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Fracturing the Real-Self↔Fake-Self Dichotomy: Moving Toward “Crystallized” Organizational Discourses and Identities

This article begins with the following question: Why, even with the proliferation of poststructuralist theoretical understandings of identity, do people routinely talk in terms of “real” and “fake” selves? Through an analysis of critical empirical studies of identity-construction processes at work, this article makes the case that the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is created and maintained through organizational talk and practices and, in turn, serves as a constitutive discourse that produces four subject positions with both symbolic and material consequences: strategized self-subordination, perpetually deferred identities, “auto-dressage,” and the production of “good little copers.” The article challenges scholars to reflexively consider the ways they may perpetuate the dichotomy in their own academic practices. Furthermore, the authors present the metaphor of the “crystallized self” as an alternative to the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy and suggest that communication scholars are well-poised to develop alternative vocabularies, theories, and understandings of identity within the popular imagination.

In recent years, organizational scholars have provided a plethora of textured and politicized theoretical treatments of identity. Influenced by critical and poststructuralist scholars, organizational communication researchers have theorized the identity construction process as a site of struggle over individual and collective meanings. In other words, the self is seen as neither fixed nor essential, but instead, as a product or an effect of competing, fragmentary, and contradictory discourses (see, for example, Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996; Deetz, 1992, 1998; Knights & Willmott, 1999; Mumby, 1997b; Tracy, 2004b; Trethewey, 1999b, 2001; Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004). This point of view challenges the assumption of the humanist subject who

possesses a “unique essence of human nature” that is fixed, coherent, and undergirded by rational consciousness (Weedon, 1997, p. 77).

Rather, individuals’ subject positions are determined by structures of discourse and, given the growing centrality of work, people must negotiate powerful and often oppressive discourses emanating from organizational contexts. Scholarship increasingly indicates that individuals form their identities based on organizational and workgroups as much or more than on home lives (Hochschild, 1997) or traditional categories such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, or nationality (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Yet, even these organizationally driven identities are not totalizing. “Within the power inequalities of organizations, identity is constantly open and available to be negotiated and re-negotiated, defined and redefined” (Collinson, 1992, p. 31). In short, there is ample theoretical work in the organizational literature that explains identity as anything but fixed, stable, or “real.”

Despite these theoretical efforts, a “politicized” understanding of identity has not found broad support within the popular imagination. In this article we contend that the self is largely dichotomized as either real/authentic or fake/false in popular renditions of identity in self-help books, organizational members’ everyday talk, and even remnants of scholarly theories such as emotion labor. We argue this should not be surprising given the power of managerialist and entrepreneurial discourses. In making this case, we extend poststructuralist theoretical treatments of organizational identity through a rereading of critical-qualitative organizational studies.

The analysis suggests that some employees, especially those who must perform subservient or “dirty” work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), are frequently encouraged to consider their “real” selves as separate from organizationally defined selves. In being admonished to perform their identities in service of organizational goals, goods, and services, such workers often label their organizational selves as “fake” and/or compartmentalized public and private selves (Collinson, 1992; Nippert-Eng, 1995). In contrast, empirical evidence indicates that employees who perform traditionally feminine caring work and those who hold professional white-collar positions often are encouraged to align their seemingly “true” or “real” selves with the preferred organizational self.

We assume that power produces reality, identity, and “rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1977, p. 194). Therefore, we suggest that the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy serves as a powerful discourse that ultimately enables or produces specific material and organizational consequences. Here the word “discourse” refers to an assemblage of knowledge that creates “truth effects” (Foucault, 1980b). Whether or not there actually is a real or fake self is not the central issue, as “effects of truth are produced

within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false” (Foucault, 1980b, p. 198). Truth effects created by the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy are important not because there are necessarily true differences between real and fake selves, but because people talk and act as if there are. In other words, the power of these discourses “comes not from their ability to give us ‘real truth,’ but from their claims to truth, their claims to know the world” (Newton, 1995, p. 7). Specifically, we argue that the dichotomy encourages (a) strategized self-subordination; (b) perpetually deferred identities; (c) auto-dressage; and (d) the production of organizationally preferred “good little copers.” We expand upon each of these concepts and their attendant organizational ramifications.

The analysis concludes with theoretical implications of the argument, a call for scholars to reflexively consider their own dichotomizing practices, and suggestions for an alternative vocabulary that may provide ways of reflecting upon identities that are understood as neither real nor fake but, rather, as “crystallized.” We tease out a potential supplemental vocabulary for talking about the self, suggesting various plays on words, and the possibilities they may provide. Linguistic alternatives that capture the politicized nature of identity can aid in the translation of organizational theory to practice (Allen, 2002; Ashcraft, 2002; Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002; Kuhn, 2002; Tracy, 2002; Trethewey, 2002). As language is constitutive and interpretive (Kay & Kempton, 1984), an alternate vocabulary provides opportunities to practice ways of speaking and being that reframe dichotomizing, depoliticizing discourses (Squires, 2002), and advances the transformative potential of critical organizational communication scholarship in everyday talk and practice.

Contextualizing the Real-Self↔Fake-Self Dichotomy

In order to lay bare how the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is contextualized and performed in everyday life, we briefly situate current poststructuralist theorizing on identity and then review the concomitant ways the self is conceptualized in contemporary self-help/popular literatures.

Building Blocks of a Communicatively Constituted Self: A Brief Examination of Identity Theories

Identity theories have evolved greatly over the past century, moving from conceiving of the self as a relatively fixed, stable, or transcendental entity to viewing the everyday self whose meaning emerges out of reflexive social interactions with others. Since the early 20th century, pragmatists, including James (1961), Cooley (1964), Dewey (1934), and, later, social interactionists, like Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), claimed some version of a social, rather than an essential, self. Goffman’s (1959) drama-

turgical self emerged as performative both in response to localized conditions or “scenes” and in order to accomplish larger moral orders. These theorists piqued our interest in the everyday self whose meaning emerges out of reflexive social interactions with others (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). However, others such as Reisman (1950) and Whyte (1956) have pointed to a “dark side” of the social self, suggesting that individuals, devoid of an essential core, may be seduced into a sort of bland conformity born of a desire to belong.

