WOLE SOYINKA

Festschrift

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at

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THE EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE
INTRODUCTION

Influence, according to the Advanced Learners Dictionary, means the power to affect somebody's actions, character and beliefs, especially by providing an example for them to follow.

People, in life, in different professions always have some form of influence exerted on them during the course of their development, the theatre profession and professionals being no exception. Usually, several factors are responsible for this capacity to produce an impact on people's lives. Mostly, it derives from direct or indirect contact with people and places and it leads people to
Creating role models for themselves and ultimately developing a personality of their own.

This paper discusses the prime factors and elements of influence in the life and career of the present writer. It is a cherished account of the major circumstances that provided the development of artistic impetus in me and their psychological and vocational consequences on my professional growth.

The paper is structured into three sections. First I shall briefly explore the aesthetic principles and the meaning of the word "Art". Then, I shall examine the concept and the person of the Artist and discuss some of the factors that might be responsible for the discovery and making of Artists. Finally, I shall look at how patterns of discovery and processes of training go further to influence development and the general approach to the practice of the arts by the artists, using my personal experience as example. This example shall be surveyed under the following headings:
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(a) The period of proposition with Bode Osanyin (Late)

(b) The period of integration with Wole Soyinka

(c) The period of consolidation with Dapo Adelugba

WHAT IS ART ALL ABOUT?

*Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia* informs us that the word Art is derived from the Latin “Ars” meaning “skill”. Basically, therefore, Art is skill at performing an orderly set of specialised actions, as, for example, the art of gardening, or playing chess.

Art, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

is the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments or experiences that can be shared with others.²

The *Encyclopedia Americana* says Art, in its broadest sense, embraces all the creative disciplines—literature,
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poetry, drama, music, dance and the visual arts, while the *Encyclopedia of the Arts* says, "Art" designates any activity that is at once spontaneous and controlled. Art is distinguished from and contrasted with the processes of nature. Although David Best says natural phenomena and works of art may share similar concepts of aesthetic value, they are distinct because art is any intelligent method by which nature is controlled.

Traditionally, the arts are divided into the Fine and Liberal arts. The latter are concerned with skill of expression in language, speech and reasoning, while the former (Fine Arts) are concerned with purely aesthetic ends and the beautiful. However, many forms of expression combine aesthetic concerns with utilitarian purposes, pottery, architecture, metal working and advertising design may all be cited as examples. Furthermore, the Fine Arts are classified to include categories such as literature, including poetry, drama, etc; visual and graphic arts such as painting, drawing, designs and other forms expressed on flat surfaces. *The Plastic*
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arts including sculpture, modelling, etc; the decorative arts including enamel work, furniture design, mosaic, etc; the performing arts including theatre, dance, music, etc., and Architecture which includes interior designs and so on.

In his book, The Principles of Art, R.G Collingwood provides variegated definitions and meanings for the word 'Art' and explains that defining a term actually requires determining its usage because the confusion between the various senses of the word may produce bad practice as well as bad theory. He started by discussing what art is not and argues that Art is not craft because craft always involves a distinction between means and ends, between planning and execution.

A craft is always exercised upon something and aims at the transformation of this into something different. The craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it. In fact, the raw material is found ready made before the special work of craft begins. And again, the raw
material of one craft is the finished product of another? While these elements and features may not be totally jettisoned in some works of art, what, we may ask, are those special characteristics with which art may be contradistinguished from craft?

Collingwood describes Art as expression and as imagination, and states that the expressing of emotion should not be confused with what is called the betraying of it because it does not mean that, when an artist is afraid, he turns pale and stammers, or that, if he is angry, he turns red and bellows. The characteristic mark of expression is lucidity and intelligibility - a person who expresses something thereby becomes conscious of what it is that he is expressing and enables others to become conscious of it in himself and in them.

Agreeing with Collingwood, Hopsers also describes art as expression and as symbol and submits that expression has to do with manifesting inner feelings in some outward form or behaviour and again that it may be
used equivalently to evocation. Also, he states that Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings.

Edwin Wilson and Alvin Goldfarb in their book, *Theatre, the Lively Art*, describe art as a mirror or reflection of life, an abstraction or a projection of how we live, think and feel. Art reveals to us what people treasure and admire and what they fear most deeply. Art, according to them, is not only something we find desirable and enjoyable; it seems to be an absolute necessity for human survival.

There are feelings, emotions and ideas that cannot be expressed in any way other than through art. The beauty of a face or a haunting landscape may be impossible to convey in words, but it can be revealed in a painting; a complex personality can be captured in a novel or a play in a way that reveals the person's innermost soul; joy or anguish can often be communicated most directly and completely through music, poetry or drama. Without these modes of expression, that is, without art, human beings
would be as impoverished and as helpless as they would be, if they tried to live without language.

