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# The Literary Metadata of African Little and Popular Magazines

Ashleigh Harris

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Recent years have seen an upswing in scholarly interest in African little magazines of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their importance in providing a fuller account of African literary history (Helgesson; Journo; Lindfors “African Little Magazines”; Ouma and Krishnan). As this scholarship reveals, little magazines were central to both pan-African politics and aesthetics, and were in many ways the ‘testing grounds’ for major African writers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Miriam Tlali, Es’kia Mphahlele, Wole Soyinka, and others (Nabutanyi and Tibaisiima). Some of these magazines (such as the pan-Africanist *Présence Africaine*, *Transition* and *Penpoint* in Uganda, *Drum* and *Staffrider* in South Africa, and *Black Orpheus* in Nigeria) have received a great deal of scholarly attention, while others remain more obscure (women’s magazines like *Grace* in South Africa, or student magazines like *The Horn* in Nigeria). Whether well-circulated or relatively unknown, what is evident is that, taken together, these platforms formed an important part of the African literary ecology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Ouma and Krishnan’s recent work has elaborated, these magazines were implicated and imbricated in larger ‘structures of feeling’, in Raymond Williams’ famous formulation (Ouma and Krishnan, 195), which tap the messy complexity of social life and its relationship to literary expression in the time of African decolonization. Ouma and Krishnan highlight the role that careful attention to these magazines can play in making visible such structures of feeling, thereby revealing how “Africa-centred print cultures, particularly small magazines, periodicals and ephemera, might open spaces – corridors of storytelling – which complicate received notions around cultural history, belonging, institution-formation and black modernisms” (Ouma and Krishnan, 193). Ouma and Krishnan also place the small magazine at the crossroads of the diachronic narratives we tell ourselves about African literature and the synchronic potential of the small magazine to get to the knotty and sometimes contradictory African social life during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Yet, despite the centrality of these materials’ role in the making of African literature and literary networks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the material conditions in which such magazines were produced and then archived and catalogued limits the possibilities of current scholarship. As Ouma and Krishnan succinctly put it, when it comes to African small magazines “futures is not guaranteed” (206). The “issue of the archive remains pressing,” they write “given the wealth and breadth of work, which has remained undocumented” (Ouma and Krishnan 206). This is not a new problem. At the 1967 *International Conference on African Bibliography* hosted in Nairobi, Valerie Bloomfield noted: “In Africa where so many periodicals are ‘little’ they provide the main vehicle for the publication of creative writing, criticism and literary news and information. *Black Orpheus* and *Transition* are well known, but titles such as *DarLite* (Dar es Salaam), *Okyeame* (Accra), *Mbari Newsletter* (Ibadan), *Voix muntu* (Congo – Kinshasa), *Chemchemi newsletter* (Nairobi), seldom appear in the indexes to little magazines [in library

catalogs]” (Bloomfield 224). More alarmingly, even some of the little magazines that were of major historical significance are not archived in the entirety of their runs in any formal repository or library. One such example is *Penpoint*, published from Makerere University and of major significance to (amongst others) Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o at the start of his career: Makerere University library has only two editions of *Penpoint* listed in its catalogue (Numbers 20 of 1966 and 23 of 1968). Furthermore, the state of any African archive is a matter that does not stand outside of the “decades of structural adjustment, enforced austerity, dependency as “aid” and over coercion” that Ouma and Krishnan attach to “accelerating neoliberalisation” (195) in Africa. The result of this is that more complete and more easily accessible archives of African ephemera are more likely to be found in libraries and archives of the global north, while national African archives have notoriously turned a blind eye to the relevance of such materials. One such example is the archive of Zimbabwe’s *African Parade* magazine at the Zimbabwean National archive, from which multiple copies have been damaged, lost or stolen, whereas a fuller (though by no means complete) archive of the magazine is available at the British Library.

What this means is that scholarship on little (and popular) magazines is limited by major issues of access and availability of data. The result is that scholarship on these materials has tended to focus on single texts or on individual writers’ works in available magazines, or on the broader publishing history of one particular magazine, rather than looking at its specific content. Other scholarship, like that of Stefan Helgesson (2009 and 2021) and Bhakti Shringarpure (2020), has investigated the potentials of how these materials trouble the theoretical commonplaces of world literature. Helgesson thinks through how such forms participate in the “historically specific, technological condition of possibility for the type of transnationally distributed discourse we recognize as literature” (2009 11, cited in Ouma and Krishnan 194), while Shringarpure is interested in theorizing the small magazine as ‘assemblage’ (Ouma and Krishnan 199), paying tribute, but also extending to African contexts, Deleuze and Guattari’s generative theoretical frame. This allows Shringarpure to attend to both the scale of material production and distribution as well as the scale of genre and how it is produced and performed within the nexus of these material conditions. While all this scholarship is crucial to the field, what we lack is a bigger picture of how these magazines operated as a literary ecology, as a ‘structure of feeling’ as Ouma and Krishnan would have it. What is archived is fragmented and uncoordinated, often lost in labyrinthine archival structures, or only collected in informal or undocumented collections.

