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## Newsletter of the Bayreuth Academy

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this new issue of our Newsletter! We appreciate your continuing interest in the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies and its current programme of research and debates on “Future Africa – Visions in Time”.

Since the publication of the previous newsletter, in autumn 2013, considerable efforts have been invested again in our **current research work**. In Africa, Europe and North America, the five Sub-projects of the Bayreuth Academy and their members have continued to collect substantial oral and written data, presented preliminary results at a wide range of conferences and seminars, and intensified their networks of **academic cooperation**.

More details on the Sub-projects and their activities can be found at <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/teilprojekt/index.html>> and in a recently produced Brochure <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/news/Booklet-der-Academy-2014/index.html>>



Besides research, more **events** with wider audiences have taken place. They brought together the research staff of the Academy (now at about 24), temporary fellows and guests as well as more encompassing academic and public audiences. „**Multiple Futures through Time**“ have been debated by **Working Group B** between November 2013 and February 2014, as the second in the series of the Bayreuth Academy’s fora for cross-disciplinary discussion about its general theme. Convened by Sub-project 1 “Narratives of Future in History”, the

Working Group addressed the diversity and historicity of conceptualizations of 'future' in Africa, in African Diasporas, and in other parts of the world. Stimulating case studies and intense encounters were provided by the researchers of all Sub-projects, together with a total of 12 Working Group Fellows and invited speakers, working on Africa and other parts of the World. The two key dimensions of the Working Group theme found peak attention at two international workshops, on “Sharing/Dividing Futures” (Dec. 12-13, 2013) and on “Changing Futures through Time” (Jan. 16-17, 2014). More details at <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/arbeitsgruppen/Winter-2013-2014- Multiple-Futures /index.html>>

A **workshop on "Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703-1750s) - Visions between Slavery and Enlightenment, between Europe and Africa"** took place in November 2013 at the Bayreuth Academy, with contributions by Ottmar Ette, Jacob Mabe, Susan Arndt and Peggy Piesche. See <[http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/resources/BA\\_Leporello\\_2013\\_Amo-Workshop\\_final.pdf](http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/resources/BA_Leporello_2013_Amo-Workshop_final.pdf)>. In the meantime, a book reflecting on the visions of this fascinating 18<sup>th</sup> century African philosopher in Germany has been published by Ottmar Ette. See <[http://www.uni-potsdam.de/romanistik/ette/ette/publikationen/pub\\_mono-2014.html](http://www.uni-potsdam.de/romanistik/ette/ette/publikationen/pub_mono-2014.html)>

Another workshop, held in January 2014 at the premises of the Academy, addressed "**Technology, Internet and its Effects on Diaspora. Notions of Race and Conceptions of the Future**", also convened by Sub-project 4 "Concepts of Future in MediaSpaces".

In February, Sub-project 5 "Revolution 3.0" held a **Workshop on "Utopia"**, at the Bayreuth Academy. See <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/resources/Workshop-UTOPIA.pdf>>.



Also in February, "**Zukunft Afrika – ein Lerntag**" (Future Africa - a Learning Day) was organized by a group of members of the Bayreuth Academy as part of the special programme on "Aufbruch Afrika" (Departure Africa) of the **Münchner Volkshochschule** (Munich Adult Education Centre, MVHS) in the heart of Bavaria's lively capital. Attended by a general public of more than 200 participants, an introductory lecture was followed by workshops on the history, the projections, the social carriers, and the iconography of African futures, complemented by culinary and musical dimensions of the theme. See more under <<http://www.gasteig.de/veranstaltungen-und-tickets/veranstaltungen/zukunft-afrika-ein-lerntag.html,v26196>>.

„**Concepts of Nature and Future: Africa and Beyond**”, was the thematic focus of debates in **Working Group C**, from May to July 2014, convened by Sub-project 2 "Visions of Nature". Critically reflecting on Western models of nature, ecology, environment and space from both natural and cultural science perspectives, it concentrated on implicit assumptions about time, change and future in these models. Besides a series of sessions, including fellows and guests, the peak event of this Working Group was an international conference, held in Bayreuth from June 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, including local as well as 8 externally invited speakers. See <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/arbeitsgruppen/Sommer-2014/index.html>>.

The major academic event this year for the Academy was undoubtedly the **25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the German African Studies Association (VAD)** on the theme “**Future Africa**”, which was hosted by the University of Bayreuth from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. Convened and coordinated by members of the Bayreuth Academy (Georg Klute and Doris Löhr, assisted by Hanna-Lena Reich), an enormous variety of perspectives on the future of Africa was discussed in its 47 panels and round tables, attended by a total of c. 500 participants. Six of these Panels were convened by members and Sub-projects of the Academy itself, including a presentation-cum-reception of its current research programme. For more details see <<http://www.vad-ev.de/index.php?id=4&L=1>>.