Comparing Art and Science, Funk and Wagnalls submit that both Art and Science require technical skill. Both the artist and the scientist try to create order out of the seemingly random and multifarious experiences of the world. Both try to understand and appreciate the world and to convey their experiences to others. The difference is that the scientist studies quantitative sense perceptions in order to discover laws or concepts that are universally true. The artist selects qualitative perceptions and arranges them to express personal understanding.

Whereas further investigation may cause a scientific law to be invalidated, a work of art has permanent validity as an aesthetic statement at a particular time and place in spite of the artist's view or the public taste. ¹¹

John Hospers informs us that, among the things in the world to which we respond aesthetically, works of art are
the most important single class and that, for every work of art to have value and be considered great, it must be an enduring source of aesthetic contemplation to many people at different times and places, and it must have what David Prall calls “aesthetic surface”. Works of art, Prall continues, should contain certain sensuous elements and experiences such as sounds and shapes, textures and lines, tastes and smells and various recognisable kinds of bodily feelings which have distinctive characters of their own.

Again, every art has form. Form has to do with the way an object is put together. The central principle of form is unity. A work of art must hang together, i.e. all its parts must be mutually coherent. For instance, if a play has two plots that never touch each other, we say it lacks unity. Yet again, there should be variety even in unity, so it is the duty of the artist to strike a balance between monotony and constant surprise in order to avoid what Hospers calls “sensory fatigue” or “attentive fatigue.”
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Art can be appreciated from different dimensions. Usually, an artist is not simply presenting a series of shapes and colours to delight the eye, or sounds to delight the ear. As important as these are, most artists have something to say about life. They try to present some features of the real world (or a more appealing imaginary world) in an attempt to heighten and enhance our experience. For instance, a study of painting can reorient our vision of the world. Works of literature almost always have something to say about life, by portraying people, their thoughts and feelings, whereby we can imaginatively identify ourselves with the persons depicted, thus gaining an insight into their characters, their problems, their world. 16

A concluding voice on all this is Elliot Eisner, who submits that art not only functions as a vehicle for the articulation of sublime visions, it also takes these visions most characteristic of man, his fears, dreams, his recollections, and provides those, too, with visual metaphors. 17.
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WHO IS THE ARTIST?

*Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines the ARTIST as a person who works or is skilled in any of the Fine arts and ARTISTE as a professional person in any of the performing arts. Both terms can be and are indeed used interchangeably in this essay. We are basically referring to a professional person either in the Fine or Performing Arts who does whatever he does with great skill.

The true Artist does not see Art as an escape from reality. He attempts to come to grips with reality in his own way, and, the more serious the art, the more resolute has been this attempt. Only the aesthete has subscribed to the thesis of “art for art’s sake”. The motto of the conscientious artist has been “art for life’s sake”.

The question of whether the artist is born or made has always generated and will continue to generate arguments. The issue I believe is linked directly to that of Talent and Training. Stanislavky, one of the greatest
teachers of the art of the stage, has spoken extensively on the need for an artist to be properly trained despite the degree of talent that he may possess. Good training combined with solid talent, according to him, produces "Technique".20

In the same vein, Collingwood agrees that the Artist must have a certain specialised form of skill which is called technique. He acquires his skill just as a craftsman does partly through personal experience and partly through sharing in the experience of others who thus become his teachers. He, however, argues that the technical skill which an artist acquires does not by itself make him an artist, because, according to him, a technician is made but an artist is born.21

Great artistic powers, for instance, may produce fine works of art, even though technique is defective, and even the most finished technique will not produce the finest sort of work in their absence, and yet, no work of art can be produced without some degree of technical skill. What all this points to is that, Talent and a natural histrionic gift
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are important just as training and the acquisition of technical skills are crucial.

Although artists may be unique geniuses impelled by their own creative energies, they are also very much products of their societies, and, in fact, the choice to be an artist may be culturally influenced. An artist, like every other human being, reflects in his own way and is reflected by his physical and cultural environments. As Leibniz would express it, "man mirrors the world of which he is part."22 The personality of the artist and the various influences on his life all combine to make him what he is.

Theodore Greene captures the situation very succinctly when she writes:

The artist's fugitive mental state cannot be divorced from his more enduring personality and outlook. Consciousness for the artist is a function of self, persisting in time as a relatively enduring pattern of memories, habits, impulses, etc. and self expression in art is, therefore, even in its most
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restricted forms, the expression of more than a passing mood, idea or impulse, it must, to some extent, express the artist’s enduring personality.  