Most recently, postmodern theorists, in their rejection of the Enlightenment project, have called into question the very nature of experience, and thus the self (Flax, 1990). In the most skeptical postmodern articulations of identity, individuals cannot and should not rely on an empirically grounded self because it is nothing more than an image among countless other images (Rosenau, 1992). From this point of view, individuals can no longer count on experience to anchor their selves, because individuals can only have access to countless representations.

This project depends less on skeptical postmodern theories because they effectively eliminate space for agency. Rather, it draws from and extends the more affirmative rendering of poststructuralist identity theories (Foucault, 1977, 1980b; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Rosenau, 1992). Affirmative poststructuralist theorists acknowledge a discursively constituted self, a self subjected to and by discourses of power in an increasingly complex, destabilized, and multivocal world. Discourses work to “fix” identities in particular ways that favor some interests over others and thus constrain alternative truths and subject positions. To say that an individual is discursively constituted does not mean, however, that s/he is void of agency; rather, “she is a thinking, feeling subject and social agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions” (Weedon, 1997, p. 105). From this perspective, resistance lies in rebelling against the ways in which we have already been defined as individuals by discourse (Sawicki, 1991). Identities emerge from hegemonic processes in the space between domination and resistance (Mumby, 1997b; Trethewey, 1999b).

Though the discursively constituted, poststructuralist self is not an essential structure, the feeling that the self is an “object” still “comes up” in everyday life where the self is at work, in two senses (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 84). First, the self is a practical everyday accomplishment—“a reflexively organized narrative, derived from participation in competing discourses and various experience” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 625). This self still has agency through “elements of life history forged by a capacity to reflexively accomplish life projects out of various sources of influence and inspiration” (p. 622). Second, the self is at work because identity construction processes occur in relation to dis-

courses that construct employment and (subject) positions in institutional settings. In short, organizational discourses incite members to enact particular identities.

Indeed, forms of organizational control are increasingly tied to the ways in which organizations attempt to harness the “‘insides’—the hopes, fears, and aspirations—of workers” (Deetz, 1995, p. 87). Through unobtrusive control, organizations attempt to marry the premises of the worker with corporate values and norms, so that workers view an organizationally appropriate decision as also being a natural self-choice (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). People come to understand themselves through overlapping identifications with multiple organizations and professions (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cheney, 1983; Gossett, 2002). What was once considered private, namely the workers’ thoughts, feelings, and emotions, now routinely serve as fodder for organizational and managerial interventions (Kunda, 1992). This is particularly true in the context of the new economy in which workers are encouraged to be creative, adaptable, and flexible (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Taylor, 2001). Employees are now, more than ever, asked to work on their very selves as part and parcel of their jobs.

A number of identity theories, especially those from critical and poststructuralist studies, suggest that the self is socially constructed, oftentimes through the world of work. However, organizational members do not routinely talk about their identities in poststructuralist terms as fragmented, conflictual, or discursively constituted (Collinson, 2003). Rather, members routinely invoke and are encouraged by popular discourses to understand their identities in fairly simplistic (modernist) terms as either real or fake—a phenomenon that is poignantly illustrated in contemporary renditions of identity.

**Contemporary Versions of the Self:
Searching for “Authentic” Identities**

Myriad contemporary discourses reinforce the notion that real or authentic selves can be found in ways that cohere or compete with organizational norms and, as such, encourage a very particular version of institutionalized subjectivity. It is important to consider such popular renditions of identity because individuals’ “souls” are increasingly “governed” or constituted in and through a therapeutic culture (Rose, 1990). Rose’s work traces the rise of mental health professionals and psychologists who were charged with assessing the self after World War II. Today, this governance has spread far beyond the psychological sciences and is located in a variety of discourses (e.g., counseling, self-help groups, and television talk shows) that profit through the construction, interpretation, and reformation of the self. Indeed, the “self has become a cottage industry” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 81).

The self is the subject of numerous advice books or self-help guides, and therefore, identity is increasingly constituted by public, profit-driven, and institutionalized discourses (Nadesan & Trethewey, 2000). Celebrities such as Dr. Phil are building multimillion dollar industries helping people to find an “amazingly clear map” to their authentic selves. Dr. Phil (McGraw, 2001) suggests that people have a “root core,” or as described on McGraw’s book flap, “the person you have always wanted to be.” This authentic self is contrasted from a fictional self or the “person people tell you you are.” Consider the following sampling of self-help books and their focus on real/authentic/internal selves:

- In *Finding Your Own North Star: Claiming the Life You Were Meant to Live*, Beck (2001) contrasted the “essential” or “core” self with the “social” self that is concocted to please others. The book promises to turn people into their “true selves.”
- Didato (2003) provided *The Big Book of Personality Tests*, which headlines on the front cover, “Who Are You? 100 Easy-to-Score Quizzes That Reveal the Real You.”
- BranBreathnach (1998), in *Something More: Excavating Your Authentic Self*, highlighted the importance of an inner self.
- Brenner (2003) advised that “[I]t is every woman’s birthright to live from her true self.” She explains that maintaining an outer self is a “trying job” and that “when you are in harmony with yourself, your outer self *serves* your inner self” (p. 8).

Very similar approaches are found on myriad television talk shows and self-help websites (e.g., <http://www.academyofselfknowledge.com/>).

For our purposes, such sources suggest that the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is alive and well in the popular imagination and vocabulary. In contrast, a fragmented, poststructuralist notion of identity is all but absent; when it is invoked, such a self is pathologized, considered sick, and in need of work. These popular discourses reify the idea that we actually have real and fake selves and that these selves are largely dichotomous. Indeed, as we flesh out in the following discussion, the dichotomy is also perpetuated in scholarly articulations of identity, including emotion labor theorizing.

Perpetuating the Real-Self↔Fake-Self Dichotomy

In this section, we examine theories and data associated with emotion labor as a case example of how the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy lingers in scholarly treatments of identity and then explain how

managerialism and entrepreneurialism play a central role in perpetuating a focus on real selves.

