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**Fosudo, Sola. The Artist As A Dreamer and A Realist: Re-Assessing Bode Osanyin's Writer's Resort, Lagos: Bode Osanyin Foundation, 2008. PP. 26**

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In the text of his lecture at the 2nd Bode Osanyin Memorial Lecture, held on Thursday, December 6, 2007, at the Arts Theatre, University of Lagos, Sola Fosudo offers a wealth of supplementary material that is intended to give the kind of knowledge required to comprehend what is, on the surface, familiar to most societies but is misunderstood: the roles and functions of artists in society. With his wealth of knowledge, his tenure as a senior lecturer at Lagos State University's Department of Theatre Arts and Music, his involvement in the film industry, and his extensive experience, Fosudo offers a sympathetic and creative perspective on the arts and the many contentious views about artists. In the Introduction, Fosudo explains that he chose the topic *The Artist as a Dreamer and a Realist*, using Osanyin's Writer's resort as an example, in order to explore the ideologies that undermine the role of the artist in society and talk about how the Nigerian government has failed to use the values of the arts to refine and civilize its citizens. I agree with Fosudo that the Osanyin family and the Bode Osanyin Foundation have effectively carried out what the government has failed to accomplish for a Nigerian theatre pioneer such as Hubert Ogunde (2008: 1-2).

Divided into four sections, the text reflects the rich experience of many years working in the arts. The first section covers an in-depth examination of art terms, the artist, dream, reality, and vision, providing the background knowledge needed to understand the art industry. The second section discusses the connections between the arts and other fields of study, looking into the work and duty assignments of artists in society in order to assess whether they are merely dreamers or truly real instrumental to communal advancements, values, and social change. While the third section touches on the comprehensive relevance and roles universal to the artists, the fourth section delves into the analysis of writer Bode Osanyin and his theater works, highlighting the writers resort as an extraordinary example of the relevance of the arts and the artist. Both society and each of us individually are strongly influenced by art. In the concluding section, Fosudo praises Bode Osanyin's sufficient dedication to putting into practice the practical theory of constructing a facility and fostering an atmosphere that can support the preservation of artistic practices. He also discusses the difficulty of upholding a steady gathering place that fosters innovative discussions about the state of art today and the artist in general.

*"Art and the Artist"* is the title of the first section. It introduces and explores various interpretations, descriptions, and points of view regarding art and artists from academics like Lanre Bamidele, Duro Oni, Matthew Umukoro, Edwin Wilson, and Alvin Goldfarb. To help even more, the section provides some understanding of how societal materials influence an artist's style and the medium in which they operate. One could argue that a society's physical resources dictate the possible instruments and forms of its artistic productions (pp. 3-5). An artist actually needs to know how to use the tools available to him in a creative way, concentrating more on what he can redesign to make society better. Nowadays, art has taken on a great deal of significance in our society, which has led to a great deal of appreciation and respect for the talented artists of today. Similarly, when contemplating the position of artists, Fosudo raises several significant issues, the answers to which will demonstrably bring attention to the necessity of a more thorough reexamination of the artist's duty: what are the responsibilities that artists play in society? Which purposes do they fulfil? Are they still relevant as contributors to the evolution of society because of the impact their works have on society? Do they use their creativity only to indulge in dreams and fantasies, or do their works make real and meaningful contributions to society? Do they have substance and authenticity? (p. 6)

In the section that follows, *"Dream and Reality,"* Fosudo, before addressing the hypothetical questions he raised in section one first takes us through the reassessment of two entirely different concepts: dream and reality. This is done to show the factors that might potentially account for creative thoughts or ideas conceived in the mind before they turn out to become physical inventions. In reference to the term, "Truthful lie", put forth by George Mercier and acknowledged

by Biodun Jeyifo, Fosudo maintains that there is a situation in which an artist's purportedly false creative work can actually be true (pp. 6-9). Finding the boundary between dream and reality, then, is essentially about taking a critical look at the past and considering how the processes have benefited the present. Fosudo makes it clear that when dreams are grounded in foresight—which entails sound judgement or common sense in everyday situations—they can come true (p. 7).

Answers to the questions posed in “*Art and the Artist*” are provided in the third section of the essay, “*The Roles and Functions of Artists in Society*”. This third section presents crucial ideas regarding the artist, particularly from a sociological perspective. It does this by highlighting the roles that notable poets and playwrights like Duvignaud, Shelley, Soyinka, Stendhal, Osofisan, and Osanyin played as change agents. According to Osofisan, who was cited by Fosudo in an interview with Muyiwa Awodiya, true art is an expression of reality as well as a response to it. The question of whether didactic literature and theatre have less social duty than other art forms or whether an artist's primary goal should be to create something beautiful is still up for dispute (pp. 9-12).

