindy-pon/>
- [The 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Manthorpe, Jonathan, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan*. St. Martin's Press Griffin. New York. 2009.
- [Maritime Asia](#)
- Rigger, Shelley. *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
- Taiwan Democracy workshop, Five College Center for East Asian Studies, 8/10/2021
- [Taiwan prepares regulations to meet 2050 net-zero goal despite COP26 exclusion](#)
- [Taiwan reports widening income gap amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Taiwan rejects Beijing's 'one country, two systems' unification formula](#)
- [The rise of bubble tea, one of Taiwan's most beloved beverages](#)
- Tsai, Shih-shan Henry, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and the West*. Routledge. New York. 2016.
- [With Taiwan blocked from U.N. climate talks, its emissions go uncounted](#)