



Workshop

Engaging Sustainability

30–31 March 2023 | Universität Tübingen, Neue Aula, Room 236

Organisation: Dr. Olusegun Samuel (samuelolusegunsteven@gmail.com)

DAY 1 (30TH MARCH 2023)

9:45–10:30

Title: A new (political) ethics of and for Sustainable Development? At the intersection of ontological, epistemic, and moral challenges– Prof. Thomas Potthast, University of Tuebingen

Abstract:

Sustainability has gone a long political way from prudent use of forest resources of European cameralist 18th-century states to an idea of justice in the United Nations' concept of Sustainable Development. It is not to be underestimated to have a shared – at least declared – political basis of i) a principle of intra- and intergenerational justice combined with ii) a principle of priority of the basic needs of poorest, with also iii) acknowledging the techno-environment as a limiting boundary condition. Yet at the same time, the approach rests on a partly outdated anthropocentric ethics – with a considerable exception in UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to be discussed further. Also, ideas of permanent economic growth seem no longer fitting or even being the source of more unsustainability. How should and could the concept of Sustainable Development be reframed, facing challenges of non-binary philosophies of human-nature relations, more-than-human approaches to non-anthropocentric ethics, the issues of which kinds of knowledge are (not) needed to grapple with multiple crises? The paper will explore the contact zones, where political, ontological, epistemic, and moral issues come together. It will be critically discussed: Whether and how could and should fundamentally 'new' and iconoclastic ontologies, epistemologies, and morals be? Might rather a more pluralist mosaic of approaches to be sought, still acknowledging which common ground?

Keywords:

Biography:

Thomas Potthast is Professor for Ethics, Philosophy, and History of the Life Sciences and Co-Director of the International Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (IZEW) of the University of Tübingen. He studied biology and philosophy at Freiburg, Germany, and received his Ph.D. at Tübingen, followed by a PostDoc at the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, and a Humboldt-Fellowship at the University of Madison-Wisconsin. His special expertise is in bio-philosophy, interdisciplinary ethics, and ethical and epistemological dimensions of (education for) sustainable development.

10:45–11:30

Title: Sustainability as an act of environmental Justice – Prof. James Ogude, University of Pretoria

Abstract:

This paper sets out to examine the challenges to the sustainability discourse now in vogue. It argues that fundamental to a nuanced understanding of sustainability concept is to see it first and foremost as an of ecological justice/injustice issue. The first challenge is the failure to interrogate the ambiguous grammar of framing sustainability discourse, which assumes there is a universal way of understanding related problems such as adaptation, “the green economy”, eco-tourism, and even the undifferentiated idea of the Anthropocene. I argue that searching for alternative ways of framing the discourse is urgent because language has a way of creating new regimes of truth, which work to perpetuate existing structural inequalities. The paper further argues that the ambiguity in disaggregating issues is evident in the tendency to shift the burden of response and responsibility on the most vulnerable communities, especially those from the global South who have contributed the least to global warming. At the level of knowledge production, the paper draws attention to the tendency to dismiss as dated, banished knowledges or indigenous modes of knowing in framing environmental challenges. Instead, the paper argues that a clear formulation must ground its foundations in indigenous philosophies, ontologies, and epistemologies in order to grasp indigenous conceptions of what constitutes justice that banished knowledges such as Ubuntu can offer. After all, over the decades, indigenous peoples, have offered a distinct diagnosis of the planetary crisis through their everyday practices, which have been wilfully driven underground. Finally, the paper calls for the need to register cultural and social differentiation in sustainability discourse, by showing the inevitability of unevenness in the way different communities and nations will respond to core sustainability issues such as renewable energy, which demands a radical engagement with a just energy transition beyond the current rhetoric.

