

Discovering Environmental Humanities: Recovering the Environment in Africa and the African in the Environment

Rachel
Carson
Center

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Sponsors: African Network for Environmental Humanities (ANEH), Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC)

Conveners: John Agbonifo (Osun State University, Nigeria), Noah Echa Attah (Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Nigeria)

Presenters: Professor Ibrahim Bashir (University of Jos, Nigeria, Africa), Professor Noah Attah (Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Nigeria), Dr. Marklene Chinatu Ugbogu (Joseph Ayo Babalola University), Dr Omokafe Alaba Ugbogu (Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria) and Ms. Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood (Kings College, London, UK), and Mr. Ernest Prince Habib (the Nigerian Defense Academy)



The African Network of Environmental Humanities (ANEH), with the generous support of the Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society (RCC), announced its presence during the international conference of the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The ANEH hosted a panel which focused on the theme “Discovering Environmental Humanities: Recovering the Environment in Africa and the African in the Environment.” A range of empirically informed papers on diverse aspects of the environment were presented. The breadth of the presentations dovetailed with the theme of the conference: *African Studies in the 21st Century: Past, Present and Future*. ANEH panelists reviewed in various ways the state of the environment in the past, the present, and provided analytical insight into what the future holds in store. In his opening remarks, John Agbonifo traced the genesis of the idea of the ANEH to the director of the RCC, Christof Mauch, and the moral and material support of the RCC.

IBRAHIM BASHIR focused on examples of environmental issues in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, looking at the roots and causes of these problems from a summarized historical perspective and following their interaction with human societies. **IFESINACHI OKAFOR-YARWOOD** examined the subject of toxic waste dumping occurring in the Gulf of Guinea and the implications it has on environmental security. Pollution and high consumption of fossil fuels result in major environmental impacts; **ERNEST PRINCE HABIB** discussed these issues in relation to Nigeria’s leader in industrialization—the Ajaokuta steel rolling mill. In light of the rapid declines in Nigeria’s forests over the last century, **MARKLENE CHINATU UGBOGU** concentrated on the necessity, practicality and misuse of forestry management practices in Nigeria. “Land-grabbing,” or the procurement of large areas of land for huge scale agricultural developments, is a global phenomenon that has particularly expanded within Africa—the consequences this has on surrounding environments and human societies were explored by **NOAH ATTAH** in his talk. There are many arguments for clearing trees in order to advance human industry and livelihoods; however the impacts on nature are vast and **OMOKAFE ALABA UGBOGU’S** paper focused on the environmental consequences of deforestation.

At a post-panel meeting, the ANEH committee deliberated on several issues that could help to move the network forward. A major decision made at the meeting was for the Network to hold an expert round-table in March 2016, in which topics such as desertification and flooding will be discussed. One of the major objectives of ANEH is to inspire and promote long-term interest in the environmental humanities. For this reason, ANEH looks forward to organizing its first International Conference for the summer of 2016.