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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Gold Coast Hand and Eye Work: A genealogical History

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**This paper investigates the intellectual legacy of Hand and Eye Work, the first art-based curriculum officially introduced by the Gold Coast colonial government, appearing first in the Educational Code of 1887. Adapting the genealogical method of Foucault for a historical study, I unearth the Hand and Eye programme's kinship with child-centered education schemes of Pestalozzi and his follower Froebel, and their lineage of technical and vocational education schemes in the British South Kensington "manual training" system, the German *Gewerbeschule* and the Scandinavian *Slöjd* system. I argue that the "bread and butter" vocational focus of the colonial scheme displaced the more recondite and progressive aspects of the Pestalozzi-Froebelian system. The programme became mechanistic and remained impervious to modern art until G. A. Stevens, a young graduate from the Slade School, became art master in the Government Training College and Achimota College. Echoing his mentor Roger Fry's dictum to "get rid of all that South-Kensington nonsense", Stevens critiqued Hand and Eye training thus: "There was, and is, no provision for the training of taste, appreciation, criticism, or for the slightest perception of art history". This was the beginning of a revolution in Gold Coast art education.**

**Keywords:** Gold Coast, Hand and Eye Work

## INTRODUCTION

In the few times the history of modern art education in Ghana has surfaced in any influential study, there has been a general silence over its intellectual legacy. This silence presents a worthy case for putting the intellectual foundations of modern art in Ghana in comparative research focus. A significant item that comes to focus is the intellectual legacy of early colonial art education in the Gold Coast, especially, with the introduction of "Hand and Eye Work" curriculum. The Hand and Eye curriculum and its "manual training for boys" or so-called "craft" focus resonates in the functionalist curriculum of Victorian Era British education for working class children, as well as the British colonies of Africa and south-east Asia (for example, the Madras (1853) Calcutta (1854), and Bombay (1857) schools of industrial art). In this paper, I

have not attempted a chronological history of events. Rather, the titular "Genealogical History" typifies my methodological debt to Foucault. I have employed the term "Genealogy" in the quasi-Foucauldian sense of a palimpsest of decentered events and their related ideologies.

Historical analysis I have conducted elsewhere (seid'ou, 2006) indicates that art education and practice in the Gold Coast has been confronted with a chain of obstructive false dilemmas coded in colonial logic but surviving as primordial vestiges in post-colonial ethos. Here, among many others, the most prominent dichotomy that comes to mind is the "either technical (vocational) education or the liberal (bookish) education". In response, the Hand and Eye-type curriculum was posited as an

educational corrective to the existing “bookish” curriculum (for example, the notorious 3 Rs).

While Hand and Eye training can be fairly placed on the vocational and roughly functionalist pole of this dichotomy, it was also overdetermined in its foundations and had a very complicated and sometimes antagonistic relationship with modern art. In Oguibe's terms, coded in this functionalist logic of the colonial art curriculum “lay a more fundamental principle at the heart of colonial discourse, namely the perpetuation of the fictions of difference upon which the colonial project was constructed”. He infers that this maneuver “granted the colonised only partial access” to “a modern identity” such that the colonised could only afford a “mimic representation” of imperial culture as their version of modern experience. (2002, pp. 243, 244). This picture seems plausible in terms of the verifiable “effects” of the colonial experiment which must necessarily be described with the benefit hindsight. But it leaves no room for surprises in so far as the picture is painted as if the British colonial network or its imperialist Government was in full control of its causes and effects. To the extent that the art curricula of the South Kensington Government Schools of the British Isles were themselves not superior in their foundations than the exported colonial versions (cf. Macdonald 1970/2004), it could equally be said that British working class children who had to attend these industrial art schools were similarly “granted only partial access” to a modern identity.