Keywords: Banished Knowledges, Ecological Justice, Indigenous, Sustainability, *Ubuntu*

Biography:

James Ogude is a Professor of African Literature and cultures, and the Director of the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria. He is also the Director of the African Observatory for Environmental Humanities, and UNESCO Bridges hub, both located at the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship at the University of Pretoria. His research interests include, postcolonial literatures, popular cultures in Africa and more recently, Ubuntu and African ecologies. He recently concluded a five-year project on the Southern African philosophical concept of Ubuntu funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation and currently leads a Mellon funded supra-national project on African Urbanities involving the Universities of Ghana, Makerere and Cape Town. He is also leading the University of Pretoria in a collaborative project on “Climate Justice and Problems of Scale”, sponsored by the Consortium for Humanities Centres and Institutes (CHCI), involving University of Texas at Austin, University of Sydney, Carnegie Mellon University, Arizona State University and American University in Beirut. He is the author of *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation*. He has edited nine books and one anthology of African stories. His most recent edited volumes are: *Ubuntu and the Reconstitution of Community* (Indiana UP, 2019) and *Environmental Humanities of Extraction in Africa: Poetics and politics of Extraction* (Routledge Publishers, 2023). Ogude is an “A” rated scholar by the National Research Foundation of South Africa.

11:45–12:30

Title: Delimiting Sustaina(ble/bility) Consumption –Prof. Edwin Etieyibo, the University of Witwatersrand

Abstract:

Largely, it is an epistemic or empirical question as to what constitutes sustainable consumption and invariably sustainability in the context of the environment. Furthermore, there are debates around whether a particular behaviour is consumptive and sustainable and what sorts of obligations there are, or we have as earthlings among other earthlings in respect of the environment. In this presentation, I engage with the broad discussion of delimiting destructive consumption as part of my attempt to make a case for consumption that is sustainable. My overarching motivation is to demonstrate not just the impact of destructive consumption on the environment but also the importance of responsible consumerism or a consumer lifestyle.

Keywords: Consumer lifestyle, Consumption, Environment, Obligations, sustainability

Biography:

Edwin Etieyibo is a professor of philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and an adjunct professor at the University of Alberta, Canada. His research and teaching interests cut across a number of areas including ethics, social and political philosophy, applied ethics, African philosophy, critical thinking, philosophy for children, social contract theories/and history. He is the co-founder (and Secretary) of the African Philosophy Society, a pan-African organisation that organises research clusters among African philosophers and mentors promising and young scholars in African philosophy. His recent book, *A Case for Environmental Justice* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2022) presents important insights into the connections between rational institutional or State self-interest and environmental concerns and issues in the international arena.

2:05–2:50

Title: Rethinking relationality on an ontological basis –Dr Niels Weidtmann, University of Tuebingen

Abstract:

If we really want to overcome the dualism of nature and culture, which is characteristic of the naturalistic understanding of the world, and if we really want to experience ourselves as part of nature, then we must first expose the foundations of this understanding of the world, which at the same time shapes our self-understanding. Usually, the beginnings of a hard dualism are seen in the early modern period and are associated with the advent of modern sciences. In fact, however, the turn to modern times first of all means a turning towards the world and away from extra-worldly powers. The world follows its own rules, and it can be understood from within itself. At least in principle, the turn to modern times can therefore be understood as the end of the dualism of physics and metaphysics. In the world, however, everything relates to everything, including humans themselves. So, it is precisely here that we encounter a consistent idea of relationality. Only if we understand how the naturalistic understanding of the world could develop on the ground of this idea of relationality, do we have a chance to correct it. In my contribution, I will try to show that the development of the naturalistic understanding is related to a one-sidedness of relational thinking in early modern times. A phenomenological critique of this one-sidedness may help to establish a new sense of belonging to nature without just imitating indigenous ideas.

Keywords: Relationality, naturalism, ontology, phenomenology, nature-culture-divide

Biography:

Niels Weidtmann is director of the College of Fellows – *Center for Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Studies* of Tübingen University, Germany. He studied philosophy, political sciences, and biology at the University of Würzburg, Germany, and at Duke University, Durham, N.C., USA. Ph.D. in philosophy with a thesis on phenomenology and African Philosophy. Before becoming director of the *College of Fellows* in 2020 he was director of the *Forum Scientiarum*, an interdisciplinary institute of Tübingen University, for more than 10 years. In 2019 he got elected President of the Society for Intercultural Philosophy. He is also a member of the German Society for Phenomenological Research. His research interests are in phenomenology, hermeneutics, intercultural philosophy, African Philosophy, philosophy of human rights, and philosophical anthropology. He has widely published in these fields. His latest book is on intercultural philosophy.

