WESTERN VISUALS AND FOREIGN NARRATIVES: THE LIMIT OF NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS ILLUSTRATIONS IN NIGERIA

NKAMI-EVAL N. ELEMI

Lecturer (Graphic Communication), Department of Visual Arts &Technology, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract - The Seoul Agendaaffirms "arts education as the foundation for balanced creative, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and social development of children, youth and life-long learners".Yet, learning is part of developmental processes rooted in the social, cultural and environmental basis of the society in which children function. While less funded public schools in Nigeria make do with whatever textbooks they find, better funded private schools take to imported, colourful and glossy textbooks rich in beautiful illustrations. However, since these imported texts were made for other countries and not designed for use in Nigeria, many of their visual illustrations and narratives are neither compatible with the local culture, nor do they comply with the national primary education curriculum. For example, images and narratives of an English Queen, including subjects such as sleigh, snow-capped mountains, red squirrels, koala, penguin, etc, are used in these. Thisdoes not make for sustainable education because the images are cultural examples absent in the life of the Nigerian child, creating a gapbetween what is learnt and the knowledge required to live in their own society. Using the analysis of illustrations in textbooks used in public and private nursery and primary schools in the city of Calabar, this study sought to highlight a visual cultural anomaly in Nigeria's nursery and primary education system.

Keywords – Nursery, Primary School, Textbooks, Western Visuals, Foreign Narratives, African Culture