

The challenge of difference's presentation day, June 18th 2016

On Saturday morning the 18th –10.00 – we started off with the annual “presentation day” of the Intensive Text Reading seminar “The Challenge of Difference”.

The (extensive) session featured many interesting presentations, each of them being given an interesting and well-prepared response. There were also international guests attending, ensuring that we would not be limiting our discussions to Dutch views.

Since our seminars are usual focused on reading texts, it was nice to become aware of everyone's exact research interests. Of course, we had heard some rumors and stories in the past but to see most of us actually presenting their research (in progress) was something completely different. On the one hand, one could observe our usual informal atmosphere, enabling each of us to pose – what we call – ‘dumb’ questions but on the other hand, though, we discussed complex topics while encouraging critical reflections on each other's work.



During the day, we were told about gender perspectives on hybrid religiosity, the Laestadian religious movement in Finland, the (alleged) existence of a sexular body, migrant marriages in Belgium, conversions in a secular Dutch climate, and alternative Medicines in an environment dominated by biomedical knowledge. I considered – and still consider – it a very informative session, attended by eleven very different scholars (e.g. Research Master students, PhD students, and post-docs) from very different fields (e.g. gender studies, anthropology, philosophy, and religious studies). During the day we have also made some nice plans for the upcoming year, including some concrete plans for publishing together...

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