Persistence of the Real Self: Emotion Labor Theorizing as Exemplar

The scholarly literature on emotion labor serves as an interesting site in which to explore the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy because, although it argues for a socially constructed and multilayered identity, it often unwittingly reproduces the belief that we have real and fake selves. Hochschild (1983) is credited with naming the concept of “emotion labor,” or “the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” to be “sold for a wage” (p. 7). Hochschild argued that in order to serve as emotional actors, employees must instrumentalize inner feelings through deep or surface acting. Deep acting requires employees to “change how [they] feel by . . . deliberately visualizing a substantial portion of reality in a different way” (Hochschild, 1990, p. 121). Surface acting, in contrast, occurs when outward expression is changed without a parallel change in internal feeling. Hochschild (1983) suggested that both processes are separate from a real self: Deep acting “keeps the feeling that I conjure up from being part of ‘myself,’” while “in surface acting, the expression on my face or the posture of my body feels ‘put on.’ It is not ‘part of me’” (p. 36).

Although Hochschild (1983) submitted that “in managing emotion, we contribute to the creation of it” (p. 18), the foundations of emotion labor theory emphasize a dichotomy between both a true self and a false self, and a “private” and “public” self. Hochschild tends to use these two distinctions interchangeably (Wouters, 1989), which suggests problems with these distinctions themselves (Tracy, 2000). This point of view presumes that emotion is more authentic and pristine before it enters the realm of organizations, where it is “transmuted” and thus “processed, standardized” for organizational ends (Hochschild, 1983, p. 153). This transmutation is theorized to result in emotive dissonance, or a clash between actual inner feelings and outward expression that results in psychological discomfort.

A number of researchers have extended Hochschild’s concepts, oftentimes emphasizing that emotion labor occurs when employees must be fake. This assumption, in turn, reinscribes the notion that an authentic self exists outside organizational norms. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) argued that emotive dissonance is especially problematic when employees fake in bad faith, or express prescribed emotions that they believe should not be part of the job. Ashforth and Tomiuk (2000) extended Rafaeli & Sutton’s conceptions of faking it with a theoretical model that compares deep authenticity and surface authenticity. Although Ashforth

& Tomiuk (2000) acknowledged that many theorists question the idea of a true self, they justify a focus on authenticity because people tend to “believe they have an authentic self” (p. 185).

This argument is perfectly reasonable. However, a consequence of theorizing emotion labor in terms of authenticity and emotive dissonance is that it perpetuates the assumption that psychological discomfort arises when fake selves and real selves clash. This has several consequences, including that few emotion labor researchers address how larger discourses of power play a role in such discomfort (for exceptions, see Fineman & Sturdy, 1999; Tracy, 2000, 2004c). Furthermore, it enables the assumption that emotion (and identity) is private and real and is falsified through various types of acting or faking it. Even self-described feminist-poststructuralists Mumby and Putnam (1992), in claiming that “engaging in emotional labor strips away the individual experience, the relational context, and the intimacy that typifies expression of personal feelings” (p. 472), have been criticized for conceptualizing self-identity in integrated terms, “assuming that a person has a single self that, transcending context, can be known” (Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998, p. 437).

Not surprisingly, it is difficult to get away from the dichotomy, and we bring up these examples not as critique, but rather as a way of illustrating the difficulty of theorizing identity without returning to real-self↔fake-self dichotomy discourse. In a discussion of critical organization studies’ treatment of subjectivity, Fleming and Spicer (2003) noted, “Although [critical organization studies scholars] disavow essentialism, a kind of essentialism continues to predominate in so far as a humanist concept (a private interiority) is maintained as if it was a natural predisposition of humankind” (p. 169).

Essentialism is reproduced in the emotion labor literature when researchers presume that emotion has a truer existence before it is constructed by organizational norms. This assumption underestimates the role of communication in constructing emotion and the very notion of real feelings (Tracy, 2004a; Waldron, 1994). In contrast, poststructuralism suggests that all facets of identity are fractured and overdetermined through varying discourses (Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1980b; Mumby, 1997a, 1997b). Emotions are behavioral and interactional: “A radically social understanding of subjectivity tells us that belief is not necessarily inside us—a rather psychologistic proposition—but somehow outside us, or as the Russian linguist Voloshinov (1973) more accurately puts it, in between us” (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 169). Whereas people may maintain a feeling of interiority, we would argue that emotions and identity are more productively understood as neither real nor fake, but constructed and constrained through various discourses of power.

Discourses of Power: Managerialism and Entrepreneurialism

It is difficult to escape the real-self ↔ fake-self dichotomy largely because this prevailing understanding of the self is reconstructed through pervasive discourses of power sutured by organizing processes. Here we focus on managerialism and entrepreneurialism as two such organizational discourses that not only construct identities, but also fundamentally articulate an “ideal” core self. Discourses of power articulate an idealized subject position and, in organizational contexts, that position reflects the interests of the organization more than the interests of the individual. This process, referred to by Deetz (1992) as managerialism, functions as an ideology whose “central motif is control” and primary code is money (p. 222). When employees “buy into” the money code of managerialism, they pursue organizational “payoffs” almost exclusively and “cash out” alternative rewards, including enjoying leisure time, pursuing meaningful and fulfilling work, or building strong communities. Such “careerism” is particularly corrosive when employees begin to treat their personal, social, and organizational relationships as utilitarian means for upward mobility (Grey, 1994). Indeed, the endless pursuit of money and power can reverberate in a never-ending cycle of working harder to gain more money to gain more symbols of power that are often seen as essential for a higher status corporate image (Deetz, 1992).

Schor (1992, 1998) provided startling evidence that managerialism, epitomized by the pervasive “work-and-spend cycle,” is not only common, but increasingly dysfunctional. This managerialist self is a product, or effect, of discourses of power. The discourse of managerialism can be enacted by all organizational members—not just managers. Furthermore, although managerialism promotes a certain subject position and a particular set of interests, identity is not necessarily imposed upon workers; employees take an active, strategic role in their acceptance of this organizationally preferred self (Deetz, 1998; Tracy, 2000). Nevertheless, identity is largely created in relation to managerialist discourses that encompass an organizationally prescribed ideal, a process that produces an organizationally defined self that comes to be understood and experienced as real and of one’s own choosing.

