

Echoes of colonial discourse in journalism

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Last year marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of David Livingstone, the explorer and missionary who is best remembered as an anti-slavery campaigner who presented Africa in humanitarian terms to the British Empire. Today the legacy of colonialism continues to haunt the continent, and the discourses of colonialism can still be heard in media representations of Africa.

This issue of *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* marks the bicentenary of Livingstone's birth by highlighting the legacy of colonialism in contemporary media discourses. The issue starts off with a special section, 'Livingstone and the legacy of Empire in the journalistic imagination'. The guest editors of this section, Martin Conboy, Jairo Lugo-Ocando and Scott Eldridge of the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom (UK), remark in their introduction that the prevalent journalistic narrative of Africa found in contemporary media still repeats the old colonial binaries of civilisation and barbarity. Even journalism that takes a positive approach to Africa is often characterised by a patronising tone that casts Africa as a victim of its own corruption, tribalism and weak institutions. The historical roots of today's conflicts, corruption and poverty are seldom investigated or explicated.

The special section contains three research articles that examine questions around the representation of Africa in the global news media, and how these representations influence the way global audiences – including Africans in the diaspora – view Africa. The special section also includes an interview with the British novelist and biographer, Tim Jeal, who writes bestsellers on the Victorian African explorers. He is interviewed by Fonghuala Sweeney from Newcastle University.

To continue the focus on global media representations of Africa, this issue includes two general research articles related to the topic. The first, by Bella Mody, compares coverage of the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, in the UK *Guardian* newspaper, to its co-owned South African counterpart, the *Mail & Guardian*. The UK has a long-standing colonial relationship with Sudan, but the article finds that notwithstanding this historical link, coverage of Sudan has been limited. Although South Africa does