3:05–3:50

Title: Assessing inclusiveness of contemporary archiving approaches for sustainable development of African knowledge identities: The case of Botswana – Dr Tshepho Mosweu, University of Botswana

Abstract:

At the dawn of colonialism, African countries found themselves entangled within colonial structures which have mostly continued even after independence to run the new states which emerged. One of these structures is the preservation and archiving of the documentary heritage of the people. Botswana, a former “colony” of the British had to inherit both the alien British way of archiving people’s histories as well as colonial records or archives that accumulated during the colonial era. Hence the national repositories are not a presentation of the diversity of the population, as the major part of the country’s preserved history is from the government offices and from official colonial accounts. One other factor contributing to gaps and absences in the national repositories includes constitutional discrimination (inherited constitution) of other tribes, such that the information preserved at the National archives is mostly from the so-called “8 major tribes”; another may be the issue of language as most archives collected are in English and a local language, Setswana, spoken by the these “8 major tribes” at the expense and to the detriment of other languages in the country. This situation means histories of other ethnic groups in the country are not documented and preserved for future generations and are not generally available to researchers and for other purposes. This paper proposes an inclusive archiving policy and practice that takes into consideration the diversity of the people in the country as a necessity for the sustainable development of indigenous cultures, knowledge systems, and social engineering. It proposes measures such as the documentation of people’s histories through other African ways, such as oral histories of indigenous peoples and those of other marginalised communities.

Keywords: Archival theory, Archives, Documentary heritage, Decolonization

Biography:

Tshepho Mosweu is a Senior lecturer at the Department of Library and Information studies at the University of Botswana where she teaches courses related to archives and records management and knowledge management. Before that, she worked as an archivist at the Botswana National Archives and Records Services. Her professional activities include working with the InterPARES Trust 4 Africa Team, most recently InterPARES Trust AI, and the ICA Digital Curation programme. She also serves as the Deputy Editor of the Journal of the South African Society of Archivists. She has published academic papers in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters on electronic records, liquid communication, Cloud-Computing, research methods, and oral history. Dr. Mosweu is the co-editor of the book, *Cases on Electronic Record Management in the ESARBICA Region*, published in 2020 by IGI Global.

4:05–4:50

Title: Thinking Sustainability through the Earth-eco-socialist Paradigm – Dr Philomena Ojomo,
Lagos State University

Abstract:

Sustaining the environment, which houses all humans and nonhumans, is a task that requires cooperation and urgency when we consider the increasing environmental challenges being experienced all over the world. The fundamental assumption of this paper is that the deplorable state of the environment is largely due to the capitalist orientation that seeks to exploit not only human beings but also nonhuman elements of the environment. Therefore, the paper considers the classical free market political economic philosophy as an inadequate template for achieving environmental sustainability. A more viable template ‘Earth-eco-socialist’ is proposed, and defended as capable of achieving harmony between humans and nature. It is a perspective that marks a departure from the prevailing capitalist emphasis on endless material accumulation and exploitation of the environment, which impacts on the capacity of others to aspire to meaningful existence. Earth-eco-socialism is based on the belief that the need for development and social progress should be based on principles which on one hand, provide the avenue for confronting social problems, and on the other hand, for arresting environmental crises through laws and democratic principles without sacrificing the needs of humans. It is based on the idea that environmental sustainability and health are indispensable if we are to achieve wellbeing for a greater number of human beings. Earth-eco-socialism combines ethical thoughts with ecological actions. It enjoins cooperative management of the environment and adaptable environmental law and its enforcement. The paper concludes with a defense of the need for the adoption of the earth-eco-socialist paradigm in our relationship with nature and others if we are to achieve a sustainable environment.

Keywords: Environmental Crises, Capitalism, Environmental Sustainability, Earth-eco-socialism

Biography:

Dr. Philomena Aku OJOMO, a Senior Lecturer, teaches Philosophy at the Lagos State University (LASU), Nigeria. Ojomo earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Nigeria in 2016. She is a specialist in environmental ethics. Her research interests are in theoretical ethics, applied ethics, environmental ethics, philosophy of education, and social philosophy. She has published in local and international outlets. Ojomo is an ecosocialist and the author of a well-discussed paper in African Environmental Ethics titled “Environmental Ethics: An African Understanding” published by Thought and Practice in 2010 and African Journal of Environmental Science in 2011. One of her most recent publications is "Niger Delta Environmental Crises and the Limitations of Africanizing Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic: Towards an Earth-Eco-Socialist Model," in *African Environmental Ethics: A Critical Reader*, edited by M. Chemhuru (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019). Ojomo has presented papers at national and international conferences. She has served on different committees and in numerous leadership positions. Ojomo was the Managing Editor of LASU Journal of Philosophy (LAJOP) and is now the Business Editor of LAJOP, the current Coordinator of the Diploma Programme in the Department. In December 2021, she emerged as the first Vice President of the African Environmental Ethics Association (AEEA).