Entrepreneurialism is another pervasive discourse of power that hails a preferred organizational/cultural subject. The “entrepreneurial self” (Miller & Rose, 1990) or the “enterprising subject” (du Gay, 1996) is responsible and actively engaged in creating a new, better, self-motivated self. The entrepreneurial worker is “an enterprising individual in search of meaning, responsibility, and a sense of personal achievement in life, and hence in work” (Miller & Rose, 1995, p. 454). This identity is in-

voked in the self-help and success literatures, particularly in texts aimed at working women (Nadesan, 1999; Nadesan & Trethewey, 2000). Myriad ads encourage women to become their “best self” by using products such as food processors, lip gloss, daily planners, and training seminars. Here, the seemingly real self is the self that is developing, growing, and becoming a better, more successful person.

Organizational theories such as emotion labor reinforce the idea that employees construct fake or compartmentalized identities whereas managerialism and entrepreneurialism serve as discourses for positing a preferred identity that is increasingly defined by the confluence of upward mobility and consumption. Such discourses suggest that those who do not readily fit the ideal mold should understand their deficiencies as individual problems rather than sociopolitical issues to be collectively solved. As Collinson (2003) noted, “the validation of the self through career success, material accumulation, and the confirmation of ‘significant others’ [has] become a new and highly influential religion” (p. 530). Together, these discourses of power suggest that some selves are more real, more valued, and more esteemed than others and, in doing so, reinscribe the dichotomy between the real and the fake.

Consequences of the Real-Self↔ Fake-Self Dichotomy

So, what is the productive power of the dichotomy between the real self and fake self? How does the dichotomy’s persistence enable and constrain organizations and organizational actors? We argue that the dichotomy encourages subject positions that ultimately benefit organizations by moving control processes from managers to employees’ own management of identity. Moreover, we maintain that employees’ location in the organizational or social hierarchy offers uniquely situated possibilities for identity construction. Our analysis reveals that some employees will go to great lengths to align their seemingly real selves with the preferred organizational self. In cases, however, when the organizational self is so distasteful that this seems unattainable, employees may endeavor to separate their seemingly real selves from organizationally prescribed selves. These identity management processes have troublesome consequences for organizations and their actors.

In the following section, we draw from various empirical analyses of critical organization studies, including our own (e.g., Tracy, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Tracy & Tracy, 1998; Trethewey, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2001). The data presented here, although certainly not representative of all identity research, are nevertheless illustrative of the ways the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is manufactured in everyday organizational practices and talk.

“Real-izing” a Preferred Self

Our analysis identifies three identity construction processes in which organizational members attempt to make real or “real-ize” the prescribed (preferred) organizational identity: (a) engaging in strategized subordination, (b) crafting perpetually deferred selves, and (c) practicing auto-dressage.

Organizations have much to gain from employees who tirelessly harness their so-called real selves in service to organizational goals, needs, and interests. The organizational literature is replete with examples of employees who willingly adopt organizationally prescribed identities and engage in strategized subordination, a process in which employees actively engage in self-surveillance and subordinate themselves on behalf of management goals, even when management is not looking (Burawoy, 1985). Deetz (1998), for instance, detailed how (primarily male, White, middle-class) technical consultants voluntarily underreported their work hours and willingly chose to sleep on cots at client work sites in order to meet unrealistic deadlines.

Self-subordination also occurs through “escaping to the public” (Tracy, 2000). Hochschild’s (1997) study of employees at one Fortune 500 company, Amerco, revealed that even the primarily White, middle-class workers who claimed to want more time at home with families, nevertheless routinely offered up their best (most rested, drug-free) selves to the organization. As one manager claimed, “It was simply more satisfying being Dad here than anywhere else” (Hochschild, p. 63). Likewise, many White, middle-class midlife women willingly articulate their own entrepreneurial identity in terms of professional growth and learning, rather than private, personal, or community concerns (Trethewey, 2001). Indeed, organizational leaders often encourage employees to align their identities with the organization. In a study of how an organization trained its workers in Covey’s *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, a trainer said, “We do a very organizational piece, where they take their personal mission and map it through. I create an umbrella that says, ‘How do you fit in here? And if you don’t, you are going to have to ask yourself some hard questions’” (Carlone, 2001, p. 266). Such training emphasizes the goodness of fit between individual members and the organization, “with the privilege for influence in the relationship” granted to the organization (p. 266). The result? If people cannot align their identities with the organization, they should (and often do) leave.

Given the discursive constructions of the preferred self, who is committed to developing his/her identity in the context of work, it is not surprising that many workers find real “self-satisfaction, well-being, high-spirits and work [to be] inextricably linked” (Hochschild, 1997, p. 42). Employees, particularly women in positions that require care and nur-

turing, such as nurses (Morgan & Krone, 2001), teachers (Miller, 2002) and secretaries (Pringle, 1989), are also encouraged to align their real identities with caring for others. In providing empathy, however, employees in social service and caregiving positions often face emotional exhaustion and burnout (Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988).

Although preferred subject positions are productive and constitutive of individuals, they simultaneously constrain organizational members, their families, organizations, and the larger culture. When one's best or most real self is reserved for work, then nonwork relations and activities are seen as oppositional or interfering. Many (middle-class, professional) employees are not concerned that their employers want more from them; rather, they are concerned that their families, their bodies, and their social obligations prevent them from doing "more work better" (Deetz, 1998, p. 66). Zoller (2003), for example, found that self-managed team members at an automobile plant worked more on improving their bodies' ability to conform to the demands of their jobs than on changing the nature and expectations of their jobs. One male employee explained his rationale for athletic exercise thusly: "I didn't want the job to beat me. I wanted to be able to keep working" (Zoller, p. 130). Moreover, these same workers often blamed coworkers who were injured on the job, suggesting that they were deserving of injury or illness because they did not maintain a working body. Not surprisingly, this entrepreneurial approach leaves work processes fundamentally unchanged and demands that individuals adapt. As a result, potentially useful conflicts over the relative importance of employees' competing identities (e.g., parent, community member, or embodied, healthy individual) are suppressed, evaded, or deferred.

