



**Language**  
**Gender**  
**Sexuality**

invites everyone to a **talk** by

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Studies

on

**“I feel so guilty that I can truly say I  
loathe my father”: Online narratives  
in the discursive identity construction  
of Alzheimer caretakers**

**Abstract:**

This paper is informed by the social constructivist insights of identity as a multivalent and relational product emerging in the here-and-now interactional context (cf. Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Mendoza-Denton 2003). Narrative of personal experience, as a subjective interpretation of the surrounding reality, constitutes a particularly fertile site for the construction of one's identity (cf. Dyer and Keller-Cohen 2000). It has been documented that narrative activity enables the teller to voice and (re-)organize their disruptive phenomenological experiences, socialize emotions or forge interpersonal relationships. Consequently, the narrator is able to access various facets of their identity and "bring multiple, partial selves to life" (Ochs and Capps 1996: 19). Drawing on methods and insights Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (cf. Herring 2004), more specifically Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis, the paper examines personal narratives as a site of identity work occasioned in publically accessible forum threads, in the online Alzheimer support group. It will be demonstrated how the safe discursive space of this mediated context facilitates the Alzheimer caretakers' self-disclosure of both socially acceptable and morally delicate aspects of their identities, and how their interactive engagements enable them to normalize and validate their unveiled life experiences.

**Wednesday, 10th April, 6.00 p.m.**

**Room 101.**