

White Innocence; race and cherished self-narratives in the Netherlands

In my presentation I will explore the concept of race as a highly underestimated part of our general knowledge production in the Netherlands. What is the version of race that we, the Dutch, practice? I understand race as a silent but powerful organizer of our culture, of our self-representation and about the Other, our language and institutions and of society as a whole. I will present some everyday case studies of racism, as it is evident on TV and in everyday encounters. In my book *White Innocence* (2016), I investigate the ways in which we keep the myth alive that four hundred years of imperialism has not left any traces in The Netherlands. To that end, I will explore the cherished self-narratives that we, the Dutch, like to tell ourselves about who we are and point to the stark discrepancies that exist with those narratives. It is White Innocence that enables us to hold on to those beloved narratives.