The contentious opinions regarding the significance of the arts and theatre, as well as their legacies and impacts, are examined in more detail in this section. According to Fosudo, the value of the arts and theatre should not be restricted to textual forms or be found primarily in books on literature. When applied practically, the innovative concepts drawn from theatre and the arts will have a bigger impact and have more meaning. Stated differently, the visions conveyed through the arts and theatre ought to incite the necessity of observable outcomes and behaviours inside the community. The problem of how to keep the arts and theatre relevant, as well as the social roles and responsibilities of artists, may appear specific to a given society, but there are universal methods for leaving a lasting legacy. It is thought that the patronage system and tangible marketing could bring about change in the arts and the theatre as exemplified by Bode Osanyin and the writer's resort (p. 13).

The idea that artists in society can drive creative reform and the business of the theatre where the government lags behind is illustrated by looking at how Bode Osanyin, in his roles and functions as an artist influenced by the indigenous Yoruba culture gained from Hubert Ogunde's travelling theatre and exposure to films shown in the cinema in his younger days in Ebute Metta, has been proactive in the arts and the theatre with demonstrable results. Fosudo highlights Osanyin's development as an artist whose works span all literary genres, from drama to poetry, in the fourth section, “*Bode Osanyin and the Writer's Resort*”. The writer's resort serves as one of Osanyin the artist's roles that add value and is a useful illustration of a functional art facility.

The artist will need to understand the necessity of owning and operating a functional arts theatre in the changing environment that would serve both commercial and creative objectives. The Bode Osanyin writer's resort is a practical strategy that blends artistic objectives with the

concepts of theatrical administration. This role of an artist may be unpopular with either the society or the creative community today. Maintaining a Foundation that upholds the artist's heritage and visions is essential to the artist's continuous relevance, particularly in Nigeria, as carried out by the Bode Osanyin family. Government-sponsored theatre reform programmes would not be necessary if artists acquire their own theatres because this will help to contribute to change in the advancement of the arts.

Osanyin's dedication to the arts and theatre is not limited to dreams and fantasies. His dedication as an artist is further demonstrated by the time and resources he spent to purchase a plot of land in Ogun State's Ijoko Ota neighbourhood and built a house that has since become a gathering place for poets, dramatists, publishers, and other art enthusiasts, demonstrating an important role of an artist in society. Dreams and literary forms should not be the only places where artists serve society. They ought to actively participate in creating infrastructure that can advance their communities, like writer's resorts. Mentally mature individuals will create well-developed communities. Reading his writings to audiences at several Berlin art galleries, Osanyin noticed lessons that could be applied as a Nigerian writer from his experience during the German Academy of Arts programmes (pp. 13-19).

As an artistic venue, the resort facilitates dialogue between performance and literary culture by hosting reading events and theatrical productions. An artist can make more informed selections about which aspects of his gifts will benefit his community more by redesigning and realising his duties as agents of change. For example, Osanyin has broadened the roles and responsibilities of artists in society to include their participation in the establishment of private, non-profit art facilities. Osanyin's writer's resort is a radical take on the roles and responsibilities of artists in society. Very few artists can afford to invest in the creation of an art centre to protect performance and literary culture from neglect. Communities whose artists harness their relevance by owning and operating Arts Theatre to offer entertainment and organise cultural events would have benefited more from theatre for development (pp. 20-21).

Setting an example is one of the main responsibilities and duties that artists play in society. It is necessary for an artist to depict reality in his creations. The reality may be political, economic, or economic. Realistic representation of the situation will support the movement for change and the adoption of new practices in society. The most crucial strategy for bringing about change is to face reality with imaginative aspirations and dreams. In his role as an artist, Osanyin has demonstrated a useful method for safeguarding cultural assets and promoting ongoing discussions about the value of the arts and the administration that is vital to the expansion of the arts and the theatre for the development of their various communities.

One of the most reliable ways to bring back the arts and theatrical productions is to borrow

ideas from the example of Bode Osanyin. In order to encourage community involvement in the arts, the artist must form alliances with organizations and individuals. Bode Osanyin Writer's Resort is among the best arts practices that can increase theatre attendance in any community. The text's conclusion, which is the last section, focuses on assessing the investment made by artist Bode Osanyin and outlining the support required to achieve the objective. The writer Bode Osanyin, who passed away in 2005, is regarded as a man of the theatre whose ideal, in Fosudo's opinion, has been realised. He was born on August 20, 1940, in Ijebu-Jesa, Osun State, in the southwest region of Nigeria. Osanyin's impressive infrastructure, which he started before he passed away, needs financial backing from the creative community as well as kind donations from people and international organisations like the Ford Foundation. Fosudo highlights that the Nigerian government can rarely provide any support for the arts and theatre because it does not recognise the value of the National Theatre or invest in cultural institutions (pp. 22-24).

Upon close examination of all the texts, it is evident that artists should not only adopt the roles of dreamers in society, but also actively invest in visions that become reality. One of the main points of Fosudo's presentation is to highlight the social roles that artists play as well as to encourage artists to embark on the difficult task of prioritising reality above illusions by dedicating themselves to build infrastructures for the present and future of their works.

## REFERENCES

Sola Fosudo, *The Artist As A Dreamer and A Realist: Re-Assessing Bode Osanyin's Writer's Resort*, Lagos: Bode Osanyin Foundation, 2008.