The **ALMEDA (African Literary Metadata)** project is primarily focused on creating and connecting such documentation, to ensure the futurity of these ephemeral materials for the African literary archive. While cultural heritage initiatives have focused primarily on

digitization to address the problems that I have described above,<sup>1</sup> ALMEDA addresses the problem of visibility and accessibility of these materials through metadata. There are many reasons for this. For the purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that digitization is not adequate in and of itself, and is also beset by numerous problems when it comes to African libraries and archives. Because of the costs involved, many African libraries and archives do not have the resources to digitize such materials – also, literary culture often gets deprioritized in national digitization projects. The outcome, as noted above, is that well-resourced universities and companies in the global north are more likely to produce high-quality digitizations of such materials, and put them behind paywalls that make them inaccessible to most African students and researchers. Paywalls also stand in the way of coordinating data about what is available digitally.

I would suggest that the rhetoric around the required standards and resolutions for digitization are partly to blame for this drift of African cultural heritage to the global north. While the value of high-quality digitization is undeniable, African libraries would do well to proceed with affordable digitization, rather than having to purchase expensive machinery for this task. The history of the varied and multiple techniques of copying paper texts or recording oral ones should teach us that any record or copy is better than none. The content of print that has not survived could still be read in poor quality photocopies or on microfiche film copies of lost originals. While photocopy is a far cry from the high-resolution, colour digitisations that we expect today, they nevertheless have a role to play. A good example is the poor-quality photocopies that have been digitized off Microfilm by CRL digital delivery system of the October 1951 to July 1954 and October 1955 to October 1956 editions of the popular *Drum Magazine*. While some material is only available for subscribers, the copies made accessible here are, if badly copied, nevertheless valuable for literary students (see <https://dds.crl.edu/crldelivery/4912>), since the content is at least readable.

Catalogues are also crucial in accounting for materials that cannot be accessed – or perhaps that no longer exist. When Ouma and Krishnan note at the end of their article, that even the well-circulated little magazine *Kwani?* “does not possess archives for much of its material” (206), presumably because of the implied costs of creating a digital archive, the bigger question for ALMEDA is whether they have a full and detailed catalogue of all the works they have published. In the worst-case scenario, in which materials have been lost, a catalogue can at least be a placeholder for the missing material. Further than that, a well-maintained catalogue can, in the absence of full digitization, be important metadata through which to find and recreate lost archives. This does not have to cost a lot in either money or time – catalogues can be maintained across a variety of formats, from handwritten lists to spread-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the entirely open online archives of *Awa: La revue de la femme noire*, compiled by Ruth Bush and Claire Ducournau (<https://www.awamagazine.org>) and Digital Innovation South Africa’s full digitization of *Staffrider* (<https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/st>)

sheets – but it is an important element in guarding against the fragility of print and even digital objects.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, in a time in which there are as many small digitization projects as there were small magazines, we need more than only local catalogues of these magazines, we also need to link up data about these digitization projects so that researchers can find these materials with ease. This is a major ambition of the ALMEDA project: by creating Linked Open Data on a variety of ephemeral and non-book literary materials, we hope to make the highly fragmented and unevenly accessible global archive of African small and popular magazines (amongst other forms) searchable and coherent. By doing this we hope to provide a bigger picture of the literary ecology in which these magazines circulated. One might, for example, be able to search across different magazine archives from a single month or year, to allow for more comparative possibilities. The potentials of Linked Open Data will be the subject of a later paper in the ALMEDA pamphlet series. Let me return, now, to the specific literary metadata that is of relevance to small and popular magazines.

### Paratextual politics

As mentioned above, the materiality of small magazines, the modes of production, distribution and consumption of these texts, has been an important strand in recent scholarship. An excellent example is Aurélie Journo's discussion of the 'posturing' of little magazine's paratexts (2021). Of course, any application of Gérard Genette's paratext is as much about the materiality of the text as it is a "space of transaction" (Journo 211) which is "a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public." (Genette 2; cited in Journo 211). This approach also addresses the public sphere and shows how these materials position themselves in relation to other cultural texts and trajectories: as Journo writes, "the paratext of magazines offers insight into the way they negotiate their posture within specific cultural fields but also, more widely, within and in relation to a complex network of contemporaneous or past magazines" (Journo 212). This comes out in Journo's discussion of the visual aesthetics of the magazines and their covers, but also has implications for the contents of the magazines (the literary aesthetics), which is discussed here within the nexus of pan-African circulation.