When, therefore, an artist expresses himself in his art, he simultaneously and necessarily expresses certain aspects of the environment that has formed him. And the more spiritually significant his personality and outlook, the more does his art reveal the forces that have made him what he is.

Apart from the influence that society exerts on the artist, he (the artist) also influences the society in his roles as an observer, commentator and challenger of the way society conducts itself.

Lanre Bamidele in his essay, “Art and the Artist in Society,” in Literature and Sociology informs us that in traditional societies, for instance, the artist is seen as a “sustainer of the community and its institutions,” while in modern times, he (the artist) regards himself as a redeemer and his art as a redeeming agent.
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This assumption or assertion is sometimes taken to such an extreme that it becomes questionable. In spite of this argument, however, what is not in doubt is that, art serves as a civilizing agent. Bamidele concludes thus:

Whatever may be our reaction to the artist’s view about his art, whatever may be our reaction to the image and personality of the artist, whatever may be our reaction to the quality of art so produced, there is something spiritual in art for the serious connoisseur. Art is one of the few elements in our society that give the spectator, as well as the artist, a sense of transcendence. This spiritual or quasi-religious essence of art in society could be approximated to a divine mission.  

THE PERIOD OF PROPOSITION WITH ĐÔĐE QSANYIN (Late)

"Congratulations, my name is Đôđe Qsanyin, husband to your teacher and director of the play. I
must say that your performance was quite impressive, very brilliant. I strongly think that you are a man of the theatre and you should consider, in future, a career in theatre arts practice...”

These were the words of Bode Osanyin to me in 1977 at the premises of Muslim Teachers’ Training College, Surulere, after the command performance of 'Zulu Sofola’s Abiona in Love (a play now re-titled Memories in the Moonlight). He had been invited by his wife, Mrs Ajikè Osanyin, then a lecturer at the teachers’ college, to offer technical support for the school’s production. After the play, he called me aside and addressed me as above.

I have never before been so appreciated in my life. And not only that; no one has ever made any prediction to me concerning my future coupled with a recommendation of what I should or must do. Indeed, I found Uncle Bode’s approach very unforgettable, though, I must confess, I didn’t quite take his advice seriously at first, because I had other plans and interests at that time.
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Two years after, when I couldn’t pull those plans through, I went back to the Osanyins. When I told them that I was back to do theatre, he was very pleased, but he simply advised me first to endeavour to acquire a formal theatre arts education and he enlightened me about the different programmes available in Universities such as Ibadan, Ife, Port-Harcourt and so on. In the meantime, however, he asked me to join rehearsals and training sessions as Associate Cultural Officer with the then Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Lagos, where he worked.

The experience of my very first rehearsal with the Cultural Studies performing troupe was simply wonderful. It was for me a re-orientational encounter. With a simple introduction exercise of “knowing one another”, Uncle Bode took me through a significant voyage of self discovery through a process or principle described by Stephen Covey as ‘paradigm shift’. Covey informs us that the word ‘Paradigm’ in a general sense implies “the way we see the world - not in terms of our visual sense of
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sight but in terms of our perception, understanding and interpretation.27

The point is, our attitude, behaviour and responses are usually conditioned by our experience through what is called "mental maps" and we seldom question their accuracy. We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be. Each of us tends to think we see things as they are and that we are objective. But that may not really be correct. Usually we see the world not as it is, but as we are or as we are conditioned to see it. The more aware we are, therefore, of our basic paradigms, the more conscious we are of our assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience; the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a larger picture and a far more objective view. May I invite you to participate in a pictorial perception exercise. Let us take a few seconds and just look at the picture on the following page (Page 85).
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Also, look at the picture on the next page (Page 86) and carefully describe what you see.

Do you see a woman? How old would you say she is? What does she look like? What is she wearing? In what kinds of roles do you see her?

You probably would describe the woman in the second picture as being about 25 years old, very lovely, a rather fashionable damsel with a petite nose and a demure presence. If you were a single man, you might like to take her out.

But what if I were to tell you that you’re wrong? What if I said this picture is of a woman in her 60’s or 70’s who looks sad, has a huge nose, and is certainly no damsel. She’s someone you probably would help across the street. Who’s right? Look at the picture again. Can you see the old woman?

If we were talking face to face, we could discuss the picture. But because we can’t do that, turn to page 118 and study the picture there and then look at this picture again (page 87).
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Can you see the old woman now? It's important that you see her before you continue reading. Stephen Covey in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, explains that he first encountered this exercise many years ago at the Harvard Business School.