Historically, it emerges that the British Hand and Eye training in the Gold Coast, the institutionalization of the functionalist ethos in art education, was coextensive with the Victorian Somerset House-South Kensington art education system which, itself, had patrimonially derived from the German *gewerbeschule*. The German *gewerbeschule* and the South Kensington systems were also homologous to the French *metiers* and post-Froebelian child-centred education systems such as the Scandinavian *Slöjd* (Sloyd) system (Bennett, 1937; Goetze, c. 1893; Macdonald, 1970/2004; seid'ou, 2006). Hand and Eye training deposited a homogeneous class of art teachers, habitués of clinical, teachable and learnable drawing procedures amenable to the mechanization of the arts and the so-called manual training. Carryovers from the pedantic regime survived to complicate the events I have labelled elsewhere as “Promethean” revolutions staged by influential colonial teachers in Achimota College such as G. A. Stevens, Gabriel Pippet and H. V. Meyerowitz, whose ideas also carried resonances, in varying degrees, of the romantic-primitivism of Fry and Malinowski, the Progressivism of Marion Richardson, and the socialist-Luddism of William Morris, Eric Gill, and Ruskin respectively. The present College of Art in Ghana was launched on this layered history. The foregoing genealogy consists in landmark

historical, bibliographic, sociological and theoretical details which are missing from the typical text citing or commenting on the Gold Coast Hand and Eye training, a watershed in colonial education in British west Africa. With these resources and similar others, some loose threads in the extant narrative on art and art education in Ghana can be tied back. These details are also proffered as markers opening up new directions in the study of the intellectual legacy of art experience in colonial and post-colonial Ghana.

### Some historical notes on Gold Coast education

The first British education ordinance in the Gold Coast, the Education Ordinance of 1852, had predated England's own attempt by the state to bring school administration under central government control. It was contemporaneous with the formation of the Department of Science and Art (DSA) (1852) under whose auspices Richard Redgrave, RA would design the National Course of Art Instruction (NCAI) for the South Kensington system. The Ordinance had followed the colonial administration's decision to provide a Gold Coast Executive Council and a nominated Legislative Council, to secede Gold Coast administration from the Government of Sierra Leone and consequently, to appoint a governor for the Gold Coast forts alone. The new Legislative Council passed as their first legislation “An Ordinance to provide for the better education of the inhabitants of Her Majesty's forts and settlements on the Gold Coast”<sup>1</sup>. While the workings of this Ordinance could not be sustained it recognized that “a superior system of education should be adopted so as to meet the wants of an advancing society”. It had even prefigured Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey's famous call for intensifying the education of girls by stating that “some effort should be made to educate the rising generation of females”. The Colonial government soon slipped into a laissez-faire posture then operating in most British colonies, thereby, allowing the various missions to operate schools in their autonomous, sometimes antagonistic, systems while the central British school system proposed by the Ordinance became almost still-born. The result was that for over half a century in the Gold Coast, school consciousness was largely shaped in the Protestant Christian mode<sup>2</sup>. A turning point in this system was Rev. Johann G. Auer's Reforms (1863)<sup>3</sup> (Owusu Agyakwa et al, 1994, pp.13, 21-22, 62; seid'ou, 2006, p. 95) which displaced the existing “book-centred” curriculum with vocational<sup>4</sup> and technical sets of subjects which subsequently became the perfect placeholder for British Hand and Eye training. It comes as no surprise that it was on this armature that the subsequent British school system was built.

The May 1882 British Colonial Ordinance for the

Promotion and Assistance of Education passed in Gold Coast Council “marks the period when the colonial Government began to officially recognise the educational work of the Mission churches” (Odamten, 1978; Report of the Educationists’ Committee, 1920). In this Ordinance, was also the first official British attempt at introducing “manual training for boys”, which I can only describe patronizingly as a proto-art curriculum, in Ghanaian schools (Quao, 1970, p.11; see also Kudowor, 1981). But this Ordinance was still-born<sup>5</sup>; it was not operationalised until the combined effects of a series of successive Amendments and Educational Codes. In its apotheosis, “Manual Training for boys” in the 1882 Ordinance would become “Hand and Eye Training” in the 1887 Educational Code.

