

COLLEGE OF FELLOWS, TUBINGEN UNIVERSITY

Call For Abstracts for Workshop

Theme: Eco-phenomenology: Exploring Eco-phenomenological Concepts and Theories from and for Africa's Ecological Lifeworld

Workshop Date: December 13–15, 2023

The specific concern of phenomenology is to redirect our consciousness towards what is there in experience. It seeks to understand the fundamental structures of subjective experience in the world. However, its pioneers only make scanty theorizations of human's experience in, and with, the natural environment. Only recently have scholars begun to apply the classical phenomenological thoughts of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Levinas to address environmental issues like climate change that our world is facing (see Brown and Toadvine 2003; Peeters *et al.*, 2015; Edelglass, 2020; Booth, 2021). The result is the beginning of a new discipline: Eco-phenomenology.

The engagement of human's experience in, and with, the natural environment and how the natural world (including its constituent species) shows up for them is central to eco-phenomenology. David Wood, one of the foremost eco-phenomenologists posits that eco-phenomenology can be thought of as a hybridization of phenomenological ecology and ecological phenomenology (Wood, 2019: 14). The sense here is that eco-phenomenology adopts the methods and insights of phenomenology and, at the same time, uses these methods, concepts, and insights for studying the interrelationship between organism and the world in its metaphysical and axiological dimensions.

Despite the recent wave of eco-phenomenology, there is a surprising need for abundant eco-phenomenological perspectives from the African continent whose situated experiences are often connected to the flora and fauna of the natural environment. Of course, it is not the case that African philosophers do not adopt phenomenology as a method in their research. Many African scholars have used phenomenological approaches to reflect on the lived experiences of Africans to examine how such lived experiences can promote better awareness of their challenges and aid a meaningful response to these challenges (John Sanni, 2019: 2). However, such attempts have been common to theorizing socio-political realities (see Olivier 2023) but very sparse in addressing Africa's socio-ecological experience (Rootaan, 2019) even now when human ecological consciousness needs to be taken seriously.

Although many African Scholars have reflected on Africa's ecological crisis from ethical and socio-political standpoint (see Munrove 2009; Behrens 2014; Metz 2015; Kelbessa 2018; Fayemi 2016; Chimakonam 2017; Etieyibo 2017 and 2023; Chemhuru 2019; Ogude and Mushonga 2023; Samuel 2023), a vacuum is yet to be filled by applying phenomenology to the environmental crisis in Africa. This overlooked intellectual space is the focus of this workshop. It is expected at this workshop that both classical and contemporary phenomenological theories will be interpreted and engaged without eschewing analysis of the African social, political, and historical structures which imbue ecological experiences with intersubjective meaning-complexes that are necessary for philosophical understanding. This workshop aims to use eco-phenomenology to analyze African

environment or nature-related problems in a bid to contribute important insights that would direct and infuse the habits of thought and action in the everyday lives of African people towards a transformative eco-consciousness.

The Workshop speakers may explore, among others, the following questions.

- In what ways has the African environmental lived experiences provoke or promote attitudes of eco-dissonance, eco-disjunction, and eco-affectivity?
- Are there peculiar emotional and felt significance of our relations with the more-than-human world in Africa?
- How can we phenomenologically reconstruct the African environmental relations using eco-relational concepts that are co-adaptively engaging as well as attentive to Africa's socio-ecological contexts?
- How does the African experience of a particular place reveal essential experiential qualities of environmental relations?
- Are there phenomenological theories from Africa that can help promote human-animal relational awareness?
- What are the normative implications of adopting eco-phenomenology for addressing African environmental crisis with reference to environmental justice and environmental sustainability?

Submission and Workshop Information

Interested speakers should please send an Abstract of not more than 300 words and 1 page biography/motivation letter to:

Dr. A.P. Afolabi: abiodun-paul.afolabi@cof.uni-tuebingen.de

The subject line of the e-mail should please read "Eco-phenomenology Workshop."

Please note that there are limited slots for Speakers and only abstracts that address the core thematic focus of the workshop will be accepted for presentation.

Also, there will be no registration fee for the workshop. Workshop organizers, however, regret to inform interested participants that there is no available fund to support travel plans, but breakfast and lunch will be provided for participants during the workshop. However, the workshop will be held in a hybrid format so speakers who cannot travel to Tübingen can give their presentation online.

Deadline for Abstract Submission: October 10th, 2023. Abstracts received after the deadline will not be considered.

Speakers will be notified no later than October 20th, 2023, whether their submission has been accepted for the workshop.

For further enquiries on the workshop, please send a mail to:

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