Indeed, the aesthetics of the paratexts of small magazines has been a consistent thread in recent scholarship, a focus that may have to do with high quality digitization projects that beautifully reproduce such materials (see, for example, how Bush and Ducournau's online archive on *AWA* is searchable through the covers of each number, a strategy used by Africa

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<sup>2</sup> We should not mistakenly think that digital formats are any less ephemeral than paper. Indeed, this is partly why basic metadata, which is easily converted from one system to another, is possibly more important in the futurity of the archive than digital images. The example of the microfiche is once again germane: finding machines to read microfiche formats today is not so easy. But text-based formats or code have greater longevity and, as such, can provide digital placeholders, even where the materials themselves are no longer extant.

Commons' digital reproductions of Black South African Magazines.<sup>3</sup> This has even led to collections of the covers alone, such as we see in Rebecca Romney's blog on *Black Orpheus* covers.<sup>4</sup> What interests me, by way of paratextual focus, is the table of contents, which I read as literary metadata. Journo does mention tables of contents in her paper, but only to consider how they are aestheticized as a reiteration of a nostalgic aesthetic in *Chimurenga* (where the "first issue on music was packaged as a CD, with a cover and table of contents presented through the codes and vocabulary of a record sleeve", which is to say as a 'tracklisting' and *Kwani?*'s third issue which presented "the contents of the magazine through the codes of film – 'starring;' 'featuring'." (Journo 220).<sup>5</sup> This focus on how the table of contents contributes to the ways these magazines self-present in the media and literary environments they circulate in is also apparent in Eric Bulsom's field-defining *Little Magazine: World Forum*, which draws overt attention to the interplay between paratextual posturing the content of little magazines by including his own contents page on the cover. Bulsom also discusses the function of the contents page to show the diversity of content<sup>6</sup> or even to hide content from censorship.<sup>7</sup>

My own focus on reading contents pages for their literary data is prosaic rather than aesthetic. What kinds of metadata can we extract from tables of contents and how is this relevant to giving a fuller picture of the 'structure of feeling' and the literary ecology of the era in which small magazines circulated? Like all literary metadata – such as the information included on the copyright page of a book, or external metadata, such as the call number or catalogue number in a library – the table of contents' function appears solely descriptive and thus, ostensibly, neutral (it simply directs us to where we will find certain texts in the magazine); however, because it is part of a system of content organization, it participates in the prescriptive aspects of knowledge ontologies and like all metadata, as I have written elsewhere, is thus "culturally, historically and ideologically informed." ('Foregrounding African Literature at Makerere University Library, 1959-1964', forthcoming). In elaborating the value of extracting detailed metadata from contents pages of African small and popular magazines and from the pages of the magazines themselves, I hope to illuminate the importance of addressing the ideological and cultural biases implicit in this metadata.

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<sup>3</sup> See [https://africacommons.net/search/?i=collections&modules=AFCO\\_AFMG](https://africacommons.net/search/?i=collections&modules=AFCO_AFMG)

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.rebeccaromney.com/blog/black-orpheus>

<sup>5</sup> The one other time she mentions contents is in relation to their value in tracing Es'kia Mphahlele's influence across different magazines, a potential that is hinted at by not directly analysed.

<sup>6</sup> This emerges in a discussion of T.S. Eliot's injunction that the contents of *New Criterion* "should exhibit heterogeneity which the intelligent reader can resolve into order." (T.S. Eliot "The idea of the literary review," *New Criterion* 4 (1926): 3; cited in Bulsom 98)

<sup>7</sup> The example here is of the Italian little magazine *Corrente*, which hid anti-fascist content by using the "political first page [as] a screen that could distract censors from the more subversive contents hidden inside." (148)

## Disaggregating Aggregates

Starting with the level of descriptive metadata, there may seem not to be much more to say about the table of contents page than the obvious: it shows readers what's included in the magazine. But, because of the economic and political conditions in which African small magazines have emerged, formalities like tables of contents pages are not always given: they are costly because they take up precious print space; they are not always necessary for shorter publications like zines or pamphlets; and, because so many small magazines were started by amateurs, they often do not follow any standards that makes data-capture possible or useful. This is not at all like the way we might be able to capture important information from the table of contents in, for example, British literary magazines, like *The Criterion*, where the table of contents is so prominent that it appeared on the front cover: a standard that was retained from the first 1922 edition (which included the title of the work and the author's full name) and even survived the relaunching of the journal as *The New Criterion* in September 1982, where we are given the further metadata of page numbers (See figure 1).