According to him:

The instructor was using it to demonstrate clearly and eloquently that two people can see the same thing, disagree, and yet both be right. It's not logical; it's psychological. He brought into the room a stack of large cards, half of that had the image of the young woman you saw on page 84 and the other half of which had the image of the old woman on page 117. He passed them out to the class, the picture of the young woman to one side of the room and the picture of the woman to the other. He asked us to look at the cards, concentrate on them for about ten seconds and then pass them back. He then projected upon the screen the picture you saw on page 86 combining both
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images and asked the class to describe what they saw. Almost every person in that class who had first seen the old woman’s image on a card saw an old woman in the picture. The professor then asked one student to explain what he saw to a student on the opposite side of the room. As they talked back and forth, communication problems flared up.

“What do you mean, old lady? She couldn’t be more than 20 or 22 years old!”

“Oh, come on. You have to be joking. She’s 70—could be pushing 80!”

“What is the matter with you? Are you blind? This lady is young, good looking. I’d like to take her out. She’s lovely”.

“Lovely? She’s an old hag.”28

The arguments went back and forth, each person sure of, and adamant in, his or her position. All of this occurred in spite of one exceedingly important advantage the students had: most of them knew early in the
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demonstration that another point of view did, in fact, exist, something many of us would never admit. Nevertheless, at first, only a few students really tried to see this picture from another frame of reference.

After a period of futile communication, Covey continues,

One student went up to the screen and pointed to a line on the drawing (of page 86).

"There is the young woman's necklace." The other one said, "No, that is the old woman's mouth." Gradually, they began to calmly discuss specific points of difference, and finally one student, and then another, experience sudden recognition when the image of both came into focus. Through continued calm, respectful, and specific communication, each of us in the room was finally able to see the other point of view. But when we looked away and then back, most of us would immediately see the image we had been conditioned to see in the (first) ten-second period of time.²⁹
and queried, “What is the meaning of ‘Tony’?” since I announced “Tony” as my name when it came to my turn during the exercise.

“It is short form of Anthony, sir. He is a saint, a catholic saint,” I replied.

“I don’t care whether he is a politician, an angel, a cowboy or an engineer, I only want to know the meaning of the name,” he said. Of course I became speechless.

He asked, “Don’t you have any other name?”

“I do, sir,” I replied.

“Tell us,” he said.

“Oluṣọla,” I answered.

“What’s the meaning of Oluṣọla?” he questioned.

After a brief silence, I replied, “It means, God provides wealth.”
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He demanded for a round of applause and said emphatically, “That is your name,” and then the exercise continued.

Of course everyone now mentioned their “actual” names (i.e. what the colonialists would rather refer to as native or middle names) even when they could hardly remember or pronounce them well. For a moment, I was lost in thought in the hall, but all the same, I was very pleased with myself. I had just had a paradigm shift. Again, according to Covey,

Paradigm shifts move us from one way of seeing the world to another. And those shifts create powerful change, becoming the sources of our attitude and ultimately our relationship with other people and the world.31

That moment, I believe, I came to a sudden realisation of my real identity. Not that I have never been called Olusọla before, but, for whatever reason, Tony was, before then, the name and symbol of my identity. Without
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unnecessarily being afrocentric or atheistic, it was the first time I felt truly a native of my people and place; it was the first time I started to think and reflect seriously on the question of aboriginal or native mentality; it was the first time I started to think of the bounteous traditions of my people, of our own customs, the cultural trappings, the arts, crafts, religion, philosophies and so on. Hence, my interest in this field of human endeavour that seeks to lead one to come in contact with individual essence, and that of his cosmology, through a consciousness that is basically cultural, became heightened.

After the rehearsal I went to thank him, but he smiled and waved off the gratitude. He charged me immediately to proceed to Ife and Ibadan to make enquiries concerning academic programmes in theatre arts. I did, and a few months later, after due processing, I got admitted for a certificate in drama (CDA) programme at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)) in 1980.
So, Bọde Qsanyin it was, who proposed me, as it were, as a candidate into the world of theatre, He set me forward to sojourn in this humanistic profession which makes use of Drama, Dance, Music and Visual Arts as instruments of creative communication.

THE PERIOD OF INTEGRATION WITH WOLE ṢOYINKA

When I got to Ife in 1980, it was easy for me to assume the name of my new identity (i.e. ṢOLA FOSUDO), as I immediately found out that all the lecturers with whom we were to interact as students have such names as Wole Soyinka, Ṭeimi Ogunbiyi, Kọle Ọmọtọso, Olu Akọmọlafe, Ọṣẹgun Akinbọla, Ọjàlabọ Ajayi, etc. I must have been influenced by all the lecturers in different ways, but the impact and influence that Soyinka had on me was most memorable.

