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Published by the Department of English, Lagos State University
The
English
Compendium 1 & 2

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Chapter 44

CONTEMPORARY LAGOS: A STUDY OF THE PEOPLE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE OF LAGOS STATE
Sola Fosudo and Bola Ademeso

Introduction

A cursory look today at the city of Lagos, presents the picture of a metropolitan urban settlement characterised by ethnic plurality and socio-cultural diversity. Lagos, now the commercial capital and the economic nerve centre of Nigeria, has really come a long way and it possesses a unique and interesting history of foundation, urbanisation, commercial growth, socio-cultural life, linguistic development and so forth.

This paper examines the history of the origins of Lagos, the pattern of the influx of other natives including the white man into the city, the impact of this on the overall development of the city and its environs. Also, a study is made of the literature, cultures and traditions of the peoples of the state, including a study in the sociology of the playwrights and plays on Lagos.

ORIGIN OF LAGOS

There are many historical dimensions to the origin of Lagos. However, it is not in contention that Lagos was originally inhabited by a Yoruba man called Olofin who settled at Iddo Island. Olofin had 32 children and divided Lagos Island among 12 of his children of whom Olumebon was the eldest. The others include Aromire, Olofo, Ojora, Onitolo, Onitana, Onikoyi, Oniru, Oluwa, Onisino, Elegusi and Ojomu.

Aromire was the first to develop and make use of his piece of land, building huts and utilizing the rest for farming. Chief Olofin’s sons were known as ALEDEJO-Association of Co-operative Society of Fishermen. They are to this day still known as IDEJO chiefs. The site of the present palace known as Iga Iduganran was Aromire’s pepper farm. Its name was derived thus “Iganran” which means pepper while ‘Idun’ means House. In other words “Pepper House”.

According to Losi (1967) about this same time, Ogunfunmire a hunter who came from Ile-Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba civilization, led a group of Awori to settle at Ilishi sometimes in the 16th century. During the tribal conflicts, which occurred in the last part of the 16th century between Benin and Ilishi, Oba Oroghua of Benin was reported to have occupied Lagos Island and established a military camp. A Benin war captain was killed and his body was carried to Benin by an Ilishi citizen named ASIIPA.

Asipa was said to have found favour with Benin rulers and he was presented the insignia of office by the Benin monarch. Asipa’s reign marked the beginning of a new dynasty, which though of Yoruba origin and extraction was considerably influenced by the Benin kingdom. Asipa created a new class of chiefs not based on the possession of land but on service to the king; an action similar to the act performed by Oba Ewuare of Benin.
Asipa was succeeded by Oba Ado who also governed in accordance with the system designed by the Benin monarch. He collected annual tributes from his subjects for remittance to the Oba of Benin. He shifted the capital to Ido Island. After Ado ruled Gabaro who seemed to have adopted a rather conciliatory attitude to the descendents of Olofin. He shifted the seat of government from Ido back to Lagos Island and occupied Iga Idunganran. Gabaro created more chieftanship titles along the Benin model but also conferred titles on more of Olofin's descendents. Intr family feud between Oba Gabaro and his brother Akinsemoyin led to a series of events, which later influenced the growth of Lagos.

DERIVATION OF THE NAME, LAGOS OR EKO
From the beginning, the inhabitants of Lagos have proved to be very permissive and accommodating. This is why from the period of Olofin and Ogunfunmire, till the present time, Lagos has continued to witness a steady migration of people from other parts of the country and indeed the world.

The name Lagos itself was derived from the Portuguese who named the Island Lago-de-curamo when they first came to Lagos, from which Kuramo waters near the Eko Hotels also derived its own name. Lagos is also said to be the name of a town in Portugal.

The Yoruba name for Lagos, Eko is derived from Oko (Yoruba word for farm) or Eko, (Benin word for war camp). That these names have been retained buttress the tolerance, the cosmopolitan and outward looking nature of the state and its people.

THE GROWTH OF LAGOS
The foundation of the modern outlook, the political and commercial influence, which Lagos possesses today, was laid by the dynamic leadership of their Obas.