Indeed, a second way of "real-izing" a preferred identity is through the creation of a perpetually deferred self. For example, Hochschild (1997) reported that many Amerco employees were frustrated by their inabilities to balance home life and work life, but were simultaneously unwilling to give up time at work. So, they simply created an imagined, but never enacted future in which they might be able to take their children "camping in the Poconos" (p. 236). This imagined, potential self believes that the "pay-offs from such demanding work can enrich one's outside life, but this is consigned to an ever-receding future" (Deetz, 1998, p. 166). When money and power are "themselves simply more instrumental means and not ends, the quest is never complete" (Deetz, p. 164). In this cycle, families and communities are left with "deferred" lives, as well. Childcare is outsourced (Schor, 1992), community and civic engagement declines (Putnam, 1995), and family-centered tasks are commodified (Hochschild, 2003). A *Business Week* article (Sharpe, 2000) noted that employees can outsource "mommy" duties to compa-

nies such as baby-proofing agencies, birthday party planners, kiddy taxi services, and closet organizers.

Not surprisingly, one study indicated that financial resources are the most powerful driver of outsourcing, and that those who most often purchase household services aspire to a higher level of outsourcing (Stuenkel, 2002). Clearly, the deferred lives created by outsourcing are largely available to middle-class and upper-class employees who have the resources to purchase these services—and often buy these services from those employees who cannot afford the same for themselves. “Women [and men] of lower socioeconomic status . . . do not have the option to choose whether to work for pay [or to outsource], indeed they have often provided the services that free up upper class women [and men] to ‘balance’” or to defer (Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell, 2003, p. 28). These processes of deferral create a cycle where one’s nonwork life concerns are continually placed “on hold”—something to attend to in a future that never comes to fruition. Or, such concerns are left in the care of others while the employee spends most of his/her resources on crafting a preferred, present-day self at work.

A third process affiliated with “real-izing” the preferred self is an activity we refer to as “auto-dressage.” Dressage is an equestrian term that refers to the discipline and taming of horses to perform stylized movement (Loch, 1990). Dressage epitomizes control for control’s sake—an activity performed for the sake of the audience and master. When applied to the world of work, “labour in its dressage sense . . . is non-productive, non-utilitarian and unnatural behavior for the satisfactions of the controller and as a public display of compliance, obedience to discipline” (Jackson & Carter, 1998, p. 54). We extend the dressage concept one step further: As preferred organizational identities colonize members’ nonorganizational selves, those members increasingly practice dressage not only for an organizational audience, as suggested by Burawoy’s (1985) strategized subordination, but for an audience of one—the self. Members turn the panoptic gaze on their own performances and identities and evaluate themselves in relation to a managerialist discourse they have made their own.

Moreover, Deetz (1992) claimed that the work of professionals is decreasingly about actually producing goods and services or making meaningful decisions about the allocation of resources. Rather, the central task of management has become the production of a management identity, one crafted through the display of appropriate symbols, lifestyles, and adornments. Managers often spend more of their time manufacturing this identity than on any work product or service. For instance, Beth, a consultant, explained how women “can’t have it all” and must make “hard choices” in order to be successful (Trethewey, 1999a). Beth ex-

plained that her goal was to make money and that she never “whined” about remaining childless to do so. She was willing to give up her leisure time and outsource her household services (e.g., cleaning) to paid—backstaged, invisible, and primarily working-class—others so that she could devote all energies to work. Beth seemed proud to take off only 2 days per month. What type of organization demanded such loyalty, sacrifice, and commitment? Beth worked for herself, albeit in the context of capitalistic discourses that materially reward entrepreneurs far more than mothers.

The substance of Beth’s work philosophy is perhaps unremarkable; it’s the absence that is telling. In her narrative of success, Beth takes pride in “working hard.” What we fail to hear is mention of making difficult choices to do qualitatively better work or engage in more fulfilling work. Rather, it’s simply about doing more work. Similarly, although Hochschild’s (1997) Amerco management claimed to offer progressive work-family programs, when employees began to press for more time at home, managers admitted they were very concerned with employees’ face time. Bill, a top Amerco personnel manager, explained, “The time a worker works, in and of itself, has to count as much as the results accomplished within that time” (p. 69). And who demanded the face time? According to Bill, “No one tells us to work long hours. . . . We impose it on ourselves” (p. 57). Indeed, even when organizations develop well-meaning work-family policies, supervisory, peer, and self-induced pressures encourage employees not to make use of them (Kirby, 2000), and colleagues often tag such policies as preferential treatment for parents and discrimination against childless employees (Kirby & Krone, 2002, p. 60).

This type of activity, therefore, is not just about surveilling the self on behalf of management (or strategized subordination). Neither is it solely performing unnatural activity for another’s sake (dressage). Rather, it is activity that fails to produce any tangible good or service; its primary product is a preferred managerialist identity. Here, the project of the self becomes almost “fetishized” to the point that individuals become “victims of their own identity-seeking preoccupations” (Collinson, 2003, p. 533). Employees willingly engage in nonutilitarian work to “real-ize” identities that are preferred as much by the self as for any audience or master; it is control and discipline for the sake of the self—auto-dressage.

Faking a Preferred Self

Professional employees are certainly not alone in having to negotiate the construction of preferred selves at work. Although many organizational members strive to align a real self with a preferred identity, employees in marginal, distasteful, subservient, or “dirty” jobs are encouraged to compartmentalize their organizational persona and perform a seemingly fake, yet organizationally preferred, self at work. Clair’s (1996) concept of “a

real job,” which includes those positions that pay well, require education, are enjoyable, and are structured by an organization, is especially pertinent here. Jobs that are considered “less than real” are unskilled or semiskilled, often service-oriented, and performed during odd hours, such as the graveyard shift (Clair, p. 264). We would suggest that employees in these types of jobs face the additional burden of occupying a self at work that is similarly less than real (read: fake). As a result, such employees are often encouraged, in a variety of explicit and implicit ways, to craft a fake self at work, often in the guise of protecting a real private self.