Professor Ṣoyinka is a man who is strikingly charismatic and, at the same time, very enigmatic. He has undoubtedly and positively influenced thousands of
people not only in the Arts but in many other spheres of life. Late Femi Johnson, for instance, recounts in *Before Our Very Eyes* how Soyinka taught him hunting. Alain Ricard describes Soyinka as a wine lover and says he made him to appreciate wine more than he could ever imagine, even as he was born and raised in Bordeaux, France (the wine nation).  

Femi Osofisan also talks of how he was captivated and inspired by the drama of Soyinka, especially *Kongi’s Harvest* staged at the Arts Theatre, U.I., in the mid 60’s, while he was still a student at Government College, Ibadan. After watching the play, he confesses that the experience was totally mesmerizing and that he was entranced by the special effects, the costuming, lights, dancing and music, etc.  

According to him, the mechanics of performance, the persuasive brilliance of the acting, the seductiveness of the successive spectacles and the rich explorations of language deployed in the dialogue of the play all had a
significant influence on him with regard to his development as a dramatist.  

The main impact Professor Soyinka had on my life came really after my programme at Ife. He was then the Head of the Department of Dramatic Arts and Artistic Director of the University of Ife Theatre (Now, Awo Varsity Theatre). Through his influence, three of my colleagues (Ayo Thomas, Jide Ogundipe and Jimoh Fakoyejo) and my humble self, were encouraged to remain with the Department as performing staff of the University Theatre Troupe after the One-year programme. (In other words, we were retained and given automatic appointments.) The circumstances of our retention and employment into the troupe were curious. Prof. Soyinka, being a highly discerning man who operates at the highest level of mystical foresight, must have observed in some of us (while we were schooling) prodigies of some sort, and so, before our graduation, we were contacted through the troupe’s management and asked to consider staying back as staff of the University Theatre company. To say the
truth, the idea was a great privilege which we all (the aforementioned) embraced and acted upon. So we joined the company in February 1982. Then, about a year later, Professor Soyinka sent for the four of us. In those days, it was terrifying for Soyinka to send for you either as a student or as a member of the troupe. A lot of horrible thoughts ran through your mind and, in great anxiety, you began to enquire from everybody what the matter could be.

However, because Professor Soyinka is a highly unpredictable person, usually, none of the guesses offered by your sympathisers was ever right. Eventually, you just submit yourself to fate and proceed to wait at his door with such prayers as - “The Lord is my Shepherd”.

Anyway, when we eventually stood before him in his office, he went straight to the point and said:

I have called you to let you know that you’re expected to be a bit more up and doing in the
troupe. For instance, you don’t have to wait for senior members of the company to initiate productions. You are very free to pick short plays, one-act plays and work on them for staging. And you’re sure to get the backing of the company’s management. OK?34

We all just said, “Yes, sir”. He waited a few seconds to see if anyone of us would ask a question. But perhaps because none of us ever expected the subject of discussion, we remained silent. Thereafter, he dismissed us by simply saying, “That is all”.

I must confess today, that Professor Soyinka’s charge to my colleagues and I that day opened a new page, perhaps the centre spread in my professional development. Personally, I felt challenged by Prof. Soyinka’s encouragement. And so, a few months later, I picked a play, a comedy titled Blood and Tears written by a Ghanaian dramatist, Asiedu Yirenkyi, with a desire to direct. And yet, it was not easy to declare that I wished
to direct a play for the company. It is pertinent to emphasise here that the University of Ife theatre has been in existence since 1967 with the name Ori Olokun Players founded by Late Professor Qla Rotimi and under the subsidy of the then Institute of African Studies of the University. In 1976 when the Departments of Dramatic Arts, Fine Arts and Music were created out of the Institute, Ori Olokun was renamed University of Ife Theatre and gazetted as an official unit of the Department of Dramatic Arts. Since its inception, it has premiered and produced such big productions as Qla Rotimi’s *The Gods are not to Blame*, *Kurunmi*, *Ovonramwen Nogbai*; *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again*; Peggy Harper’s *Purapakali*, *Alantagan*, *Ogun Onire*, Soyinka’s *Opera Wonyosi*, Camwood *on the Leaves*; Kole Omotossy’s *Shadows in the Horizon*, Akin Isola’s *Madam Tinubu*, Aiyé ye won tán, to mention a few.\(^{35}\)

Again, it has featured such big names as Jimi Šolanké, Akin Šofoluwe, Laide Adewale, Kọla Oyewọ, Femi Euba, Peter Fatomilọla and so on (as actors). For a young
member of staff such as I was (barely a year old with the company and just about 2 years old in the theatre profession) to take on a responsibility to direct a play with such a professional troupe of about 15 years standing cannot be described as a mean task.