As earlier noted, after Gabaro, Oba Akinsemoyin, the 2nd son of Ado returned from exile in Badagry to occupy the throne of Lagos around 1720. He had gone to Egun in Badagry on exile as a consequence of a tyranny he was accused of by Gabaro. Akinsemoyin had criticised Gabaro of recognising too many of Olofin's descendents as chiefs. This did not go down well with Gabaro especially as he heard of this criticism through a third party. In an open meeting, Gabaro confronted Akinsemoyin and alleged him of attempted subversion in the presence of the chiefs. Since Akinsemoyin would not budge nor apologise, he was asked to leave the town.

It was in Badagry that Akinsemoyin made preliminary contacts with the Portuguese who had established trading relationships with the neighbouring state of Dahomey. When the relationship between the Portuguese and Dahomey was strained, they found solace in other ports and sites such as Badagry and by the time Akinsemoyin ascended the throne in Lagos, he encouraged the Portuguese to come to Lagos.

Until the accession of Akinsemoyin, Lagos was regarded a backward area, a sandy and insignificant island far removed from the centre of power in Nigeria. At the time that Benin Obas were exercising influence on Lagos, there were reports that the unattractive nature of Lagos must have affected their enthusiasm for incorporating Lagos into Benin kingdom.

Akinsemoyin's reign and the commercial activities that took place in Lagos changed the picture of the city.

Traders mainly from Portugal in addition to some Brazilians and interested Lagosians were able to take advantage of the existence of the calm waters of the Lagoon which opened up a vast system of inland waterways connecting Lagos by canoe with Port-Novo and beyond on the West and with Creeks about 100 miles to the east. It was in this way that Lagos became important first among the Yoruba and later (among Nigerians as a centre of trade and politics.

Adefuye et al (1987) inform use that Akinsemoyin's reign witnessed the foundation of the walls of present day Iga Idunganran. His Portuguese friends were said to have built a palace in a style to suit his way of life with imported materials such as iron columns and roof tiles. It was also during this time that slave trade flourished. Transit camp and baracooins where slaves were kept pending their transportation by sea to
Europe grew up on various sites near present day Marina. The trade also benefitted Akinsemoyn and his Lieutenants.

After Akinsemoyn came Ologunkutere in 1749 who virtually continued rulership in the fashion of Akinsemoyn. After Ologunkutere came King Adele Adesun 1775-1780, Osinkun 1780-1819.

The institution of Obaship in Lagos has seen eighteen monarchs on the throne since its inception in 1630 with Oba Ado as the 1st King and his Royal highness Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II as the incumbent, some of the notable Obas include Kosoko 1845-1852, Dosunmu 1853-1885, Sir Adeniji Adele II 1949-1964 etc.

The influx of people to Lagos created accommodation and employment problems and this was responsible for the building of industries and residential accommodation. This marked the development of Lagos from just small areas of farmlands and swamps to include areas reclaimed, drained and sand filled into estates and residential areas such as Tolo Wharf, Oyingbo, Ebute-Meta, Yaba, Surulere, Itire, Oshodi, Ikeja, etc. Recent ones include Ilupeju, Obanikoro, Anthony Village, and Amuwo Odofin Estates. In addition to this are areas like Ikoyi where Europeans and affluent members of the society live as government reservation area (GRA). The various people who make up Lagos today have perceived for long a common destiny founded largely on industry and commerce. The very name Lagos conjures up a myriad of experiences and a thousand faces. In fact to have been born or to have grown up in Lagos seems to bestow a lifelong capability for survival from which one continually benefits.

Lagos even has a praise name or chant like any worthy personage.

_Eko Akete_
_Ilu Ogbon_
_Aromi Sa_
_Legbe Legbe_
_Aro de de_
_Ti ko le ja_
_Oba ma pa lu eko re._

A literal translation of the chant conveys the pride and depth of feeling developed by many over the years about the city of Lagos.