For instance, in jobs that are particularly stigmatized, or dirty (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), employees are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between work and home life, and they oftentimes deny that work could construct their real identity. For instance, male factory workers go to great lengths to protect their private selves from organizational demands, one saying, “Why should I take my work home? The job has no effect on me whatsoever” (Collinson, 1992, p. 163). In similar vein, erotic dancers employ a variety of strategies to separate their working and real identities, often claiming to be wholly different from their stage personas. However, those rational distinctions are undermined when strippers lie to friends and families about their work. Likewise, correctional officers resist the idea of letting prison work change their true selves, saying, “Why would you change? Yeah, this profession does change people, but you need to be better than that” (Tracy, 2001, p. 265). By holding onto a dichotomy between a real and organizational self, dirty workers can cling to a more desirable nonorganizationally prescribed identity. However, in their nonwork time, employees often end up “performing a self that is no more real than the characters they play on stage [or work]” (Murphy, 2003, p. 329).

This split between real and fake selves is also evident in service work. Training manuals instruct emergency 911 call takers not to “feel” calm, neutral, and friendly, but rather just to “appear” and “sound” this way (Tracy & Tracy, 1998). Likewise, cruise ship service credos tell crew members to “smile, you’re on stage” (Tracy, 2000), a mandate that casts employees as performers. Presumably workers do not have to actually be happy; they just have to act happy on stage. However, employees are often unable to specify when they can ever be off-stage, and, as a result, backstage can serve as a myth or a continually deferred space. Therefore, whereas organizational norms and employee talk may perpetuate a real-self↔fake-self dichotomy, little literal or figurative organizational space may be afforded for acting out a nonorganizationally prescribed self.

In addition to suggesting that employees compartmentalize their selves, organizational norms also encourage employees to privatize certain as-

pects of selves that are not considered organizationally productive. For instance, women frequently are admonished to perform a phony self at work, one that is more in keeping with preferred (masculinized) organizational identities. That which is considered inherently real about women, such as emotionality (Mumby & Putnam, 1992), is often marginalized, and if females are to be successful, they best fake it to make it. Indeed, empirical analyses suggest that female employees attempt to leave the debased feminine parts of their identity, including their family commitments, outside the organization's doors, or at least hide them behind appropriate dress, language, and behaviors (Ashcraft, 1999; Kirby, et al., 2003; Nadesan & Trethewey, 2000; Trethewey, 1999a). Even in organizations in which members claim to value "feminine" relational orientations, women often describe their "real" selves in negative terms (Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996). Such processes serve to foster an individual who defines her self-worth in regard to her ability to attain the preferred organizational self "in spite of" her "real" (hidden, shameful) self. This type of employee strives to become a "good copier—someone who can do her job well, who is a good little worker" (Newton, 1995, p. 60). Indeed, Newton claims that "the best copiers, it seems, are those who see the job as all about acting; they treat the emotional performance as a game into which they switch in or out" (p. 130).

Members of historically marginalized groups have also faked their identities to survive in their organizational lives. Ethnic minorities, women, gays, and lesbians have attempted to pass as members of dominant groups (e.g., Whites, men, heterosexuals; Squires & Brouwer, 2002). "Passing" enables subordinated group members to "assume a new identity, escaping the subordination and oppression accompanying one identity and accessing the privileges and status of the other" (Ginsberg, 1996, p. 3). Aging professional women deploy various strategies that enable them to pass as younger, more valued workers (Trethewey, 2001), and some gay and lesbian employees feel compelled to fake a heterosexual/heteronormative identity at work that is markedly different from privat(ized) identities (Spradlin, 1998).

Although compartmentalization, faking, or passing may, in many ways, feel to the employee like resistance to corporate colonization of one's identity (e.g., Kondo, 1990; Scott, 1990), we would argue that it can also reinforce passivity, subordination, and objectification. Fleming and Spicer (2003) claimed that processes such as corporate cynicism and compartmentalization provide employees with a "specious sense of freedom ('I am not a dupe, I am outside of power')" (p. 162) and "a counterfeit sense of self-determination that allows the corporate roles to be enacted without the friction that is usually present when one feels hard done by" (p. 163). For example, a cynical McDonald's worker who wears

a “McShit” T-shirt under her uniform in an attempt to protect a real self who sees through managerial motives, may still perform as an efficient team member at work. In this case, her willingness to “fake it” serves the organization well, and perhaps helps to preclude any more “consequential disruptions” to the organization’s operations (Fleming & Spicer, p. 167).

Furthermore, compartmentalization glosses the ways institutional norms actually do construct identity. Whereas organizations may claim that employees do not have to change their real selves to do the job, individuals do not necessarily distinguish between organizational mandates that they change their work behaviors with those that ask them to change their identities. For instance, 911 call takers regularly transform expression rules, such as their training manual’s mandate of “do not show any personal feelings” into feeling rules in their informal talk, telling each other, “don’t take it personally” (Tracy & Tracy, 1998). In addition, employees face the challenge of “turning off” their organizationally prescribed selves when they go home. Even those employees who try to maintain a nonorganizational real self that is unaffected by the job nevertheless admit to ways in which work transforms identity; in response to a question about how the job changed her, one such correctional officer said, “I’ve really gotten, not cold, but more callous to things. . . . I saw a guy get hit by a [grocery] truck a couple months back. Killed him dead. Not even phased” (Tracy, 2001, p. 294). Scholars need to be more critical of organizational norms that advocate that employees “just act” in a certain way. Just acting still constructs identity, and organizationally prescribed identities not only affect work, but play a role in multiple facets of life.