### **Hand and Eye Work and the Government Training College, 1909<sup>6</sup>**

In a paper read in March 1928 at a staff meeting in Achimota College, G. A. Stevens critiqued the institution of Hand and Eye curriculum thus:

The educational code of 1887 provided for the teaching of art subjects as they were understood in South Kensington at the time – the age of Froebel and Sloyd: the aim seems to have been the vague one of ‘hand and eye training’. But the purpose for which hand and eye were to be trained does not appear clearly in its instructions, and I am perfectly certain that the bulk of teachers of the older generation do not know of one...The Code was drawn up as if there were no indigenous arts in the country at all, whereas these were in a much more flourishing condition than they are today (1930, p. 150, cf. Svasek, 1997).

The Government Training College<sup>7</sup> in Accra had introduced “Hand and Eye Work” as a two-year teacher training subject in art in 1909 (Antubam, 1963; Forster, 1963, Kwami 2003; Quao, 1970; Svasek, 1991). According to Asihene (2004), Hand and Eye was “a specialist training course in Art for teachers”. The Ghanaian sculptor Vincent Kofi identifies it with “still life drawing”, describes its mode as “drawing just what you see” (Mitchell n.d. [1970], p.36). Stevens (1935, p. 15), identifies Hand and Eye and its cognate Brushwork as the “elementary mechanics of European drawing, painting, modelling and handicraft”. He lists the principal “elementary mechanics” as “light and shade, mixing of colours, accurate observation, and perspective”. He intimates that “these exercises had been taught for half a century” and that “there were many Africans who had

achieved considerable ability in them”, except “perspective” which “even the most competent never really mastered”. Hand and Eye had indeed survived in Stevens’ time since he claims to have taught it to “a class of teachers on a refresher course” (Stevens, 1935, p. 18).

Like 19th century monitorial systems such as William Bentley Fowle’s in America, trainee teachers were posted to teach art in the various schools in the colony after completion<sup>8</sup> (Asihene 2004, p.71; Mitchell n.d. [1970], p.36). Relatedly, by 1916 we find in the curriculum of the Presbyterian Training College (Seminary) the subject Hand and Eye (Agyemang, 1988, p.19) as a response to the new Educational Code. [Rev.] E. V. Asihene, the father of the painter E. V. Asihene of the College of Art, a pioneer Hand and Eye trainee in the Government Training College (Asihene 2004, p.71) is listed among the staff of the Presbyterian Seminary in 1916 (Agyemang 1988, p.19)<sup>9</sup>.

Literature on the content and theoretical foundations of Hand and Eye as administered in the Gold Coast curriculum is very scanty, mostly depending on secondary sources and presented as short paragraphs or commentaries on a wider subject. It is yet to be the subject of any focused study. Kwami (2003), referencing Forster (1965/1967, p. 148) mentions briefly that its “object was to develop industrial training” and that it “led to the teaching of “designing” and water-colour painting at the Accra Institute. Kwami (2003) further corroborates a famous line in Meyerowitz (c. 1941) that the Hand and Eye Training, “attempted to convert instinctive activities to rational ones”. Antubam (1963) mentions Hand and Eye training but does not elaborate on what it constituted and why it was recommended above all other possible forms of art instruction. Also the theoretical assumptions underpinning Hand and Eye training and their logical implications on the present Ghanaian art instruction and practice have been anonymous in the extant literature on the subject.

### **Rationale for Hand and Eye: Some Musings**

The consensus in the use of the term “Hand and Eye” is that it is education through activity, “education through work” or in Herbert Read’s overused formulation, “education through art”. Roughly, it is a generic term for free hand drawing and manual training targeted at the elementary education of working class children. In European and American literature, “Hand and Eye” is a commonwealth of craft-based programmes variously referred to as Sloyd, Husflid (Scandinavian), *Travail Manuel* (French), Manual Training (English), *Arbeitsunterricht*, *Gewerbeschule* or *Handfertigkeitunterricht* (German). It takes its theory from 19th century child-centred education schemes of