_Lagos_
_The capsule of wisdom_
_Bedecked with_
_Interminable stretches_
_Of water_
_Scourging precariously_

_Never to crash_
_May the Good Lord never destroy Lagos._

Life was good in those days. A popular highlife tune of the society affirmed that:

_Lagos na so so enjoyment_
_You get money, yo no get money o_
_Na so so enjoyment_
_Lagos e be só so enjoyment._

Lagos still accommodates the rich and the poor, the hard-worker and the lazy drone, the breadwinner and the bread eater. It accommodates the philosopher and the ignoramus, and even for beggars and layabouts, Lagos is a present day Eldorado.
PATTERNS OF LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN LAGOS

Linguistic contact in Lagos has several dimensions to it following the several levels of linguistic interactions, which characterised the patterns of development and growth of Lagos.

One dimension of linguistic contact involved the Yoruba language as used in Lagos in the early and mid 19th century coming in contact with foreign languages such as English, Portuguese and Sierra Leone Creole. During the period, there was European incursion into the West Coast of Africa and also the migration into Lagos of the victims of Slave trade.

Another dimension involves the contact between the Yoruba and other Nigerian languages such as Igbo, Efik, Hausa, Urhobo, Edo, Eguns and so on. These languages were spoken by the various ethnic communities in Lagos and with this, they established themselves such that the daily contacts they had with the Yoruba speaking population of Lagos influenced their acquisition of the language and today many of them speak the Yoruba language quite fluently (though some accents may be noticed)

\[ e.g. \quad \text{Hausa - } \text{Ari e u da ni} \quad \text{Are you sick?} \]
\[ \text{Igbo - } \text{Ma wo e} \quad \text{Look at you} \]
\[ \text{Ki lone omodo yi} \quad \text{What's wrong with this toddler?} \]

The third dimension involves the contact between Eko (i.e. the dialect variety of Yoruba used in Lagos) and other Yoruba dialects such as Egba, Ijebu, Oyo, Ibadan, Ijesha, Ijage etc. The presence of these various Yoruba dialects obviously contributed to the evolution of the form of Yoruba language being spoken in urban Lagos today. The history of linguistic contact is thus intimately intertwined with the settlement history and patterns of immigration and migration into Lagos.

By the mid 19th century according to Adefuye et. al (1987), majority of the Yoruba people in Lagos were already having regular business contacts with English speaking traders in addition to the large numbers of Nigerian immigration from Brazil, Cuba, Sierra Leone who spoke either Portuguese, Creole or some Yoruba.

Apart from the fact that there were not many opportunities for the indigenous population to learn English, it was recorded that following the Education Ordinance of 1882, the people reacted, implying that a Yoruba man had no need to learn English. There was much pride in the fact that most of the people who came to Lagos already started to learn to speak Yoruba. Although some of the Sierra Leonian immigrants reacted negatively to the Yoruba language and instead emphasised the importance of English, they feigned ignorance of the Yoruba language in public even though a good number of them were said to use Yoruba well at home.

Also, the Brazilian immigrants tended to emphasise the use of Portuguese to impress the indigenous Lagosians as the Sierra Leonian immigrants did with English. Thus, the Lagos of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was one of the considerable language and dialect diversity.

The emergence of the Yoruba Eko (Lagos Yoruba) etc. the urban variety of Yoruba associated with Lagos as distinct from the standard written variety is a consequence of the assimilatory characteristics of Lagos as a vibrant cultural and socio-economic center,

\[ e.g. \quad \text{Lagos Yoruba} \quad \text{Mi ni mi ti gbajbe} \quad \text{I said I have forgotten.} \]
\[ \text{Standard Yoruba} \quad \text{Mo ni mo ti gbajbe} \quad \text{I said I have forgotten} \]

Although, some people have argued that the Lagos Yoruba is the Awori dialect modernized or bastardized as the case may be. We could safely say that what constitutes the Lagos Yoruba today may be regarded not as a regional dialect but as an urban variety which has emerged steadily over the years with the growth of Lagos as an important Yoruba city of considerable administrative and commercial importance.
IMPORTANT TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN LAGOS STATE

A people’s culture goes a long way in telling the story of the community. The cultural environment of Lagos State is so rich that despite the brush it had with the Western world, it still flourishes hundreds of years after. Traditional festivals are usually held to offer sacrifices to the spirits of ancestors, to appease the gods and to pray for peace, good health and prosperity.