5:05–5:50

Title: Whose sustainability? Interrogating the ethics of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) through the prism of the sustained disaster goals (SDGs) – Dr Senayon Olaoluwa, University of Ibadan

Abstract:

Research agenda setting is oriented towards micro and macro dynamics and has an overarching global resonance which in the past 500 years has been informed by paradigms of the capitalist West. It tyrannizes all other parallel agendas and extracts conformity from different spaces of the world in an ostensible affirmation of our common humanity, despite the historical and contemporary evidence of inequality. The

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda is one such to which the world is currently moored with a 15-year timeline (2015-2030). It is, among others, a heavily funded mitigation necessity for the assurance of human and non-human survival and continuity. However, I argue that the SDGs as a research agenda is at best generative of the proverbial “protruding legs of the hurriedly buried corpse”, which rather than resulting in closure, provokes an investigative curiosity. Drawing upon perspectives from the global South, especially the African experience of encounters with the West in the past 500 years, I argue that the mandate of the SDGs provokes critical questions about their flipside. The situation invites us to consider what I term the *Sustained Disaster Goals* (SDGs), which reference the centuries-long capitalist strategies deployed to entrench human and ecological disasters aimed at precipitating inequality. Therefore, rather than pursue an agenda which is at best a smokescreen for the preservation of human and ecological degradation made poignant by the sordid dynamics of the Anthropocene, I show in this paper the necessity of interrogating the ethos of the *Sustainable Development Goals*, which cannot cancel out centuries of the *Sustained Disaster Goals*. The paper concludes that the SDGs reinforce the injustice of Western capitalism by the very sense in which such temporal fraction of mitigation cannot be redemptive of the *Sustained Disaster Goals* that have placed the world in jeopardy for over 500 years.

Keywords: Sustainability, SDGs, Anthropocene, Africa, Narrative archaeology

Biography:

Senayon Olaoluwa, a Senior Research Fellow and former Acting Director, is of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. He is also an AfOx Fellow at the University of Oxford (2023 to 2024). His research is located at the intersection of environmentalism and migration studies. Some of his publications have appeared in *African Affairs*, *African Studies Review*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, and *Research in African Literatures*, among others. His article, “Dislocating Anthropocene: The City and Oil in Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water*”, was ranked in the top 10 on social and environmental justice by Oxford University Press in 2020. Senayon has been a winner of other prestigious fellowships, including African Humanities Program-ACLS fellowship, USA, All Africa House Fellowship, Cape Town, South Africa, African Guest Researchers’ Programme, Uppsala, Sweden, DAAD, Germany, among others. He has also read his papers at meetings in Africa, Europe, Asia and North America. Email: samsenayon@gmail.com

DAY 2 (31ST MARCH 2023)

9:30–10:15

Title: Behind theory and Practice: Ontological presuppositions and environmental sustainability –
Emeritus Prof. John A.I. Bewaji, University of the West Indies

Abstract:

The virtually irreversible environmental degradation inflicted by humanity on the universe – our universe as a minute part of the multiverse – is a function of the absolute ontological presupposition which underwrites the predominant Western capitalist system which currently rules the world. This absolute ontological presupposition is built on the mythical, non-scientific, impractical metaphysical narrative of what there is, how it came to be, the relationship between the elements of reality, and the overall understanding of being. The predominance of Western metaphysics and the gradation of nature and beings it proffers confers certain predetermined outcomes: in science and technology, politics and economics, arts and love, and education and religion. Utilizing R. G. Collingwood’s discourse on the metaphysical foundations of science as absolute presuppositions, it is canvassed in this discussion that until Western hegemonic philosophical and ideological foundational and absolute presuppositions which predispose humanity to destructive behaviours which are antagonistic to the future welfare of generations to come is unmasked for its bogusness and irrationality, the whole discussion about environmental sustainability will be futile, unproductive and redundant. In this essay, we lay out the contours of the urgent task for humanity to assist Europe and America (USA) to confront the monster of their intellectual deception, packaged as universalisms and objectivity through the elicitation of the Absolute Presuppositions of the Sciences which has led humanity onto the precipice of collective omnicide.