Pestalozzi and Froebel. In its teacher training version, it was a drawing and craft instruction for the generalist teacher of children, not a course for a specialist artist. As a system of training it was underpinned by the objective of precise technical or contour drawing. As a professional prerequisite for the “practical”, “manual” or “mechanical arts”, the benefits of Hand and Eye training were thought to be impeccable. In a few cases, the term was appropriated in the fine arts regime to mean proficiency in academic-style drawing in the tradition of Ingres. For example, Holmes (1927/1935, p.191), employing the phrase allusively, describes an English painter as an “heir of the grand English tradition of the eighteenth century” who “possessed the powers of the *hand and eye* which mark the born professional painter”. Elsewhere he suggests that the Pre-Raphaelite Millais had “precocious gifts of the *hand and eye* enabling him to perform feats of minute and elaborate accomplishment” (p. 223). This iconographic fine art sense of the “hand and eye” reverberates in Delaquis’ (1979, p. 23) doctrinaire assertion that “if a student cannot copy a thing with his *eyes and hands* in an exercise he is just no good”.

In its 19th century dogmatic form, governments invested “hand and eye skill” in the mechanical, manual and ornamental arts with overt instrumental and remunerative value in socio-economic and educational policy. This was especially intended to aid the growth of industry and manufacture and, in the bourgeois formulation of working class aspirations, to churn out bread-winners who could keep the pot boiling. A parallel is identified in nineteenth century industrial America:

In addition to the increased competition arising from steam-carriage, new and cheaper methods of manufacture, and increased productiveness, another element of value has rapidly pervaded all manufactures, an element in which the United States has been and is woefully deficient - the art element. The element of beauty is found to have pecuniary as well as aesthetic value. The training of the hand and of the eye which is given by drawing is found to be of the greatest advantage to the worker in many occupations and is rapidly becoming indispensable. This training is of value to all the children and offers to girls as well as boys opportunity for useful and remunerative occupations, for drawing in the public schools is not to be taught as a mere “accomplishment”. The end sought is not to enable the scholar to draw a pretty picture, but to so train the *hand and eye* that he may be better fitted to become a *bread-winner*.

(U.S. Bureau of Education (1874, pp.86, 88) as cited in Eisner and Ecker (1966/1970, pp. 12-25)).

While the industrial prospects of the Hand and Eye may have struck the colonial administrators, the historical position of Gold Coast as a non-industrialised agrarian and artisanal economy at the inception of the 1887 Educational Code could not have put her in the prospective position of being instructed in “industrial” training in the fashion of 1870s industrialised America. In this case, if the stimulus for Hand and Eye training in the Gold Coast had been made identical with the mechanical industry aspirations of the British South Kensington Schools of Design or the American Boston Normal programme, it would have been out of place. On the other hand, if one considers Hand and Eye training as not just a foundation for the manufacturing industry but as a foundational subject for modern art [especially, drawing and painting with which it would most likely have had some kinship], considering the fact that the curriculum was impervious to modern art but overbearingly implemented as the totalizing art curriculum for the entire colony, it would appear to have been anachronistic to contemporary art developments and concerns. Indeed, if Asihene’s (2004, p.71) evaluation of the motivation for Hand and Eye training is reliable, then its “intention [...] to broaden the outlook of people to appreciate and identify with the wonders of art that were abundantly available to them” was at best ironic but at worst self-defeating. Here, Stevens’ firsthand experience of Hand and Eye corroborates my assessment for in the Gold Coast version of Hand and Eye Training, “There was, and is, no provision for the training of taste, appreciation, criticism, or for the slightest perception of art history” (1930, p. 150).

On the question of colonial industrialisation, Britain, the colonial regime had consistently exhibited a lack of interest in developing modern manufacturing industries in the Gold Coast colony, as in other colonies, so the presence of Hand and Eye cannot be simply explained by its anticipated contrivance to the manufacturing industries as it did America. Neither is it satisfactory to infer that it was meant to develop the local artisanal and craft industry for as Svašek (1997) after Stevens (1930) has noted “[a]rt lessons based on indigenous art forms were not to be given because the inhabitants of the Gold Coast were thought to be non-rational primitives lacking the qualities to produce art”. Notably, the Governor of the Gold Coast at the time Hand and Eye was in force, Sir Hugh Clifford corroborates thus:

The West African Negro has often been reproached with his failure to develop any high form of civilisation. It has been pointed out ad nauseam that he has never sculptured [sic] a statue, painted a picture, produced a literature, or even invented a mechanical contrivance worthy of the name, all of which are perfectly

true. ((January 1918) in *Blackwood Advertiser* as quoted in Oguibe (2002)).