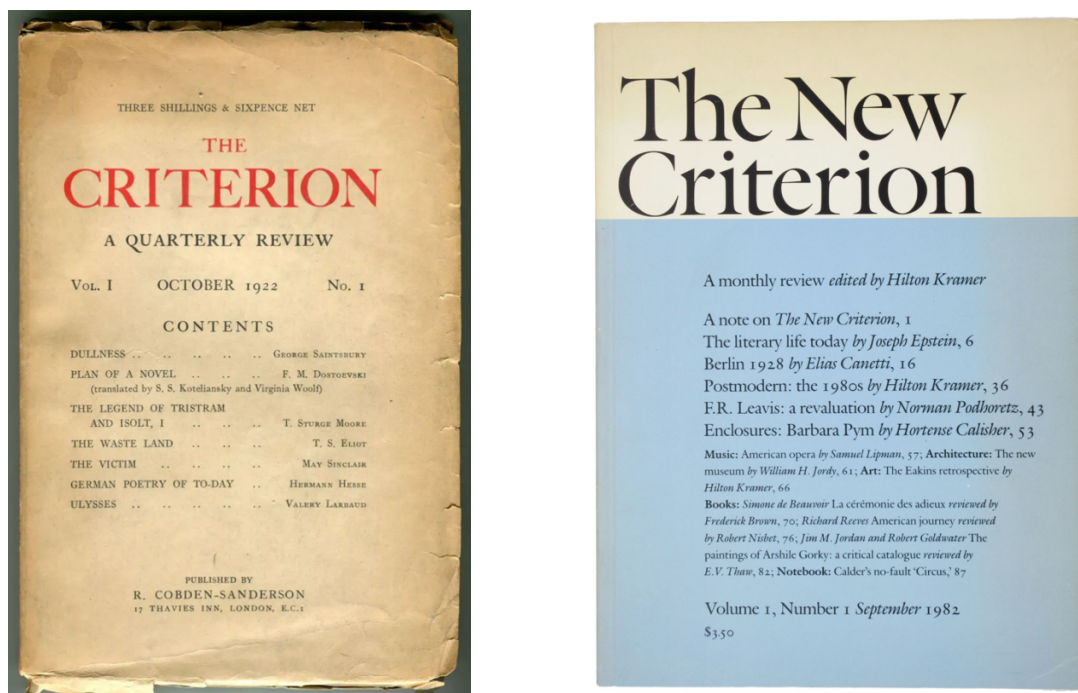


Figure 1.

High-quality digitized images of these front covers, enabled for Optical Character Recognition (OCR) in which an image of text is converted into machine-readable text, means that we can easily extract details from these tables of contents of who was publishing what across the full range of the magazine's run. This is invaluable information to capture if we wish to make the works included in small magazines visible beyond the covers that dominate their paratextual reproduction.

However, not all tables of contents are standardized or include the kinds of detailed metadata that enables such visibility. *Drum* magazine, for example, began with quite substantial although by no means complete table of contents, such as the example below (Figure 2) from the first digitized edition of October 1951 (volume 1, number 7).

<i>Contents</i>	
<b>CRIME</b>	Inside Johannesburg's Underworld . . . . . 5-9
<b>FICTION</b>	"Cry, The Beloved Country" (Serial) . . . . . 16-17
	Mathemba's Choice, by C. E. Mofokeng . . . . . 25
	The Old Man of Phokengwa (Pohliso) . . . . . 32
<b>PICTURE FEATURES</b>	
	Gold Coast University . . . . . 14
	West African Boys' Camp . . . . . 20-21
	We Bring You Africa . . . . . 26-27
	Alhau Gibson — Sports Star . . . . . 12
	Mr. Suboti Goes to London . . . . . 37
<b>LITERATURE AND MUSIC</b>	
	"White Men, Do Not Deceive Yourself," by Bulima Nyathi . . . . . 11
	Music for Moderns . . . . . 19
	Peter Abrahams . . . . . 25
<b>SPORT</b>	
	"The Gen." by Henry Nsumelo . . . . . 33
	"Sugar" Ray Robinson . . . . . 34
	Johannesburg Events . . . . . 35
<b>NEWS</b>	
	Drumbeats . . . . . 22
	Negro Notes . . . . . 10
	London Letter . . . . . 10
<b>HOME FEATURES</b>	
	Social and Personal . . . . . 29
	Fashions, by Angeline Ann . . . . . 30
	Birth of a Baby . . . . . 31
	Gardening . . . . . 31
	Religion . . . . . 36
	Competition Corner . . . . . Inside Back Cover
<b>OTHER FEATURES</b>	
	Teachers' Talk . . . . . 23
	Causso's Opinion . . . . . 36
	Letters to the Editor . . . . . 2
	Pen Pal Club . . . . . 28
	Transvaal Boy Scouts . . . . . 40

