

## EDITOR'S WISHES

A yawning problem has for long, for too long we have every right to say, defined Nigeria's art and literary landscape. And this is the problem of space. A problem of medium. Today, hardly any reputable journal exists in the country that services the vocation of artists, writers, musicians and film makers. A few which made initial valiant efforts were snuffed out of existence by a combination of debilitating forces, chief among which is Nigeria's prevailing economic gloom.

Some publishing efforts which became the voice of artists promptly relocated abroad when it became inevitable that their founders/editors should migrate, presumably prompted by the general decline of the climes of existence in a nation which only too recently was the luxuriant hub of assorted art and literary activities.

Have the artists and writers consequently ceased to exist? If no, would they continue to remain voiceless? True, in the last decade we have witnessed an upsurge of interest in the arts and in literature by the managements of leading Nigerian national newspapers. The leaders here being the banned *Guardian* and the *Daily Times*; the reviews pages of the latter I have both reported for and edited in the past six years. But these only helped to expose more problems: the allocations of space could never satiate the growing activities of cultural workers, especially when it is borne in mind that we had to face an almost limitless landscape of genres and art forms. Visual artists had to besiege my desk in *Daily Times* on many occasions with charges that I resorted to granting more audience to film makers, literary artists, sometimes musicians. And when we made conscious efforts to level up somewhat, we had angry expletives from some of their counterparts specializing in the other genres to cope with. And then the worst began to happen: the famous art feature columns began

to vanish weeks on end whenever extra advert placements were recorded; they very conveniently usurped the traditional spaces on which the arts and books columns normally appeared. The very worst to follow was the widespread ban of influential and vibrant newspapers, leaving us with only a few.

We must pay tribute to former attempts similar - and whenever they do resurrect, we shall be happy to say, complimentary - to this. Aside from serving as the official voice and news bulletin of the group, the *Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Review* had a far more noble objective of being a reputable annual review. There also was *Okike* founded by the novelist Chinua Achebe; *Black Orpheus* (published in the early 1960s in Ibadan by the German scholar Ulli Beier, long since out of print); *Positive Review* (formerly produced in Ile-Ife, Nigeria); *Opon Ifa* (edited by Femi Osofisan); *Transition* (which only recently resuscitated in the United States) and a host of others. Many of those are now extinct. *GR* does not pretend to attempt to fill any of their shoes - beyond, perhaps to keep up irregular fevered heartbeats.

*GR* is first and foremost a Nigerian review but with a broad international perspective. It is an effort on the whole to amplify the voices of those creative people of Nigeria and of Africa wanting to speak to the rest of the world. If we do it well - and there is no reason why we would not - doubtless, the world would not only listen but would speak back through us to Africa and to Nigeria.

The choices of materials are in our own self-evaluation defective in that they have not been able to inclose sufficient representative voices. But this is only an initial attempt, the very first step. With your help, we are sure the ground under us will not give way.

*Dapo Adeniyi.*