Alternate prospects of Hand and Eye in the Colony during the period would certainly be a more useful explanation here. The suggestion that there was the commonplace functionalist notion, in both the metropole and the colony, that in pursuance of colonial education in cartography, illustration, calligraphy and penmanship, handiwork, housecraft, nature study, some clerical and civil duties, blackboard work by teachers, etc., *free hand drawing* - then synonymous with the foundational studies for Hand and Eye training – was the inevitable basis, seems plausible. One only needs to look at the contemporaneous curriculum of British Educational Slojd, a prequel to Hand and Eye, to verify this (Macdonald 1970/2004). But in imperial British hands this curriculum was further based on the assumption that for the teaching of drawing to be standardized it was important to formulate it around “fixed” rules like science. “Fancy” drawing, so-called fine art drawing and “art for art’s sake” would receive the least official sanction in such a system. Even at a critical point in South Kensington history, there were “the Government regulations of 1843 which stressed that 'no person making Art his profession should be eligible for admission as a student'” (Macdonald 1970/2004, p. 151). There was also “the insistence by William Dyce, one of its founders, that students should state their future employment in order to guard against the artisans' ambitions to become fine artists.” (Macdonald 1970/2004, p. 151).

In *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens' satire of Henry Cole's instructions in the Department of Practical Art would also be insightful here (cf. Fielding, 1953):

You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use', said the gentleman, 'for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste.

## **Hand and Eye: Some Source Materials and Reverberations**

Till date, G. A. Stevens' occasional references to and critique of Hand and Eye training remain the most insightful paragraphs on the nature and quality of the subject as it pertained in the Gold Coast. Granting the dearth of material on the Gold Coast experience on the subject, William Bently Fowle's little book (97 pages), *The Eye and Hand; Being a Series of Practical Lessons in Drawing, for the Training of those important Organs: Adapted to the use of Common Schools* published in 1847 could be of help in mapping out the foundations of the subject. While evidence has yet to be found either affirmatively or to the contrary, it seems reasonable to infer that Fowle's manual would have been one of the earliest English language publications which treated the subject in-depth and could as well have had various intersections with subsequent textbooks and manuals on the subject or a reference material for the “teacher of teachers” in Hand and Eye instruction. Indeed, there are other publications of its sort which were more contemporaneous with the Gold Coast programme some of which I am yet to have full access. Examples of such sources are F. C. Stanley's (1912) *A course of hand and eye training*, Henry Holman's *Hand and eye training or education through work* (1921), Woldemar Goetze's *Illustrated manual of hand and eye training on educational principles* (c. 1937), the *Journal for teachers of hand and eye work* published under the auspices of the Bradford School Board: Manual Training Department (n.d.). These British sources were more contemporaneous with the introduction of the subject in British colonies. However, it can be argued plausibly that they are homologous with Fowle's sources (cf. Macdonald, 1970/2004).

By its title, content and objectives, Fowle's book suggests the problematic Platonic separation of the intellect from the sensory in its advocacy for the “training of those organs”. By adopting a similar subject title for the art student in the Gold Coast, there seems to have been the tendency to view “art”, or in its precise reductive terms, “free-hand drawing”, as manual and retinal training to the near-proscription of meta-theoretical and critical reflection. The second characteristic is as instructive as it is ironic; while the manual and retinal flavour suggested naïve empiricism or a training of the “innocent eye”, its advocacy of “fixed”, standardised rules of drawing upheld its direct philosophical contradiction- rationalism. Fowle is however, resounding about the indebtedness of the “Eye

and Hand” instruction and his book to a Napoleonic French manual on drawing; “The emperor ordered the Bureau of Instruction to prepare a drawing book of this sort for the national schools, and the book so prepared by M. Francoeur, was eminently successful. The following book is a free translation of the French Manual”. (1847, p. 3, 4)