**Shattering the Real-Self↔Fake-Self
Dichotomy Through Scholarship and
Communication**

The dichotomy of the real-self↔fake-self pervades popular understandings of identity and is perpetuated in theoretical literatures, organizational discourses, and everyday talk. The dichotomy, in turn, produces and constrains individuals in several very specific ways. Employees may align their seemingly real selves with preferred organizational notions of the self through processes that include strategized subordination, creating perpetually deferred potential selves, and auto-dressage. Especially in jobs that are stigmatized and subservient, employees may also separate their seemingly real selves from the organizationally prescribed selves and become “good little copers.” Although such compartmentalization may feel like resistance, it can, ironically, blind employees to the colo-

nizing power of organizational discourse. Each of these processes implies consent to the discourse of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy. Through such consent, the self becomes a product of the organization, a process that dramatically reduces many of the conflictual alternatives for more participatory identity negotiation. The self, produced through consent rather than negotiation, is viewed as never being good enough—as always straining to reach a certain level of preferredness. What may have originally been the means (e.g., becoming an organizationally preferred self in order to attain ends of good pay and a good life) becomes an end in itself, and activities such as self-surveillance, strategized subordination, and coping begin to be experienced as autonomy and as one's real self—a perfect means of organizational control.

Communication and organizational researchers who theorize notions of identity can play an integral role in disrupting the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy. Scholars can encourage the development of alternate subject positions by analyzing texts, discourses, and practices that resist extant notions of the real self; researchers can empirically report upon the ways individuals embody, enact, or resist notions of the real and fake. Scholars also can incorporate multilayered notions of the self in research methodologies. They can, for instance, interview, observe, test, or survey research participants in various contexts that encourage the reflection of different facets of identity. Researchers can also take care in how they may subtly reproduce the dichotomy; backstage selves should not be considered any more real than frontstage selves; public selves constructed in relation to organizational norms are just as important as private identities. We recommend, for instance, that theorists play with replacing the words real, core, or authentic identity with the word “preferred” sense of self, as doing so emphasizes the way identity is ideological, constructed, negotiated, and constantly shifting.

Clearly, we encourage scholars to consider the aforementioned practices. However, as we earlier discussed, although the real real-self↔fake-self dichotomy lingers in some theoretical treatments, the problem is not so much that scholarly theories, empirical results, or methodological processes are lacking in politicized treatments of the self. Rather, the problem is that these nuanced notions of identity have not found their way into popular parlance, and disturbing consequences of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy persist. We believe scholars can play a key role in helping translate a poststructuralist-inspired understanding of identity to an audience of laypeople. In short, we urge scholars to explore the shifting, fluid, and potentially liberatory identity tensions in a world in which people are accustomed to striving for a stable self. Specifically, we suggest that (a) communication scholars should turn a self-reflexive critical eye on their own research and representational prac-

tices, and (b) consider linguistic alternatives that might find a home among popular audiences. In this discussion, our writing shifts in tone to speak in a voice that embodies the more varied and textured identities that we argue for in this essay.

Alternative Language: Constructing a Crystallized Self

Communication scholars, in particular, are uniquely poised to suggest everyday linguistic alternatives that encourage a fractured understanding of the self. Language does not mirror reality; it constructs individuals' worlds and their selves (Kay & Kempton, 1984). People understand their lives through the language available to them, and as C. Ashcraft so keenly observed, "The words we have are not always the words we need" (2000, p. 3). Language is political and construed in ways that perpetuate and normalize structures of domination (Kramarae, 1981; Spender, 1985), as evidenced by the problematic consequences associated with the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy. As critical scholars, we suggest that one way of disrupting the dichotomy is through modifying and adding linguistic alternatives for understanding the self that may find more ready acceptance in the popular imagination.

We propose the metaphor of the "crystallized self," a positively valenced term, to speak about, understand, and experience the self in more appropriately politicized and layered ways (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The imagery of the crystal:

combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose. (Richardson, 2000, p. 934)

The crystallized self is neither real nor fake. It is not flattened (du Gay, 1996), suffocated (Tracy, 2000), or colonized (Deetz, 1992). The crystallized self is multidimensional—the more facets, the more beautiful and complex. Certainly crystals may feel solid, stable, and fixed, but just as crystals have differing forms depending upon whether they grow rapidly or slowly, under constant or fluctuating conditions, or from highly variable or remarkably uniform fluids or gasses, crystallized selves have different shapes depending on the various discourses through which they are constructed and constrained.

We suggest, somewhat boldly, that a crystallized self is stronger, more beautiful, and more productive for a variety of (political) purposes and downright better than a planar self, flattened by managerialist ideologies. In doing so, we understand that we are reproducing the managerialist

terminology that we have just critiqued. To this, we cede that we are bound by discourses and their attendant sedimented vocabularies and meanings (Weedon, 1997). Despite the fact that our very language is imbued with notions of managerialism and entrepreneurialism, through appropriating terms for alternate purposes and improvising with them in ways that may seem initially awkward, we enact potentially transformative resistance. By translating poststructuralist theories into more familiar and utilitarian terms, we believe individuals in their everyday lives will be more readily able to take advantage of the (micro)political space offered by poststructuralist theorizing. Conceiving, describing, and acting upon identity as “crystallized” may free those who occupy both preferred and marginalized organizational positions to relate differently to and at work, home, and the spaces between. As a crystallized self, for example, an executive may worry less about being a nurturer at work, and at home might feel less constrained by notions of running an efficient, Taylorized ship; as a crystallized self, a police officer may be more cognizant of the ways his work has hardened him, and he might make more careful choices about spending his leisure time in contrasting contexts. In so doing, such workers may find new and enabling ways to reflect the different facets of their selves in various contexts.

The Crystallized Self “at Work”

We have provided a normative and moral argument urging people to construct multidimensional, crystallized selves. How might they do so, and how can researchers encourage such a notion? First, we encourage people to play with language. Through appropriating taken-for-granted and routinized scripts, individuals can achieve provocative and evocative ends. Indeed, the way people talk and write, even in the context of scholarly venues, affects what can be known and, consequently, constructs individuals, organizations, and communities (Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Richardson, 2000). We were reminded of the potential power of linguistic alternatives when a friend recently bemoaned the frequent cocktail party question, “What do you do?” He pointed to the superficiality of the question because people are more than their jobs. Indeed, even the seemingly transparent word “do” has been colonized by notions of commodified productivity (du Gay, 1996). Could people not just as easily respond to such a question by answering, “I play with my daughter. I run 5ks. I volunteer.”