Despite other religions, the traditional religions and beliefs of the people of Lagos have persisted and have acquired a certain degree of sophistication which have removed them from the realms of what the uninitiated would term “dark and fetish” to the territory of “fascinating and exotic”.

In his essay, “Is Lagos State culturally disadvantaged?”, Ladnee Komolafe in (Abinibi: 1989) noted that though Lagos State is very permissive and so recognised to be a melting pot of peoples from diverse cultural backgrounds, the culture of the people of Lagos is “whole and intact”. This quality of wholesome cultural retention is attributed to the resilient nature of the Lagos State traditions, which could easily adapt, absorb and accommodate.

Some of its cultural festivals include Eyo Adamu Orisa (Lagos), Egungun (Mushin), Osi and Gelede (Ejirin), Jigbo and Ebi (Epe), Agbo Remi Reke (Agbowa), Osun Iya Alaro (of Ojota), Iggunu (Oshodi) and Sato (Akarakumo).

**Eyo Adamu Orisa**
The Eyo is the most important, most attractive and most thrilling traditional festival of Lagos. The Adamu Orisa is staged as one of the ceremonies associated with the burial rites of a deceased Oba or chief. It is also staged in memory of prominent citizens of Lagos in which case the members of the family of the deceased who can afford the expenses of the performance regarded it as a great honour to their departed relation.

The Eyo masquerade is dressed in white robe from head to toe. He carries a staff called the “Opabata” and the hat bears different colours with the inscription of the group to which the Eyo belongs.

There are certain rules guiding the members of the public when Eyo play is being performed, e.g. on sighting an Eyo,

a. One must remove his shoes, cap or head tie
b. One must fold his umbrella
c. One must not smoke
d. If one is on a bicycle, he must come down.

Opabata is used to beat people known by the Eyo or those who disobey the don’ts of the Eyo.

**Igunnu**
This festival was originally the festival of the Nupes who came from Bida and who are referred to as Tapa. The masquerade is found in Oshodi area of Lagos. The Iggunnu dresses in robes on stilts. It is a very tall figure. It is a secret cult that hunts witches. It parades the streets and visits important people. On sighting an Iggunnu, one must remove his shoes and hat. The companion of the Iggunnu is called the “Sahumog”, a very short masquerade that holds a whip and clears the way for the Iggunnu.

**Egunungun**
This Festival at Mushin is also celebrated annually. There are two types of Egunungun: The ferocious and aggressive group and the gentle dancing masquerade.

**Epo**
Another ritual festival is Epo, which is a masquerade festival performed in Epe to discourage itinerant children (Abiku) from tormenting their parents. The masquerade wears plantain leaf mask in order to show the Abiku that it is better to live than to die.
Another important festival in Ejiarin in Epe Local Government area, celebrated annually is Osi. The word “Osi” means ancestors and as such, the festival is mainly to offer sacrifice to their forefathers for peace and happiness in the town and it lasts for 28 days.

Kilajolu
Kilajolu is also a ritual festival masquerade dance celebrated annually for purification purposes in Epe and Lekki. It is also celebrated to prevent war outbreaks.

AGBO REMI RERE
This festival is celebrated in Ijede in Ikorodu Local Government area, it is also celebrated in Agbowa and Langbasa in Epe Local Government Areas of the State. According to the “Eleku” (the chief priest and custodian of the deity) one of their forefathers had brought the “Imale” to Ijede many years back when he went to Ijebu Waterside for hunting.

The Imale has certain taboos and powers. For instance, the Imale must not be allowed to go near a ripe plantain, or banana. If this happens, the box in which the Imale is kept will break to pieces.

During the festival, the people are free to request for anything they want from the Imale which range from prosperity, rainfall, peace and children and it is reported that their requests are normally granted. Also, if any theft case is brought before the Imale, the culprit will be caught within a specified time. Many people who doubted the potency of the power had died because they swore falsely by the Imale when they knew they were actually guilty.