### Somerset House and South Kensington Schools of Design

Sharman (n.d.) recalls that the council of the Central School of Design, Somerset House, had asked William Dyce (1806-64), an Edinburgh portrait painter, graduate scientist and later the first Superintendent of the Schools of Design, to report on the organisation and teaching methods of schools of design in France and Germany and that he visited both of these countries in 1837 and reported in 1838. As Sharman notes “it was on the basis of that report that the Central School and its teaching was redesigned”. That Dyce would have encountered the “French manual” Fowle refers to as well as its advocated teaching methods seems a plausible conjecture. Prior to the publication of *Eye and Hand* (1847) and Dyce’s visit to France (1837) a third edition of Fowle’s publication, *An introduction to linear drawing translated from the French of M. Francoeur: with alterations and additions to adapt it to the use of schools in the United States: to which are added the elements of linear perspective and questions on the whole* had been in circulation since 1830. Significantly, we find among the publications of George Wallis, Dyce’s former student at Somerset House (1841-1843), the document *Fifty Diagrams to Illustrate the Delineation of Form, adapted to the Author’s Lessons on the same Subject: with a preface containing Hints to Teachers on the Early Education of the Hand and Eye*.

Here, acknowledging the risk of sounding too patronizing of the French Manual, I also acknowledge that Dyce had encountered and advocated the German *gewerbeschule* (trade) system of training in 1838 which had run on rationalized drawing methods of the tradition of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg aspects of which reverberate in Monsieur Francoeur’s. It is also worth noting that the Department of Science and Art at South Kensington had, according to MacDonald (1970/2004), “consciously modelled” its system “after the German craft school system”.

Admittedly, Benjamin Haydon, an apologist of the classicism of the Royal Academy and the French atelier system had attempted subverting the Dyce-Redgrave “cast-iron” programme with a more iconographic fine-art content but this scheme “was shelved during his lifetime”. MacDonald (1970/2004). It was only in the late 19th

century that his scheme got introduced to the Slade School of Art through Edward Poynter and his advocacy of the French academic system. G. A. Stevens and Margaret Trowell who would later transform art education in the Gold Coast and Uganda respectively had been trained under this system.

The many intersections between William Dyce’s seven stage Somerset House system and sections of Fowle’s *Eye and Hand* make it plausible to infer that he had encountered the Francoeur system even if their parallels resonate in other contemporary systems. For example, McDonald (1970/2004, p. 82) describes the seventh stage of Dyce’s system thus:

The pupil had to work for a probationary period of three months in Class VII, copying outlines, first drawing straight lines with a hard lead pencil, bisecting and trisecting them with more straight lines. After rubbing out innumerable lines and achieving lines straight enough to satisfy the drawing master, pupils were allowed to copy geometric figures and curves on grids.

The scheme Dyce describes is an appropriation of Pestalozzi’s exercises in the *ABC der Anschauung* (ABC of Perception) through Monsieur Francoeur’s and Fowle’s system. Dyce’s scheme seems to have extremely mechanized the Pestalozzian-Froebelian exercises. Woldemar Goetze who transformed Dyce’s tradition about half a century later, perhaps, keeps more faith with Pestalozzian-Froebelian theory when he raises the psychological and educational prospects of “Manual Training for Boys” above its instrumental justification. Thus he almost implies, against Dyce, that the “hand and eye” aspects of the scheme were only subsidiary:

The condition that the child shall itself be active, that by observation and experiment it shall contribute to its own education, is the essence of our system, and exhibits its most striking contrast with the pedagogy which works from without rather than from within. Other demands are that the hand must be skilled, the eye trained to see a right, the senses of form and colour developed, the tension of the muscles increased. But these are subsidiary aims. They are but the prismatic colours, whilst the element of self-activity is the illuminating ray. In this requirement all friends of the cause agree,... Some may entrust the teaching to the schoolmaster, others to the artisan; some may consider exercises to be all that is necessary, others prefer objects of actual utility; these objects, (c. 1893, p.)