However, as stated earlier, the plunge was taken, which, for me, yielded results that were professionally fulfilling. The play was produced and eventually tagged "orientation production," used to welcome the new students admitted into the University that year - 1983. It ran for a few nights and was also taken to some venues outside the campus, as was the tradition with most of the productions of the Troupe. Unfortunately, Professor Soyinka was not around to see any of the performances, as he was away abroad shortly after he approved the play for production. When he came back I went excitedly to inform him of our effort in realising the production (though I guess he must have been officially briefed by Dr (now Professor) Koledo Omoteso who acted as Ag. Head and Director of the
Company in his absence). He nodded and said, "Hm... I am glad to hear it went well. I'd like to see it resuscitated."\(^{36}\)

Although the play was never brought back on stage before I left for the University of Ibadan later that year to further my education, Professor Soyinka had already touched my life directly by integrating me in the mainstream of theatre arts practice. The experience of directing the production was profoundly insightful. It extended the range of my understanding of the professional demands of theatre arts practice. It opened for me a fresh horizon in the articulation of creative ideas and the coordination of the workforce in the theatre. Indeed that experience prepared me subconsciously for leadership responsibilities in the profession. I was then motivated to build up my credentials through scholarship in order to add academic value to Professor Soyinka's integration influence. I would like to thank Professor Soyinka for the crucial role he played in making me to realise my potentials and providing inspiration for me to embark on further exploration in the theory and practice of the arts of the theatre.
THE PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION WITH DAPÒ ADELUGBA

Professor Dapọ Adelugba is probably the most crucial influence in my career and professional life, because he not only inspired me in the way of scholarship, he trained me, like he did most of his students, in very unconventional but effectively enduring ways. Beyond these, he offered himself as a friend and confidant and I believe I must have gained more from Professor Adelugba outside the classrooms than from lecture halls, because if he had recommended 20 books for a class to read and review for a particular course, I would have to read additional 10 by virtue of my closeness to him and being with him often.

A very likeable personality, approachable, simple and sympathetic. A very meticulous man whose anger no one prays to encounter. Erroneously regarded as harsh for his occasional emotional outbursts against laziness and naughty tendencies, Professor Adelugba combines, most admirably, academic competence with a sure knowledge
of the art of the physical stage. A tireless teacher, regarded usually as the perfect model of the balanced Nigerian Artiste, for his possession of intellectual prowess in theory and creative ingenuity in practice. Though I got to Ibadan in 1983 to begin studies leading to a Diploma in Theatre arts, my first intimate experience with him began in 1985 when I directed my class (i.e. Diploma II) production of The Trials of Brother Jero under the course titled "Production Workshop" which he handled as lecturer. Apart from remembering that he guided us systematically on how to achieve the play on stage, what I cannot forget about the experience of the production was that on the day of performance, he assembled us in front of the Arts Theatre, informed us that the Arts Theatre had been booked for another event and so our practical examination could not hold there any more. We thought he was going to give us a new date of performance, but he continued: I have, however, concluded arrangements for your class to have the practical examination at the university zoological gardens. So you go ahead and get the place ready for your show, I'll join you at 2 p.m. I don't think you should
bother yourselves with set construction. Whatever set pieces and set props you can get to the venue will do.\textsuperscript{37}

For a moment it was like we didn’t hear him well. We were simply dumbfounded. Drama performance in the Zoo? But before we could recover from our wonderment, he disappeared. And the time was then 1.30p.m. We had a choice - to prepare for the exam at 2pm or to face the wrath of the Professor for being contumacious. Again, we reminded ourselves of one of his usual sayings, “Instructions are part of an examination, observe them.”

Throughout my Ile and Ibadan years, I learnt very rapidly about the open-ended possibilities of the theatre from my teachers in more ways than I could describe here, not only in terms of dramatic composition, but also in terms of interpretation and presentation. The foregoing point is, for me, fundamental and crucial because I believe that, as a philosophy, the nature of training of anyone in a profession affects the pattern of understanding of the profession, which ultimately affects the attitude of the person to practice.
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In my first year (i.e. 200 Level) at the degree programme later that year in 1985, I had another opportunity to work with Prof. Adelugba on a private level. He had been commissioned by the United States Information Service (USIS), Lagos to produce Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie to be staged in Lagos and to be recorded for the WNBS radio in Ibadan. I had joined the production as stage manager. However, at the beginning of that academic session, Prof. Adelugba had just been appointed Head of the Department of Theatre Arts, so he was quite busy. He therefore couldn’t attend the first four calls for rehearsals and whenever I went up to inform him that the cast was ready, he directed me as stage manager to coordinate a reading of the play with the cast. Thereafter he directed, at different times, that we should read the play again and discuss the plot, characters and so on. Then when it became apparent that the workload at the office of the Head of Department would prevent him from concentrating on the production,
he scribbled a note and sent it to me one day at one of the reading cum discussion sessions. The note read...

