

Children's Literature as Bridges to Transitional Justice for Indigenous People

Undoubtedly, children's books are one of powerful mediums in shaping people's identity. Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie started to write stories at the age of seven; however, all characters she wrote were white and blue-eyes. In colonial periods or areas, authorities use narratives to control thoughts and behaviors of the people. Yet Adichie's case clearly reveals that even in the independent era, hundreds of storybooks read as a single storybook raise generations with the oppressor's viewpoint.

The transformation of ideology only takes place when alternative narratives originated from the masses struggle against the dominant one in forms of news, stories and arts. These narratives could effectively shed light into darkness and propel the society in the direction of democracy and humanity. People contribute to transitional justice are those who from the fields of the judiciary, news or oral history in revealing the truth, reconstructing memories and distinguishing right from wrong. Nevertheless, a simple story made into a picturebook can easily cross the boundaries between communities and ages. It reaches out to the public and draws attention to the injustices arising from totalitarianism and colonialism. For indigenous people, their shared predicaments among communities worldwide, such as tremendous loss of native people's lands, languages, sovereignty and dignity, also enable those stories to transmit effortlessly. Those books not only remind the society of their neglected histories, but also arouse critical and reflective thoughts to both adult and young readers.

In this paper, some case studies of children's books will be taken to illustrate these points. I will argue that those works develop the collective consciousness of non-indigenous citizens, and hence lay the foundation for their acceptance of upcoming policies of transitional justice. Apart from America, Canada and Australia, certain texts and the situation in Taiwan where I come from will also be touched upon. As a creative writer and a researcher of children's literature, I would include my participation aimed to bridge the understanding and the reconciliation between oppressed and oppressors with children's books.