

Embracing Sankofa: Centering Africa in Narratives

As we enter a new era, we are proud to present the inaugural issue of the *African Journal of Media and Society*. As the steward of this academic platform, our commitment is to foster discourse that goes beyond conventional academic inquiry. Our mission is not just to disseminate knowledge but to redefine how we understand and engage with African narratives.

For too long, discussions regarding African liberation have been trapped by the legacies of colonialism. The prevalent focus on “decolonization” has often unintentionally centered on the oppressor and their agenda, pushing African agency and freedom to the margins. It is time to move beyond this paradigm and reclaim our narrative sovereignty.

The esteemed African scholar Professor Kofi Asare Opoku recently inspired us with this insightful Maasai proverb: “The scorching sun cannot erase the stripes of the zebra” (K. A. Opoku, personal communication, n.d.). He urged us to embrace the concept of Sankofa—a symbol highlighting the importance of looking back to move forward. Sankofa teaches us that our past holds the key to our future and that our path to liberation must be deeply rooted in an understanding of our history, culture, and ways of knowing.

This call was echoed by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah in his speech “The African Genius,” delivered at the formal opening of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, on October 25, 1963. He urged Africans to “study the history, culture, institutions, languages, and arts of Ghana and Africa in new African-centred ways — in entire freedom from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch, and from the distortions of those Professors and Lecturers who continue to make European studies of Africa the basis of this new assessment” (Nkrumah, 2013, p. vii).

Thus, we embark on this journey with a firm commitment to center Africa in all narratives. Our journal acts as a conduit for amplifying African agency, giving voice to those who have long been marginalized and challenging the hegemonic structures that diminish our collective identity.

At the core of our mission lies a dedication to African epistemology—a recognition that knowledge is not a monolithic entity but a rich tapestry woven from the experiences, perspectives, and wisdom of African peoples. By centering Africa in our narratives, we aim to challenge the prevailing Eurasian-centric viewpoint and create a space where African voices can flourish, free from the constraints of colonial constructs.

As we embark on this journey together, we invite scholars, researchers, and intellectuals from across the African world community to join us in reimagining the contours of academic discourse. Let us embrace Sankofa as our guiding principle, drawing strength from our past as we forge a path towards a more equitable and inclusive future.

In the pages of the *African Journal of Media and Society*, may you find inspiration, enlightenment, and the courage to challenge the status quo. Together, let us create a new narrative—one that celebrates the richness and diversity of African heritage, empowers marginalized voices, and paves the way for a more just and equitable society.

Welcome to the *African Journal of Media and Society*—a beacon of hope, a catalyst for change, and a testament to the enduring spirit of African resilience.

Sincerely,

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References

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