Figure 2. Available at <https://dds.crl.edu/item/193904>

Even this relatively substantial table of contents raises certain problems for OCR technology. First, of course, is the poor quality of the reproduction. Secondly, the information in the contents page is not consistent: some authors and full titles are mentioned, others are not. Furthermore, less than a year later, the contents page would be reduced in size (see figure 3), a move that would signal the slow disappearance of the table of contents page altogether by December 1963, in the 153<sup>rd</sup> number of *Drum*.

Volume 2, No. 5 MAY, 1952 International JUNE, 1952	
<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>NEWS FEATURES:</b>	
	BEHIND THE CRIME WAR . . . . . 36-41
	Gameli Pass—and talks to DRUM . . . . . 32-33
<b>PICTURE FEATURES:</b>	
	NEGRO UNIVERSITY . . . . . 8-11
	High Life in Cape Town . . . . . 20-21
<b>HOME FEATURES:</b>	
	Home and Beauty . . . . . 18-19
<b>STRIP CARTOONS</b>	
	Children's Page . . . . . 15 & 30
	What a Laugh! . . . . . 29
	42
<b>SPORT:</b>	
	Salute to Soccer! . . . . . 7
	Sports Drum . . . . . 22-23
<b>FICTION:</b>	
	WILD CONQUEST, by Peter Abrahams (Serial) . . . . . 16-19
	Play Back, by Dyle Sentso . . . . . 24-25
<b>MASTERPIECE IN BRONZE:</b>	
	Zik, by William B. Megan . . . . . 26-27
<b>MUSIC FOR MODERNS</b>	
	. . . . . 12-13
<b>NEWS PAGES</b>	
	. . . . . 34-35
<b>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b>	
	. . . . . 4 & 6
<b>Mr. DRUM</b>	
	. . . . . 5
<b>AFRICA, 1952</b>	
	. . . . . 28
<b>SCOUTS PAGE</b>	
	. . . . . 14

Figure 3. Available at <https://dds.crl.edu/item/193911>



Unlike the major literary figures writing in *The Criterion*, who would enjoy full entry into the catalogues of world literature, African writers writing for small and popular magazines, have fallen under a critical threshold of visibility. This is for the obvious reasons of cultural bias in the making of literary canons, but that ideology is compounded by the consequences of economic and material inequalities, as well as inequalities in organization of knowledge, too. The material conditions in which these writers circulated meant that small and even popular magazines were always-already ephemeral.

To turn to the politics of the catalogue, then, I wish to theorize the undetectability of information under the system of the catalogue via Eyal Weizman's discussion of "violence at the threshold of detectability" (13). Weizman uses the phrase to discuss the problem of evidencing very real violence that falls under the threshold of detectability: for example, the damage done to humans and buildings in drone strikes is unreadable on the satellite images used as court evidence because such damage is "smaller than the size of a single pixel" (25). The resolution of the technology used for evidence is unable to register the scale at which the violence occurs. While I do not wish to suggest facile equivalence between physical and epistemic violence, the idea of thresholds of detectability is productive when applied to knowledge ontologies, such as those produced by cataloguing and classification systems, because it allows us to think of the uncatalogued as constitutive of a systematic and ideological erasure of certain kinds of cultural forms. That those forms, in this case small and popular magazines, do not receive full legitimacy under the technology that describes them is not incidental.

The problem of visibility can be related to how catalogues deal with *aggregate* works. As cataloguing theorist Chris Holden explains, "[w]hile a chapter removed from a novel forms part of a larger work, an aggregate is made up of several works that can also function as complete works outside their presence in the aggregate" (Holden 90). All small magazines, then, can be classified as aggregate works, being containers for a host of independent and individual works. Holden notes that the "fact that aggregated works are not part of some larger whole, but complete, standalone works that just happen to be collected together, has made modelling them difficult" (90). The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' (IFLA) Working Group on Aggregates argues that the "process of aggregating ... itself is an intellectual or artistic effort and therefore meets the criteria for a work." (IFLA Working Group on Aggregates, Final Report (2011)

<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/frbrwg/AggregatesFinalReport.pdf>; p5; cited in Holden 90-91), which gives due visibility to the editors and editorial teams that, in many cases in African small magazines, defined the work and content of their publications. But, when writ large across large networks of literary culture, the problem remains that data about individual works and their individual authors fall under the threshold of bibliographic visibility and given

that small and popular magazines were of such importance to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century African literature, this structural invisibility is particularly problematic.