Agbo Remi Rere is celebrated every three years and it lasts for 9 days. The most interesting day out of the nine – day celebration is the “Igunwa day” – also referred to as the grand-finale. The two quarters – “Itun Onino” and “Oke Igbehin” gaily dress up their floats and visit each other paying courtesy calls on their way to important personalities in the quarters.

It is reported that during the visits, abusive songs, puns and chants are rendered in front of the houses of the people visited and the scandals perpetuated by these people are revealed. In turn, the people greet them and give them money or other gifts.

On Igunwa day, rituals are also performed at the seaside led by “Otuko” and old woman who goes into the sea with the Agbo in a canoe and asks what blessings it has for them.

Sacrifices are made with a he-goat and a tortoise after which everyone proceeds to “Etita Sqaure” where there is general dancing, drinking and merriment to the delight of the invited guests and the entire people of the town in attendance.

OSUN IYA ALARO
This festival is held annually in Ojota, Somolu Local Government Area and it is a combination of the worship of Osun, the water goddess and a personal celebration for Odo Iya Alaro by the Priestess who claims she was ordained to worship the Iya Alaro river where she went there to gather herbs.

During the celebration, the Iya Aaro priestess takes some water from the river, offers, prayers, supplicates and pays homage to Osun. The entire followers and townspeople also join in the supplication followed by dancing, singing and general merriment.

SATO
This is a special music and dance of the people of Akarakumo who fled from Dahomey and settled in the lagoon front near Badagry town. There is a twin giant drum placed in the middle to which dancers form a circle about, turn and beat. The drums are reputed to be brought from Dahomey by Tọsọyọ to Akarakumo.
GELEDE
A very fascinating and most gentle masquerade. The passiveness of the masks, the jutting breasts and protruding buttocks symbolize fertility. This is also performed annually in Ikorodu Area of Lagos State and it requires great skill to dance with the masks and animate them during performances, to bring about appropriate interpretation with their benign looks. The festival is also used to correct social vices through satirical songs and dances. It is predominantly a female affair.

AGERE
This masquerade comes mainly from Ikorodu and other parts of Lagos State. These amazing stilt dancers usually develop a reputation after long experience. Some specialize in dancing only on one leg while others specialize in descending from their height on to a bicycle and they then proceed to ride around the town, while the entire towns people and applaud them.

CORONATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE OBA OF LAGOS
The celebration and installation of the Oba of Lagos is usually a grand affair. When one king dies, the question of who succeeds him becomes apparent. This period is usually a trying period for the ruling houses. Every ruling house is expected to present the most eligible candidate. This search stimulates keen competition between brothers and at times can be very distasteful. Each family will have to delve into its genealogy. Sometimes, incidents such as war of words or court actions have been the order to the day.

If a candidate is finally picked, he will be presented to the kingmakers and they will hold meetings to determine his eligibility. In the olden days, once the nomination of the Oba elect has been ratified, they would proceed with the coronation ceremonies. But these days, the state government will be notified of the nomination and if approved, elaborate preparation and arrangement will commence by the chiefs for the installation.

The family of the Oba elect will pay a customary fee known as “Ikaro” to the chiefs through the installing officer – Chief Eletu Odibo. When this is done, the next task is the keeping of vigil by Eletu Odibo and principal members of his family before the Olubun ritual tree at Oju Olubun in Isale Eko. After the vigil, they will escort the Oba elect to Oju Odu popularly called Ojodu to the special shrine where the ceremonies are performed.

The installation proper is performed in camera during which the Oba elect will be capped. He is then taken round to pay homage to the ancestors and the gods at different spots. First at Ojodu for the Ikase ceremony (homage to the ancestors). Then to Bridge Street to pay homage to Olokun. Then to Eletu Iwase to pay homage to Odyrun and from this place, they move to Ajobile Shrine, opposite Eni Owa central mosque when they leave Ajobile, he’s finally escorted to the palace for the conclusion of the installation ceremony.

From this day for about seven days, the Oba elect will only dress in white loin cloth and at the 7th day, he will now appear in public and Gbedu drums are played with singing and dancing with the Eyo Adamu Orisa leading in the merriment.