### Typical Content of Hand and Eye instructional text and some instrumental consequences

The Gold Coast version of Hand and Eye which Stevens et al describe has parallels in the mechanical Dyce-Somerset House system, the early stages of Richard Redgrave's National Course of Art Instruction for South Kensington (cf. MacDonald, 1970/2004, pp.388, 389; cf. Stevens, 1936) and the Scandinavian *Slöjd* system.

Fowle's instrumental justification of his method resonates in the Gold Coast Hand and Eye system:

Those who have seen the elegant writing, printing and map-drawing performed by my pupils, should be informed that those exercises were done by children who had also been trained to draw according to the system here proposed and explained, a system more simple, more practicable in our common schools, and more economical, than any other I have seen.

It would seem reasonable to infer that similarly, the Colonial Office felt justified introducing Hand and Eye training above all other possible systems of art instruction.

H. G. Ramshaw's *Blackboard Work* (1955/1967), a book which was used by Gold Coast and Ghanaian teachers, summarises one important aspect of the instrumental implications of the Hand and Eye- type art training in classroom teaching. Ramshaw does not use the phrase Hand and Eye and by the time of its publication Hand and Eye training had already given way to the Stevens-Meyerowitz art teaching traditions. Yet what Ramshaw advocates is indeed the residual of what Hand and Eye training could offer to the teacher trainee.

The first part of Fowle's *Eye and Hand* instruction, as of Dyce's curriculum, was similar to "technical drawing" course but unlike the latter, it was to be tackled without drawing instruments. Similarly, this was the essence of the Gold Coast Hand and Eye training, to train the eye and the hand without mediation of drawing instruments (Mitchell n.d. [1970], p. 36; Stevens, 1930; 1935; 1962). Then this skill was applied to forms and objects. Objects were to be drawn in European academic perspective so Euclidean perspective was also to be taught. Euclidean perspective forms the crux of part two of Fowle's book.

Some vestiges of the Hand and Eye are to be found in the succeeding curricula in Achimota and the School of Art and Crafts in Kumasi College of Technology, the prequel to the College of Art, KNUST. Also, the existing premises for art assessment conditioned art education around so-called "objective", constative, regulatory and "assessable" skills more than the more instinctive and interpretive approaches to art practice which are construed to be subjective and more problematic in their

assessment.

Art and art education in the Gold Coast became encumbered with and premised on procedural methods of the kind employed in such "how-to-do" draughtsmanship manuals as Walter Smith's freehand drawing manual inspired by the canonical traditions of Villard de Honnecourt and Petrus Camper. The art teacher and student oblivious of the historical contexts within which these canons developed and being only in touch with their institutional imperative is likely to take them for granted as the natural way of "seeing" or "capturing" or drawing a figure or an object. They would thus find their hagiographic place in drawing textbooks and habitual pedagogies. This geometricized approach to formulating drawing canons around the human figure (and in some cases, animals) is echoed in Kofi Antubam's characterization of the ideal Ghanaian figure which he stipulates, is composed of a particular configuration of ovals and circles.

In the teaching of life drawing, the geometrical framework set by the Hand and Eye type of instruction became emphasised and the term "anatomy" in Ghanaian Art College jargon was meant by how drawings conformed to any of such systems. It has been argued elsewhere (seid'ou, 2006) how such notions about art, however refined or exceeded by the later efforts of such illustrator-authors and publishers as Andrew Loomis and Walter Forster, became certified as unproblematic imperatives in studio activity in the College of Art, Ghana.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

After thirty-eight years of the institution of Hand and Eye Work in the Gold Coast, the debate had cumulatively tilted against its banality. The new strategy, articulated succinctly in the diatribe of Roger Fry was "to get rid of all that South Kensington nonsense" (Stevens, 1962, p. 334). Achimota, the Prince of Wales College, was to become the confluence of this new direction and the successive Promethean teachers, especially, G. A. Stevens, H. V. Meyerowitz and their Gold Coast assistants and students led the Cultural Revolution.