Keywords: Ontological, Sustainability, Presuppositions, Environmental, Collingwood.

Biography:

John Ayotunde (Tunde) Isola Bewaji (Ph.D. Philosophy and MA Distance Education), first Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of the West Indies, Member of CODESRIA College of Ph.D. Mentors in Africa and Visiting Research Fellow, Rhodes University (2022), Senior Research Associate, University of Johannesburg, Carnegie/CODESRIA Visiting Professor, University of Ibadan (2016) and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria (2021), Newman Endowed Visiting Professor of Philosophy of Culture, Brooklyn College – CUNY, USA (2011-2012), Guggenheim Research Fellow in Philosophy of Culture (2010), Member, Global Summit of Bioethics Chairman, National Bioethics Committee of Jamaica (UNESCO) founding Editor, Caribbean Journal of Philosophy (CJP); founding President, International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS), founding President, Academy of African Indigenous Religions, Theology and Art (AAIRTA). His books include *Beauty and Culture* (2003), *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (2007), *Narratives of Struggle* (2012), *Ontologized Ethics* (2013), *Black Aesthetics* (2013), *Introduction to Philosophy and Logic* (2014), *The Rule of Law and Governance in Indigenous Yoruba Society* (2016), *The Humanities and the Dynamics of African Culture in the 21st Century* (2017), *Media Theory, Practice and Ethics* (2017), *Identity Recreation in Global African Encounters* (2019) and *Fragmented Identities of Nigeria* (2021). He is a Fellow of Nigerian Academy of Letters.



10:30–11:15

Title: Grounding sustainability from African Intergenerational ethics – Dr Munamoto Chemhuru,
Great Zimbabwe University

Abstract:

In much of contemporary environmental ethical discourse, questions about intergenerational ethics and its implications for sustainability are usually overshadowed by those that only concern the interests of present generations. As a result, less attention seems to be given to questions of what obligations ought to exist between individuals of different generations. Yet, the fundamental questions around sustainability also revolve around intergenerational obligations. And, a meaningful theory of environmental ethics demands that serious consideration be given to how ethical obligations could be construed across different generations. In this work, I consider how to ground an alternative and plausible African conception of sustainability that is based on intergenerational environmental ethics, which stems from the African model of existence, as the latter considers all generations, past, present, and future. I consider how African ethics might be understood as an ethics of sustainability connecting the ontological, teleological, and ethical gaps between past, present and future generations. I provide reasons why such a view of ethics attempts to balance the rights and entitlements of future generations to environmental benefits with similar rights claims of past and present generations. Ultimately, I present a conception of African intergenerational ethics as a plausible and uncontroversial ethics for grounding sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Environmental Ethics, African Ethics, Intergenerational Ethics

Biography:

Munamoto Chemhuru (PhD) teaches Philosophy at Great Zimbabwe University since 2007, and is also a Senior Research Associate in Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg (2018-2023). Munamoto was an Alexander von Humboldt fellow in the department of Philosophy and Systematic Pedagogics at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, KU, Eichstätt, Germany from 1 March 2020 to 31 October 2022. His book, *Environmental Justice in African Philosophy* was published by Routledge in April 2022.



11:30–12:15

Title: Engaging Sustainability from a non-anthropo-centric perspective: including animals in a theory of sustainable development – Dr Leonie Bossert, University of Tuebingen

Abstract:

We live in a time in which we are increasingly confronted with the consequences of socio-ecological crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, or global pandemics. Such crises are related to the dominant human-animal relationship and human treatment of animals, which contribute to their emergence as well. However, the human-animal relationship is rarely discussed in the debate on proposed solutions to end them or at least reduce their consequences. Addressing these socio-ecological crises is central to advancing a societal transformation towards Sustainable Development. Therefore, as is argued in this talk, the sustainability discourse should also address the human-animal relationship and the human treatment of animals. This thesis will be underpinned by elaborating on two aspects in more detail: At

first, the link between the emergence of global socio-ecological crises and the treatment of animals is highlighted. Secondly, it is reasoned that the normative foundations of Sustainable Development at least allow for the inclusion of animals and, depending on the interpretation, even demand it. With this, the talk wants to show through empirical as well as ethical arguments that animals – as individuals, not as resources or species – should be taken seriously in the sustainability discourse. This comes with demanding changes in sustainability theory as well as practice. At the end of the talk, the consequences of such a non-anthropocentric perspective are addressed. Thereby, required modifications of our treatment of animals are discussed that may help to reduce the emergence of the above-mentioned crises and contribute to a more sustainable future – a future that is worth living for all humans as well as for animals.