Nov 10, 1985

Mr Sola Fosudo

Department of Theatre Arts

You now have the go-ahead to direct *The Glass Menagerie* for November 28 at USIS, Lagos, using the concepts of the 1984 production and adapting these after due consultation with me on each detail. Do not wait for me. I'll be dropping by from time to time but I must now hand the responsibility over to you.

Good luck.

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Unless I want to lie, I must admit that note sent jitters across my spine. I thought, how could I direct a play that
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has been given to a Professor to produce by an International Organisation and perhaps for an International audience such as U.S.I.S. Quickly I showed the note to my colleagues-the cast of the play, and they all seemed to support Professor Adelugba's decision. For the first time, I carried out research on a play as director. I had to find out biographical details on Tennessee Williams as dramatist; I had to look for essays written on his works and writings; above all, I had to read some other plays of his such as Suddenly Last Summer, A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

I thought I needed to have an insight into the playwright's world and background, his ideology, aesthetic vision and the philosophy that informs his dramatic composition. The result was rewarding. It made my approach to the work quite limpid. However, I wasn't so sure at first whether Professor Adelugba would approve of my interpretation or not. I looked forward nervously to the day he would come to see us at rehearsals. One day, after a rehearsal, I told
the cast to wait while I call Prof. Adelugba so that we can re-run for him what we had done. Then suddenly from nowhere, a voice came ringing,

I am right here, oh, I have been part of the rehearsals today right from the beginning, only I didn’t want to disturb the proceedings. So, you go ahead and give your notes, you are the director (referring to me).”³⁹

Quickly I said, “No, sir, we wanted you to see the run through of what we did, so you can give us your notes …

And he replied almost interruptingly…

Yes. But I have just told you that I saw everything (pause) oh I think it was stupendous…. (He continued)⁴⁰

But, for a moment, I felt discouraged, deflated and ashamed of myself. I thought the word “stupendous” had
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a connection with "stupidity" and I thought quietly, I didn't ask to direct the play anyway, you compelled me to do it, so you will have to bear part of the consequences of my stupidity. However, as he continued to address us, I observed that the other things he was saying were complimentary. He gave the actors some notes and closed the rehearsal, asking me to see him before leaving.

Professor Adelugba is simply a wonderful person. I may not be able to fully recount in this essay the several surprises he sprang on us, especially me, concerning that production, but I am proud to say now that all he did then contributed in no small measure to firmly establish confidence in my approach to the practice of theatre. Unknown to him, as was the case with Òsanyin and Soyinka, Professor Adelugba had succeeded in being instrumental to the conjugation of the process of the discovery, development and deployment of some of those latent potentials I may have possessed. For me, it was a
great privilege to have worked with a professor of his standing under the circumstances at that time.

So, with Prof. Adelugba's approval of my interpretation of the play, and the fact that it was well received in Lagos and everywhere it was performed, I grew a bit taller in terms of conviction, but certainly not out of conceit, and I developed a greater trust in my ability to handle theatrical undertakings.

I therefore wish to thank Professor Adelugba for bringing together into a united whole and consolidating, as it were, my desire and aspiration to be trained and be able to practise the theatre with a fair degree of professional competence.

CONCLUSION

I wish to conclude this essay with a brief reflection on the prevailing elements in the patterns of approach to my work, both in terms of initial lead off and subsequent response by the three benefactors discussed above. They are:

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(i) Element of challenge;

(ii) Element of praise.

**Element of Challenge:** Challenge is defined as a difficult task that tests somebody’s ability or a call on another by somebody to do something requiring boldness. Now, it is a fact that many of us do not really know who we are, that is, we are mostly unaware of our gifts, endowments and abilities until we have opportunities to be engaged in activities that will bring to the fore the inherent capabilities hitherto innate in us and waiting to be tapped.

We therefore need to be proactive and take initiative at every opportune moment. We also need the promptings of other people, especially those who are more experienced, to lead us off into activities and engagements that would make us come in contact with those inner resources within us. This way, we might start to gradually come to a realisation of our capabilities and consequently begin to discover our real selves.
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Consider Wole Soyinka's charge to this writer in a meeting he called in his office in February 1983 (see p. 17). Consider also the note sent to this writer by Professor Adelugba at rehearsals in November 1985 (see p. 22). Covey describes as very progressive, the creation of an atmosphere where people can seize opportunities and solve problems in a self-reliant way. It is important to note, however, that facing a challenge is one thing and taking up the challenge is another, and, as Covey summarises, the difference between people who exercise initiative and those who don't is literally the difference between night and day.\textsuperscript{42}

Element of Praise

Praise means to express approval or admiration for somebody or something. It also means to applaud, commend or pay a compliment to somebody over something.\textsuperscript{43}

In his essay, "How to spur men on to success," Dale Carnegie submits that praising even the slightest
improvement inspires the other fellow to keep on improving. He believes that we can change people and in fact transform them into a realisation of the hidden treasure they possess if we inspire them and appreciate what they do. It could be demoralising to condemn people, even when they haven't done well. And again, even when we don't want to eulogise or praise people for whatever they have done, a mere recognition of their effort can go a long way in providing motivation to do better.  