At the coronation ceremony, the Oba will be decked with necklace, a royal robe with the “abere” (Sceptre) with which he dances to the Gbedu drum supported by the chiefs and the entire people.

SOCIOLOGY OF THE ORATURE AND LITERATURE OF LAGOS STATE
To understand the orature and literature of Lagos State, we must direct our minds to the three main genres of literature i.e. poetry, drama and prose, and there could further be grouped as follows:

Poetry = (Music & Songs) Poems, Praise Songs (Oriki), Chants and Music
Drama = Ritual drama, plays about Lagos State; historical and situational.
Prose = Fiction and Non-fiction, Folktales, Essays etc.

Furthermore, scholar embarking on the study of Lagos State orature and literature must be equipped with the following in order to understand the relevance of such works to the socio-political and economic environment of the state.
COMMON THEMES
This is the major preoccupation of works emerging from a society with multiplicity of culture, people and sentiments. Some of the themes could be viewed within the ambit of the contact of the state with Western civilization and colonization. Such things may be both antagonistic or in praise of the legacies of the colonial masters. Apart from the historical and traditional themes that could be seen within the context of cultural conflict and identity (lights for liberation from the claws of colonial imperialism, social themes of slavery, pollution, over population, unemployment, corruption, gangsterism, tutoring and thuggery which are associated with most metropolitan environments, like Lagos, could be found in the works of writers. Their efforts in this regard may be geared towards finding solutions to such social problems apart from documenting them for posterity. However, these themes may run through all the genres of literature – poetry, drama and prose but the major concern of scholars should be on the peculiarities of such works to the state.

In treating themes emanating from Lagos, one must also consider exclusive incidents in the state. It means, therefore, that the stories must reflect what the reader must identify within Lagos State.

WRITERS:
Writers that are either Lagos based or non Lagos based but who write on Lagos State e.g. Akinwunmi Ishola – "Madam Tinubu", Femi Fatoba – Sisi Eko.

Writers who are of Lagos origin e.g. Rasheed Gbadamosi – Echoes from the Lagoon, Behold, My Redeemer.

Naturally, the first group of writers may be more objective in their documentation and analysis of the state than the indigenes. We must also consider the peoples of different cultural backgrounds and sentiments that inhabit Lagos State, who have invariably formed part of the socio-cultural heritage of the state.

USES OF LANGUAGE IN LAGOS STATE LITERATURE
Because of the peculiar nature of the history of Lagos State and its cosmopolitan environment, there are therefore certain para-linguistic elements that must be considered, apart from the style, form, structure, tone, influences and multiplicity of sound of the language of Lagos State literature. These para-linguistic elements are however influenced by the following: people with different Yoruba dialects – the Aworis, Eguns, Ijebus, Egbas etc on the one hand, who have interacted with the people of the state for easy communication in commerce and lost their original dialects in the process. On the other hand, we have people from other tribes – Hausa, Igbo, Ijaw etc. who have also dropped their local languages for easier mode of communication and interaction with the people of the state. This of course has given rise to the use of adulterated Yoruba dialect (a Westernized Yoruba Dialect), pidgin language (the language of the peoples of the coastal regions of Africa) with a mixture of Yoruba dialect, and influences, interference and inferences from other Nigerian languages e.g. Hausa and Igbo.

One other paralinguistic element to be considered is the development of slogans and phrases, which reflect, conspicuously in the songs, chants and praise-songs (Oriki) etc. about Lagos. Words or names like “Ogun” (Sea), Osa (Lagoon), the swamps, boat regatta, "Sharp businesses", hustling and bursting, being wise, be mentally alert are common in the language of Lagosians.

ANALYSIS OF TEXTS ON LAGOS.
The attempt to catalogue many works relating to Lagos State origin and environment could be met with some difficulties and misconception without realigning the materials obtainable to the aesthetic matrix of a particular genre. For the purpose of this study our focus shall be Akinwunmi Ishola’s (unpublished but popular play) "Madam Tinubu" and Rasheed Gbadamosi’s Echoes from the Lagoon.