By way of example, figure 4 shows the call number (that being, where the material is located in a library) and figure 5, the MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging Record) for volume 20 of *Penpoint* magazine at Makerere University Library, as available on the library’s online catalogue.

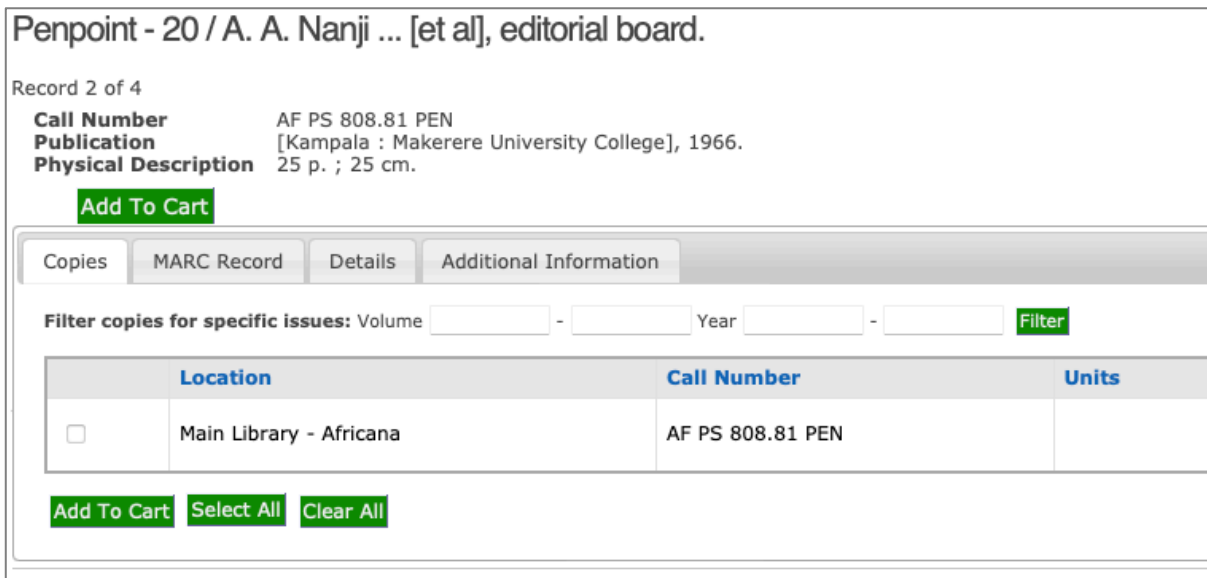


Figure 4. Screenshot taken on 17 November 2023

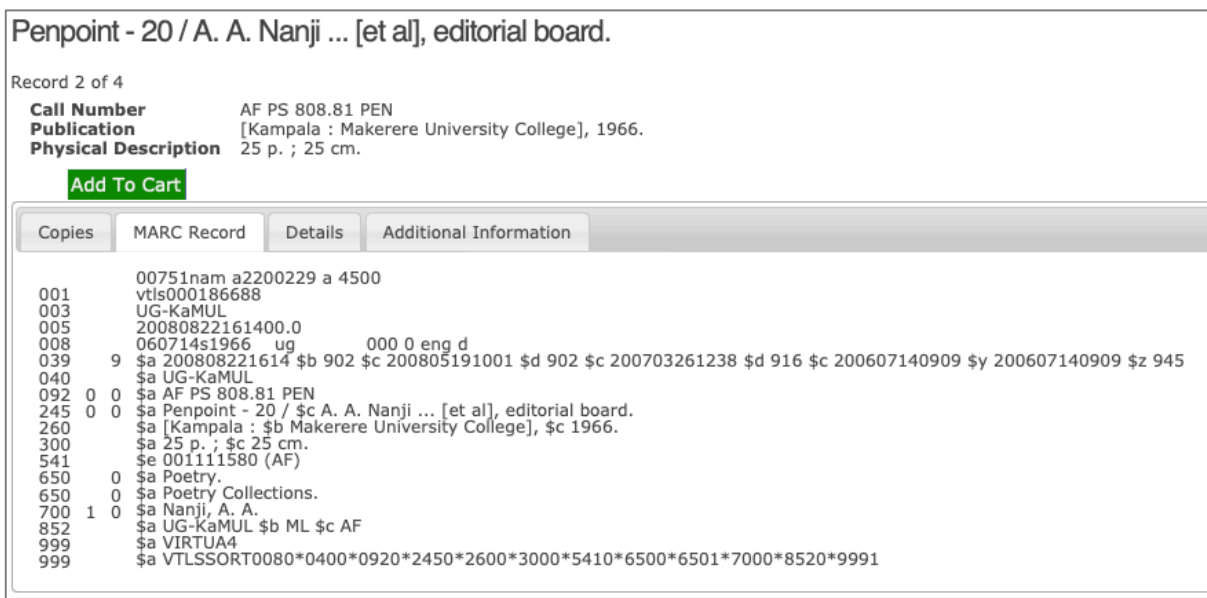


Figure 5. Screenshot taken on 17 November 2023

What we see here is typical of how most library cataloguing systems incorporate small magazines. The call number attributes the aggregated work, under the editorial name of A. A. Nanji (all other editors’ ‘intellectual or artistic effort’, as the IFLA report above puts it, falls

under the 'et al' attribution). While figure 4 is ostensibly a form of descriptive metadata, letting us know where we can, quite simply, find this text on the shelves at Makerere University Library, it nevertheless codes certain exclusions and invisibilities. While figure 5 gives a far wider range of MARC metadata (a standard I will not discuss here), what is not included here (or under the 'details' or 'additional information' tabs, for that matter) is anything about the individual works included in this particular edition of the magazine. To know that Sheikh El-Miskery's poem 'The Burnt Cottage' (11) or Sadru Somji's short-story 'The Judgment' (6-10) was published in this number of *Penpoint*, for example, one would have to consult the copy itself.<sup>8</sup> Given that this is one of only two numbers of *Penpoint* held by the library, one also sees the extent to which the content of these small magazines falls into obscurity.

Not all aggregate works are equal when it comes to metadata capture, of course. If we look at the following example of a collection of largely East African poetry published by Oxford University Press, *Counterpoint and Other Poems*, edited by T Michael Mboya, on the world catalogue, we see that the names of authors and titles of works included in the aggregate work are represented in the metadata and are made searchable:

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/774262957>. This is not often the case, even for formally published works (see for example *Voices of this Land: An Anthology of South African Poetry in English*, on the world catalogue <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1342098512>). But when it comes to African small and popular magazines, such information has almost never been captured. Once again, this is a question of resources. Capturing the individual contents of aggregate texts is extremely time-consuming and resource-intensive. Even contemporary, formally published aggregates, like the published collections of short stories from the Caine Prize, do not include metadata about the contributors or their works on the world catalogue.<sup>9</sup>

What this means is that authors who produced a great deal of writing in and across these platforms are largely invisible and that scholarship on their work has been impeded by access issues. We might even argue that the lack of available metadata of the contents of small magazines explains the tendency in recent scholarship to focus on distribution, materiality and the social relevance of the magazines instead of the actual content, or even the specific contributors, to the magazines.

## Metadata and revisioning African literary history

This is where the extraction of metadata from the magazines themselves becomes an important task: we might say that we need, now, to recreate the tables of contents of as many African small and popular magazines as possible and make that data visible and searchable.

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<sup>8</sup> Or, as I was forced to do here, given that this data does not exist in any accessible form, extract this information second-hand from scholarly work (see Nabutanyi and Tibasiima).

<sup>9</sup> The 2020 *Twenty Years of the Caine Prize*, does list the names of authors in the metadata, if not the titles of their works.

Figure 6 shows a screenshot of what this type of data capture includes: this example from early editions of *Drum* magazine is preliminary and has been compiled by myself. The columns, from right to left, represent: date of publication, volume, number, page numbers, author, title, and genre.<sup>10</sup>