Consider Bodé Osanyin's encomiums on this writer after the command performance of Abiona in Love at the Muslim Teachers' College, Surulere in 1977 (see p. 7). Consider also Professor Adelugba's assessment of the rehearsal handled by this writer on the production of The Glass Menagerie by the USIS in 1985 (see p. 23).  

Dale Carnegie offers us some examples of how some men have been spurred on to success through praise and encouragement.

He writes... (Example 1)
Years ago, a young man in London aspired to be a writer. But everything seemed to be against him. He had never been able to attend school for more than four years. His father had been flung in jail because he couldn't pay his debts, and this young man often knew the pangs of hunger. Finally, he got a job pasting labels on bottles of blacking in a rat-infested warehouse; and he slept at night in a dismal attic room with two other boys - gutter snipes from the slums of London. He had so little confidence in his ability to write that he sneaked out and mailed his first manuscript in the dead of night so nobody would laugh at him. Story after story was refused. Finally the great day came when one was accepted. True, he wasn't paid a shilling for it, but one editor had praised him. One editor had given him recognition. He was so thrilled that he wandered aimlessly around the streets with tears rolling down his cheeks.

The praise, the recognition that he received by getting one story in print, changed his whole
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career, for if it hadn't been for that encouragement, he might have spent his entire life working in rat-infested factories. You may have heard of that boy. His name was Charles Dickens.⁴⁵

(Example II)

Half a century ago, another boy in London was working as a clerk in a dry-goods store. He had to get up at five o'clock, sweep out the store, and slave for fourteen hours a day. It was sheer drudgery and he despised it. After two years, he could stand it no longer, so he got up one morning, and, without waiting for breakfast, tramped fifteen miles to talk to his mother, who was working as a housekeeper.

He was frantic. He pleaded with her. He wept. He swore he would kill himself if he had to remain in the shop any longer. Then he wrote a long, pathetic letter to his old schoolmaster, declaring that he was heart-broken, that he no longer wanted to live. His old schoolmaster gave him a little praise and assured him that he really was very
intelligent and fitted for finer things and offered him a job as a teacher.

That praise changed the future of that boy and made a lasting impression on the history of English literature. For that boy has since written seventy-seven books and made over a million dollars with his pen. You've probably heard of him. His name is H.G. Wells. 46
NOTES

1. *Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia* vol. 2 (America Assurib), Funk and Wagnalls Corp., USA, p. 391.

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7. Ibid., pp 15 – 16.

8. Ibid., pp 121 – 122.


16. Ibid., p. 6.
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22. See John Hospers, op. cit., p. 81.


24. Ibid., p. 81.


28. Ibid., p. 27.
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29. Ibid., p. 28.
30. Ibid., p. 28.
34. Ibid., pp 30 – 31.
35. Wole Soyinka’s address to Ayo Thomas, Jide Ogundipe, Jimo Fakoyejo and Solaja Fosudo in his office at the University of Ife (now O.A.U), February 1983.
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Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, 1989, pp. 65 – 96.

37. Comment by Wole Soyinka to Sọlá Fosudo following the reports on the “Orientation Production” of the University of Ife (now O.A.U.) in Nov. 1983.

38. Address by Professor Adelugba to the Diploma II Class, Theatre Arts Students of the University of Ibadan, June 1985.

39. A Note from Professor Dapo Adelugba to Sọlá Fosudo on the production of Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie by the U.S.I.S., November 1985.

40. Ibid.


42. Steven Covey, op. cit., p.66.

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Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, 1989, pp. 65 – 96.

37. Comment by Wole Soyinka to Sọla Fosudo following the reports on the “Orientation Production” of the University of Ife (now O.A.U.) in Nov. 1983.

38. Address by Professor Adelugba to the Diploma II Class, Theatre Arts Students of the University of Ibadan, June 1985.

39. A Note from Professor Dapo Adelugba to Sọla Fosudo on the production of Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie by the U.S.I.S., November 1985.

40. Ibid.


42. Steven Covey, op. cit., p.66.

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44. Dale Carnegie, from *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Benin City, Rhema Publishers Inc. (By arrangements with Simeon and Schuster, 1936, p. 228).


46. Ibid., p. 230.