The choice of these plays is motivated by the need to study Lagos State from both historical and sociological perspectives, bearing in mind different approaches to the composition and analysis of the dramatic contents in the plays of an indigene and a non-indigene.
AWUNMI ISHOLA'S "MADAM TINUBU"


"Madam Tinubu" is an historical account of the efforts of Madam Tinubu, one of the most powerful business women that ever lived in Lagos. Her vibrant and unrelenting efforts against all forms of oppression and repression to which the indigenes of Lagos were subjected to by the whites and the "educated" blacks made her their strong enemy. In the socio-political and economic affairs of Lagos, Tinubu was a very strong force, and a down-to-earth traditionalist.

The most significant import of the play in the study of Lagos orature and literature is in its documentation of the contact with foreigners and the influence of the colonial imperialist; their ways of life and their flourishing business empire and interests in Lagos. The influx of foreigners likes Birdlake, Vickiansony, Sandman, Cambell, Toker etc. to Lagos given a picture of how accommodating Lagos is. Though, the names in the play may not be real names the idea is to document the impact of foreigners on Lagos, especially in the development of socio-political, economic and religious life of the people.

In the play we are introduced to common names that are identifiable with Lagos e.g. Ashogbon, Dosunmu, Eletu-Odibo, Bada, Bajulaye etc. and their relevance to the people of Lagos. However, names of some important places are highlighted in the play to establish the environment of the play e.g. Epe (where Kosoko sojourned when he was banished from Lagos); Badagry, Island, Ikorodu, Sea side etc.

In the second scene of the play, Mr. Vickiansony is beaten up by the Eyo masquerade because he would not give way. This action still continues till date, just as the apprehensive nature of the contemporary metropolitan Lagos always gives room for rowdiness, and confusion arising from individual and collective anxiety. Every opportunity is sought by everybody living in Lagos to vent his or her anger on another person as a way of purging one's emotion.

**RASHEED GBADAMOSI'S ECHOES FROM THE LAGOON**

An eminent scholar, business magnate, philanthropist and former minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Rasheed Gbadamosi was born in Ikorodu, Lagos. He is a seasoned economist and industrialist but he is also an Artist who believes strongly in the preservation of cultural heritage.

Rasheed Gbadamosi has written books both in his field, economic and business management, and in his love-artistic and literary works. Some of his literary works include *Behold My Redeemer, Trees Grow in the Desert, Echoes from the Lagoon*, etc.*Echoes from the Lagoon*, provides a catalogue of the experiences of different people living in Lagos city that is characterised by class structure and the quest for material hings.

Tanko and Comfort are from different parental background, they share the same aspiration and feeling towards human existence. While Comfort prefers a very simple life, of the poor, Tanko sees the basic need for comfort and happiness inherent in the other. Frustration, stress and the poverty level of the one side of the city makes Tanko to be more aware of the need to free himself from the ignoble life, and this leads to his search for quick wealth through crooked means - charms and waywardness. Tanko eventually joins the army in order to make a living after he has lost his job in Chief Erinla's Transport Company.

However, the need to survive and live a pain-free life drives people in the city to the various crimes and atrocities committed against humanity.

Rasheed Gbadamosi gives a graphic capture of the worrisome experiences of the poor in the city where the rich hold sway. The poor only rely on their faint hope of survival. They only cope with stress and frustration. Unemployment and poverty rule their lives while other social and health problems make them most sub-human. Hunger, diseases and squalor are the co-tenants of the poor in the city. The rich, to Rasheed Gbadamosi, are the agents of subjugation and oppression and how the society has accepted their
corrupt practices is his concern in *Echoes from the Lagoon*. Lagos is, as portrayed in the play, a race for all comers; touts, a breeding place for thugs, social miscreants, etc. in the slums while the rich live beside the lagoon enjoying themselves.

One may wish to ask: Does Lagos State have a literary culture or tradition? This question may be prompted by the general feeling that Lagos State is "no man's land" and it is only a market for anything that is "sellable", that is, Lagos is known mainly for commercial activity, but without doubt Lagos does indeed have a literary culture.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

8. Akinwunmi Ishola, "Madam Timubu" (unpublished Play)