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
28	Jun. 1952	2	6	24–25	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
29	Jun. 1952	2	6	21	Guybon B. Sinxo	The Boomerang	Fiction: Short Story
30	Jun. 1952	2	6	21	Peter N. Raboroko	To Shaka	Poem
31	Jun. 1952	2	6	31		Douglas Sidayiya	
32	Jul. 1952	2	7	42–43	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
33	Jul. 1952	2	7	22–23	A.S. Masiye	The Bride Price	Fiction: Short Story
34	Jul. 1952	2	7	31	H.I.E Dhlomo	(Masterpiece in Bronze)	Non-fiction
35	Aug. 1952	2	8	26–28	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
36	Aug. 1952	2	8	32–33	John Henrik Clarke	The Boy Who Painted Christ Black	Fiction: Short Story
37	Aug. 1952	2	8	44	Ayodeji Ayeni	The Wicked Tortoise: A Nigerian Story Told by Ayodeji A	Fable
38	Sept. 1952	2	9	38–40	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
39	Sept. 1952	2	9	26–28	Sam Mokgalendi	The Blood Between Us	Fiction: Short Story
40	Oct. 1952	2	10	38–40	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
41	Oct. 1952	2	10	22–23	Kyle Mdenge	The Betrayal	Fiction: Short Story
42	Nov. 1952	2	11	26–28	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
43	Nov. 1952	2	11	42; 43; 46	C.O.D Ekwensi	Forbidden Love	Fiction: Short Story
44	Dec. 1952	2	12	38–39	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
45	Dec. 1952	2	12	22–23	Kyle Mdenge	Night of Passion	Fiction: Short Story
46	Dec. 1952	2	12	30–31;	Bruno Mehle	I was a Drunkard: A Terrible Confession	True Story
47	Jan. 1953	3	1	26–27	Peter Abrahams	Wild Conquest	Fiction (serialised)
48	Jan. 1953	3	1	22–23	Rita Sefora	True Love Confession "I was in a dream land"	True Story
49	Jan. 1953	3	1	32–33	Arthur Mogale	Crime for Sale!	Fiction: Short Story
50	Feb. 1953	3	2	34–35	Arthur Mogale	Crime for Sale!	Fiction: serialised
51	Feb. 1953	3	2	26–27	K.E. Nstane	Dangerous Love!	Fiction: Short Story
52	Mar. 1953	3	3	32–33	Arthur Mogale	Crime for Sale!	Fiction: serialised
53	Mar. 1953	3	3	24–25	D.C. Themba	Passionate Strangers	Fiction: Short Story
54	Apr. 1953	3	4	6–7	"Amperbaas"	Confessions of a Playwhite	True Story
55	Apr. 1953	3	4	8–11; 13		Little Men from the Moon	Picture Story
56	Apr. 1953	3	4	22–23; 48	D.C. Themba	Mob Passion!	Fiction: Short Story
57	Apr. 1953	3	4	36–37	Arthur Mogale	Hot Diamonds!	Fiction: Serialised
58	May. 1953	3	5	6–8	"Old Man Kajee"	My Life in the Underworld	True Crime
59	May. 1953	3	5	14–15	Joan Mokwena	My Husband was a Flirt!	True Romance
60	May. 1953	3	5	30–31	Arthur Mogale	Hot Diamonds!	Fiction: Serialised
61	Jun. 1953	3	6	6–9	"Kikuyu"	I was a Mau Mau	True Story

Figure 6.

We plan such data capture across the full publication ranges of numerous African magazines (see just some of the projects underway for South African small magazines in the Excel tabs above). If one imagines this kind of data capture on a large scale, we can start to see how linking such data would become a powerful tool in visualizing and understanding the literary networks of small and popular magazines. Not only will we be able to search for the exact texts any given author has produced, but we will also be able to see what kinds of genres dominated production across different regions at any given point in time, how authors moved between different magazines and readerships, how audiences' tastes shifted across time, magazines, regions, and so forth. A further aspect of the captured metadata is that a link to the digital version of the given text or a reference to where one can find a material copy will also always be included. What this allows is for us to coordinate incomplete digitized archives

<sup>10</sup> ALMEDA will extract the full literary metadata of, amongst others, *Drum* magazine, which will be available on our website and incorporated into our online database as searchable metadata when that platform launches

so that we can recreate full data-sets of the output of any given magazine, a factor that is important in a context where such magazines were seldom collected in national repositories. What we see in the above discussion is that descriptive metadata (that tells us where to find material in a library via the catalogue, or what to find in the pages of a magazine, via the table of contents) is entangled in various biases that emerge from colonial classification and taxonomy that continues to impact what is considered as worthy of documentation. At this level, we at the ALMEDA project claim that the prosaic, empirical work of recreating the visibility of the contents of (amongst other forms) small and popular magazines goes some way to addressing the epistemological violence of these long exclusions. In this sense, the table of contents page or the library catalogue empirically fleshes out Shingurapure's theory of assemblages in relation to small magazines.

Should you have questions about ALMEDA, our methods, data and research, please contact Ashleigh Harris at [ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se](mailto:ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se). We also invite contributions of metadata on materials that you would like to see linked to our larger database.

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