“**Literature of/and Memory 1884-1904-1914**” was the title of this year’s **BIGSAS Festival of African and African-Diasporic Literatures** (26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June), again engaging some of the Bayreuth Academy’s interests and resources, notably of its Sub-project 4 “Concepts of Future in Media Spaces”. As former President of the Federal Republic Horst Köhler put it in his greetings to the event: “If we succeed in finding a mutual understanding of the past, a new, collective vision for the future may arise from it, *umoya ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu*”. See more under <<http://www.bigsas-literaturfestival.de/eng.html#/home/>>. A festival reader was published as “Afrofictional In(ter)ventions”, edited by Susan Arndt and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard. See: <<http://www.edition-assemblage.de/afrofictional-interventions/>>. Another related publication that was published within the Academy’s framework is „Arriving in the Future“, edited by Philipp Khabo Köpsell and Asoka Esuruoso. <<http://arrivinginthefuture.com>>.

In July, Dieter Neubert from Sub-project 3 “Middle Classes on the Rise” has organized a session on “Middle Class As Driver of Change? Normative Orientations and Visions of the Future” at the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology (July 13-19, 2014) in Osaka (Japan). See: <<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2014/webprogram/Session4251.html>>.

From Oct. 2nd to 4th, Sub-project 1 “Narratives of the Future in History” convened its first international conference, on “Catastrophe or catalyst? African and African Diasporas’ visions arising from World War One”. The conference drew attention to non-European dimensions of the war hardly attended to during the current commemorations of its centenary: the experiences of violence and sacrifice, but also of mobilization, connectedness and unfulfilled promise that the considerable involvement of Africa and its Diasporas in this war meant for them. The focus was on the extent to which these experiences became catalysts of new ideas, demands and struggles for political, economic and social change; of the emergence of new political, social and religious

movements; and of radically altered visions of Africa's future. See: <<http://www.uni-bayreuth.de/presse/Aktuelle-Infos/2014/192-Afrika-Erster-Weltkrieg.pdf>>.

During recent months, also a number of **individual guest lectures** have been held at the Bayreuth Academy, e.g. by Dr. **Hakim Adi** (University of Chichester) on "Pan Africanism and Communism: The Communist international Africa and Diaspora, 1919-1939" in April 2014, by Prof. **JoAnn McGregor** (University of Brighton) on "Imagining African futures in exile: Zimbabwean narratives 1965-1980", and by Prof. **Marie Huchzermeyer** (University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg): "The Right to the City in South Africa" In July.

Finally, several **innovative methodologies** were successfully tested and further developed to analyse, and create dialogues with, particular types of material of relevance for the Bayreuth Academy's research theme. These comprise notably the "**Icon Lab**" and a related **Glossary** project, developed by Sub-project 5 "Revolution 3.0", but also for use by other researchers. See here: <[http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/teilprojekt/revolution\\_3\\_0/index.html](http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/teilprojekt/revolution_3_0/index.html)>.

More detailed, and better illustrated, reports on some of last year's activities of the Bayreuth Academy have been published by the end of 2013 in the Newsletter of African Studies in Bayreuth (NAB), vol. XIII, and can be downloaded under <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/news/NAB/index.html>>.

### **What is expected to happen at the Bayreuth Academy during the coming Winter Semester (Oct. 2014 to February 2015) ?**

**Working Group D** will provide an opportunity to review the results of researches and debates on our general topic "Future Africa – Visions in Time" achieved so far. Two joint Postdoc **Research Workshops**, planned for November and February, will intensely discuss insights reached through the researches by individuals and sub-projects along draft manuscripts for publication. Parallel to this, our "**Future Africa and Beyond**" **Lecture Series** will start in which prominent international scholars working on Africa and other constituencies of the world will present their reflections on the project theme to a wider academic audience. For details see <[http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/resources/BA-Public-lectures-Series-\\_update-2014-10-15\\_.pdf](http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/resources/BA-Public-lectures-Series-_update-2014-10-15_.pdf)>

Besides these Working Group activities, there will be a range of **more public lectures, workshops, panels, and other public events** at Sub-project and Academy level. Please follow up on these events at <<http://www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/index.php>>.

The major conference event in the coming year will be the **41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the African Literature Association (ALA)**, held in Bayreuth from June 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 under the overarching topic "African Futures and Beyond. Visions in Transition". For details see conference website <<http://www.ala2015.com/#/home/>>.

Finally, we invite all partners and friends, visitors and members of the Bayreuth Academy to join our **New Year Reception** on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 6pm at the Academy's premises at Hugo-Rüdel-Strasse 10, Bayreuth.