Keywords: Non-anthropocentrism, animal ethics, normativity, Sustainable Development

Biography:

Dr Leonie N. Bossert is an applied ethicist with a research focus on animal ethics, environmental ethics, theories of interspecies justice, and the ethics of Sustainable Development, including research on sustainable AI. She received her Ph.D. in 2021 from the University of Tübingen (Germany) for a thesis in which she developed an animal ethical theory of Sustainable Development. For more information, please visit: <https://leonie-bossert.com/>

2:05–2:50

Title: A Reflection on the link between environmental sustainability and the problem of human character – Associate Professor Mohammed Akomolafe, Lagos State

Abstract:

Sustainability is one of the most discussed issues in the last two decades. It is a societal goal that broadly aims for humans to safely co-exist on planet earth over a long time. It is usually described along three dimensions: environmental, economic, and social. The environmental dimension is the focus of this research, as the study shall concern itself with the problems that inhibit environmental sustainability in developing countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, India, and Madagascar. Environmental sustainability involves an ethical assessment of actions taken by present persons which do not reduce the prospect of future persons enjoying similar benefits. The environment of developing countries has been seriously destabilized in recent times. The germane question then is: ‘how can developing countries achieve a sustainable environment? Quite a number of strategies have been proposed globally to address sustainability concerns. However, the policies are not effective in developing countries due to the breakdown of character caused by the attitude of people thinking too much of themselves and their place in the world over other people and beings. This character deficiency prompts us to consider ethical concerns in order to offer helpful moral solutions to sustainability issues. This study thus draws on the ethical orientation of ‘Omoluabi’ (good character or integrity). Sustainability requires character development, which involves honesty of purpose, sympathy, and sociability traits that extend beyond the human realm. The basic characteristics of ‘Omoluabi’, include ‘iwaonilaaka’ye’, ‘iwaologbon’, and ‘iwaamoye’; all of which are enviable moral principles that can positively shape our thinking and response

to sustainability. I will show in this study how these ideas can contribute to encouraging environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Environment, Omoluabi, Character

Biography:

Mohammed Akinola Akomolafe is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Lagos State University (LASU), Nigeria. Mohammed received his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Lagos in 2009. His area of specialization is socio-political philosophy. He has competence in teaching and research in the areas of applied ethics, metaphysics, and environmental studies. He is widely published; both locally and internationally. He is currently the Acting Head of the Department of Philosophy at LASU. He was the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator (2017-2020); Editor of LASU Journal of Philosophy (2017– 2021); the current Editor-in-Chief of LASU Journal of Philosophy (2021 till date); and the Postgraduate Coordinator of the Department of Philosophy (2017-2021), among others academic and non-academic positions.

3:05–3:50

Title: “Otherness” as a problem of representation in sustainability ethics – Dr Olusegun Samuel, University of Tuebingen

Abstract:

There is a longstanding polarisation of species in debates about welfare and sustainability. An example may be seen in the work of Christine Korsgaard. In her works, Korsgaard argues that humans have superior moral weight over other animals because humans are self-conscious rational beings, whereas animals are less conscious beings. I argue that this is a problematic thesis, and we must get rid of the assumption that *significant moral* or even *political weight* operates within the rational spheres. Dispelling this assumption allows us then to properly represent the other and focus on how aptly to bring together the flourishing of species since sustainability is a deliberate practice of maintaining a flourishing environment to preserve biodiversity, including humans, animals, wilderness, rivers, and landscapes within it perpetually. How might we engage sustainability problems in a plausible way? I propose that the elements of relationality and locatedness central to ubuntu philosophy can help push our gaze beyond the human sphere. I not only argue that relationality and locatedness provide helpful suggestions to the problem of representation but that attuning our sensibilities to fragmented inter-and-intra-species relationships and material dislocation of the other also enriches our approach to sustainability as they add other dimensions to where sustainability problems might occur. A key potential outcome of the ubuntu-inspired approach (I propose) is that it demonstrates that the demands of sustainability require more granular insights into power relations, as this frames how people alter the environment.

