In the artistic imagination, Europe often provides a transcultural alternative to national or ethnic narratives. At the same time, references to Europe have also often informed narratives of exclusion (and continue to do so). Europe is answerable to atrocities relating not just to its colonial past and ongoing institutional racism but also to the present ‘fortress Europe’-mentality. Europe, as the debates surrounding the so-called ‘refuge crisis’ as well as the current Black Lives Matter protests indicate, needs new narratives to enter into a postmigratory, decolonial, provincialized future.

Janine Hauthal’s research explores how Europe is narrated on the contemporary page, stage and screen from cross- or transcultural perspectives and focusses in particular on intersections between aesthetic strategies and political functions. Her two FWO-funded research projects on ‘fictions of Europe’ were specifically concerned with British and Anglophone settler contexts (“Britain in Europe: The Emergence of Post-Insular Identities and Transcultural Discourses in Contemporary British Literature”, 2014-2017; “Europe in the Anglophone Settler Imagination after 1989”, 2017-2021). She is affiliated with the international “Imaginary Europes Network” and has published numerous articles on the topic in international peer-reviewed journals (www.vub.be/en/people/janine-hauthal). At present, she is co-editing a special issue on “European Peripheries in the Postcolonial Literary Imagination” (with Anna-Leena Toivanen, U Eastern Finland; scheduled for publication with the Journal of Postcolonial Writing in 2021). She is also co-organizing the upcoming international conference “Intersectional Challenges in Afroeuropean Communities” that will take place at the VUB in July 2021 (www.afroeuropeans2021.com).

Researchers interested in an advanced project focused on ‘fictions of Europe’ or ‘imaginary Europes’ in or across artistic media are invited to discuss ideas in the context of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship submission. Research projects may concentrate on the contemporary artistic imagination in literature, theatre and film but an expansion into other historical periods could be equally fascinating. Further points of attention could be (a comparison of) different cultural and political contexts (e.g. postcolonial, postcommunist) as well as media beyond those mentioned above (e.g. radio play, installation, video games). Researchers interested in exploring the recent surge of ‘Brexit fictions’ are equally invited to get in touch.

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