But Stevens' hostility towards Hand and Eye Training would have been misplaced if, for example, British Hand and Eye-type curriculum had not displaced authentic art experience with naïve "bread and butter" vocationalization or if the Gold Coast version had not been posited as the *only* possible art curriculum of the day. Today, it is a commonplace that the significant Pestalozzian and Froebellian tropes (gridded lines, divided squares and angles, child's innocent eye and self expression) unfortunately banalized by Somerset House, South Kensington and Hand and Eye apologists, had anticipated or even inspired such "progressive" early

modernist impulses as Johannes Itten's famous *Vokurs* and the preliminary courses of Josef Albers and Moholy-Nagy at the Bauhaus (Singerman, 1999, pp. 97-123). They also appear anonymously in minimalist work such as Agnes Martin and Sol Lewitt.

However, with the benefit of hindsight, it will be easy to see for example how belated Gold Coast Hand and Eye vocationalization would have been in Stevens' time, the period between the wars, if one considers that it was contemporaneous with Bauhaus and the early-modernist avant-garde art movements of the time. Sadly, Stevens' worry in the 1920's that "There was, and is, no provision for the training of taste, appreciation, criticism, or for the slightest perception of art history" seems to be still with us today, perhaps popping back to the surface like the inflated balloon submerged under water.

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<sup>1</sup> No. 1 of 1852 (C.O. 97/1) Gold Coast Acts 1852-64. Also, Mc William and Kwamena-Poh, (1975, p. 36)

<sup>2</sup> 1890 statistics in Report of Educationist's Committee in Metcalfe (1964, p. 579) By 1902, there were only two Government assisted Muslim schools. By 1907 they were defunct. (Metcalfe (1964, p. 580) Catholic Missionary education began in 1880, by 1890, Catholic schools accounted for approximately nine percent of the total student population of Government-assisted schools in the Gold Coast while Protestant schools accounted for 72 percent.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Johann G. Auer, the first qualified teacher to work at the Akropong Seminary and inspector of schools proposed a comprehensive educational reform in 1863. The Auer Reforms were implemented later by the Rev. J. A. Mader, successor to Auer and the third Principal of the seminary (1868-1877). Among other things the Auer Reforms introduced the Middle School system which was later to be adopted by the British Colonial government and which operated unchanged until the implementation of the Ghana Education Reforms by the Ministry of Education in 1987 (Owusu-Agyakwa et al 1994, p.62).

<sup>4</sup> My study of the origins of the principals of the Akropong Seminary before World War I shows that they were all German. Of the nine German principals listed by Owusu-Agyakwa et al, the majority are from the Wuerttemberg District. Wuerttemberg education of the time is especially noted for its vocational and technical inclination (Schweizer, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Four years after the passing of the 1882 Ordinance, the then Inspector of Schools, Rev. M. Sunter commented on the existing state of education in the Gold coast thus:

I cannot too strongly express my regret that no proper Ordinance has yet been passed; after the lapse of nearly four years an unworkable and ridiculously complicated Ordinance remains a dead letter...Till an Ordinance of a workable kind is passed no school can qualify, in the proper sense for a grant.

<sup>6</sup> I am relying on Forster's (1965/67) dating here. Antubam's dating (1919) for McLaren's introduction of "hand and eye" in the time tables of schools and training colleges as a pioneering effort seems less plausible for the subject was already on PTC time table by 1916 (Agyemang, 1988, p.19). Kwami's (2003) dating, 1908, seems to be referring to when the committee which drew up the the Educational Codes which introduced Hand and Eye was established.

<sup>7</sup> Asihene (2004) refers to the Accra Training College as the Accra Training Institution.

<sup>8</sup> According to Asihene (2004, p.71), [a]fter the completion of the course, the pioneer teachers were posted to training colleges, some of which, in those days were known as Seminaries.

<sup>9</sup> [Rev.] E. V. Asihene is listed among the staff of PTC 1900-1919, 1920-29 (Owusu Agyakwa et al 1994, p. 107). It might be safe to assume that since Hand and Eye was a two-year programme and Asihene was a pioneer in 1909, by 1912 he would have been back to the Seminary teaching Hand and Eye. Swithin J. Kwamena-Poh was Presbyterian Training College Art Tutor (1925-29). He seems to have succeeded [Rev.] E. V. Asihene.