Keywords: Otherness, Representation, Sustainability, *Ubuntu*

Biography:

Olusegun Steven Samuel is a Research Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Studies, University of Tuebingen, Germany, and a Visiting Research Scholar at the Center for Ethics Research (CRÉ) and the Research Group in Environmental and Animal Ethics (GREEA), Department of Philosophy, University of Montreal, Canada. Prior to these positions, Olusegun earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia. Olusegun's research focuses on the broad theme of belonging, participation, justice, sustainability, race, well-being, and decoloniality. He is a member of the Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics (Canada), the Australasian Association of Philosophy (Australia), and the African Environmental Ethics Association (AEEA, Global). Olusegun co-founded and co-host the African Environmental Ethics Association's monthly talk (with Rotimi Omosulu (Ph.D.) of the University of West Indies, Jamaica).

4:05–4:50

Title: Reimagining the concept of sustainability through permaculture ethics – Dr. Afolabi Abiodun, Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba

Abstract:

Reimagining the idea of sustainability is a task that must be embraced with keen interest by environmental ethicists. In this paper, I provide insights into permaculture ethics and its potential for reimagining the idea of sustainability in this environmental age. Permaculture ethics is a relatively old ethical paradigm that has been distilled from research into ancient community cultures that have existed and with great results of balance with their environment. Permaculture ethics adopts techniques and strategies that are based on natural science and patterns, using integration, innovation, and regenerative practices to achieve the goals of sustainability. Specifically, I employ the three principles of permaculture ethics that include - earth care, people care, and fair share - to define sustainability as the actions and attitudes that ensure that we are considerate and thoughtful in working with the environment, respecting all people and acting to preserve the future for generations unborn. The novel idea of sustainability that I offer will not only refocus our understanding of sustainability to consider values and concepts outside the current social norms, but it will also provide a resilient and holistic design system for creating sustainable human relations with the environment, both now and in the future.

Keywords: Sustainability, Permaculture ethics, Environmental ethics, Community ethics

Biography:

Abiodun Afolabi completed his Ph.D. at the Department of Philosophy, Rhodes University, South Africa. He is a faculty member at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria. Abiodun is a recipient of the prestigious doctoral scholarship from Allan Gray Center for Leadership Ethics, Rhodes University between 2019-2021. He is also a Research Associate at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He is keenly interested in the conceptualization and resolution of peculiar development and global justice problems afflicting vulnerable people around the world, particularly in African societies. His research interests are in the areas of applied ethics, climate change ethics, migration, global justice, and bio-politics.

5:00–5:45

Title: **Tanzanian Smallholder farmers and their culture of sustainability** – Kerstin Schopp, University of Tuebingen

Abstract:

Following the Brundlandt Report, the moral underpinnings of Sustainable Development are intra- and intergenerational justice. For this reason, there is the need for a fair share of natural resources as well as access to the environment which is fostered in approaches such as environmental justice. As the environment plays such a crucial role in human wellbeing, it also seems necessary to include a more-than-human perspective in sustainable development. In my fieldwork with Tanzanian smallholder farmers, I included an environmental ethics perspective to learn about their conceptions of a good life, their evaluative attitudes toward nature, and their reasons (not) to set sustainable development in practice. As this group is not well-represented on the political, economic, or academic level, it is necessary to reveal their ideas and to make them heard by a broader audience. These conceptions are interesting for two reasons: first, they also focus on the relational side of wellbeing which is often neglected in the Global North. Second, there are parallels with conceptions of the Global North. We thus need to ask what we can learn from these actors and what the globalization of productivity, modernization, and financial outputs mean for sustainable development.

Keywords: Good life, Relational well-being, Tanzanian Smallholder farmers, Sustainable Development

Biography:

Kerstin Schopp is a research associate and Ph.D. student at the International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities at the University of Tübingen. She studied biology and culture and society of Africa with a focus on Development Sociology and African History. Kerstin is currently working on the research project BATATA – Whose Bioeconomy? Tracing visions of socio-ecological transformation and their ethical deliberation in Tanzania. Her research focuses on the conceptions of (sustainable) land use of Tanzanian smallholder farmers.