Similarly, rather than privileging work as the only productive realm of everyday experience, individuals might begin to elevate their nonprofessional selves alongside those that intersect with work—whether that be lives of home (Hochschild, 1997), community (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002), or leisure (Schor, 1992). For example, when one of us leaves the office to care for her little girl at home, she might say, “I have to go do

‘home.’” Or, rather than bemoaning the fact that “I didn’t get any work done this weekend,” we might explain, “I did so much family this weekend” or “I deepened my friendships on Saturday.” At parties, we might ask people questions inspired by critical theorists (Deetz, 1992), such as, “What are your interests?” or even “Whose interests do you support?”

Second, we emphasize the importance of individuals constructing different angles of repose and inching closer to the edges in their lives. To see different facets of the self, people—including scholars, entrepreneurs, or service providers—must place themselves in various situations with myriad textures. In a move inspired by Weick’s (1979) demand to “complicate yourself!” (p. 261), we suggest that people place themselves in locations and situations in which they are uncomfortable and decidedly nonexpert—whether that be in a volunteer organization, church group, or in the midst of others whose values, ages, backgrounds or educational levels differ from their own. These local experiences offer the crystallized self a fuller complement of narratives/activities/resources to draw upon to construct a self that is richer than the subject positions offered up by contemporary organizational discourses. Doing so need not be dramatic; an instructor might occasionally choose to hold his office hours in the student union or a researcher might ask an undergraduate student to review her paper. A complicating circumstance, context, and set of values force different angles of repose, opportunities for contemplation, and reflections of alternate values. In short, the process of embracing conflictual discourses encourages the continued (re)growth of a crystallized self—a life wrapped in a quilt of many colors rather than one suffocated by a monochromatic blanket. Although individuals cannot freely choose the discourses that constitute them (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b), a space for agency lies in the ability to traverse, intersect, and hold in tension competing discourses and attendant ways of being.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that identity work, in large part, is a luxury. Many working people are quite simply too concerned with survival to bother with efforts at crystallization. Indeed, the ability of working-class or otherwise marginalized groups to craft more efficacious or rewarding identities may, in fact, be negatively impacted by crystallizing activities of those in more privileged positions. Too often, in this entrepreneurial world, attempts to live fuller, richer lives on the part of middle-class individuals are “leveraged on the backs of poor women” (Flanagan, 2004, p. 128), as our previous discussion of household outsourcing indicates (see also Ehrenreich, 2001). Individuals should avoid developing crystallized selves in ways that prevent or impede others from doing so. Considering this, crystallization is an explicitly everyday political and moral endeavor.

Indeed, because crystallization is enacted in local/temporal moments, such as trips to the grocery store and the gym, everyday activities become imbued with a moral significance. It is in activities of everyday life that the “experiential penetration of totalized discourses and their pervasive moral orders” are limited and possibly transformed (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 226). Mundane crystallizing activities can “short-circuit the moral penetration of life’s dominating gazes, even while they continue to specify socially organized subjectivities” (Holstein & Gubrium, p. 228). By conceiving of identities as ongoing, emergent, and not entirely predictable crystals, people are forced to acknowledge a range of possible selves embodied in a range of contexts—even as they are constrained by discourses of power. The crystallized self suggests that there are always new facets that are themselves neither real nor fake, but are materially and symbolically relevant and ready to be polished, cleaved, or transformed.

Fracturing the Real in the Academy

In addition to providing suggestions for activities and linguistic turns that may construct a crystallized self, it is also important to consider current academic practices that obstruct multifaceted conceptions of identity. Academic discourses and practices constitute real research, and real scholarly identities, and in so doing, can perpetuate the very essentializing discourses that critical and poststructuralist theorists attempt to disrupt. Real research is supposedly published in academic journals, speaking to a community of scholars, inviting them to engage in a particular theory (e.g., the crystallized self) or to undertake “future” research projects, as articulated by pithy and appropriate scholarly questions (e.g., What are the outcomes of crystallization efforts? Are crystallized individuals happier/more productive/ less burned out than noncrystallized individuals?). Scholars write sections on “theoretical implications” with the assumption that their ideas and requisite “directions for future research” will find an audience outside themselves. They hope scholarly conversations will ensue, courses will be centered on these academic issues, and students will carry these new ways of thinking or being into the world and into their lives. Although students may carry these ideas into their course papers, we are convinced that the poststructuralist self has not found its way into the popular imagination. Indeed, our essay bears testimony to the fact that affirmative poststructuralist conceptions of identity, however potentially fruitful or enabling they may be, are all but absent in everyday discourse and practice.

To further the movement toward crystallization, we urge scholars to reflexively examine the ways that disciplinary discourses reify, reproduce, and transform the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy. We are encouraged by the growing trend among scholars who are producing reflexive

accounts of their complicated and multifaceted lives in the academy, to reveal the “backstage” processes that support or undermine our more public endeavors (Goodall, 2000; Pelias, 2004). We can also further this project by adopting a reflexive approach to editorial review, tenure, and promotion. For instance, when we evaluate papers, do we go through a checklist of what it means for a piece of research to matter as real? Where did this checklist come from? Might it obstruct a variety of ways of knowing and understanding the world? When we review tenure and promotion cases, which topics, presentations, or publication outlets are considered real? Which are not? Do performances for live audiences, letters to the editor, or popular press media “count”—or are they somehow less than real? Do current evaluation processes capture the way in which professors translate their scholarship to the thousands of students (laypeople) who travel through their classrooms? By asking these questions, we may apply “to ourselves the same theoretical scrutiny we readily apply to the lives of others, we may uncover otherwise unspeakable meanings that shape our personal experience of life at work” and work at life (Goodall, 2004, p. 189).

We encourage scholars to crystallize their scholarship by directing their work to the multiple edges where research and people meet. As we’ve done here, real scholars routinely place their work in the leading journals in the field, those that rest on the intersections between themselves and other area specialists; scholars are rarely encouraged to or institutionally rewarded for translating research into outlets more suited to “action-oriented readers” whose policies, practices, and ideas could directly benefit from research results (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 286), though certainly it is not unheard of (see, for instance, Endres, 2002; Goodall, 1998; Keyton, 1995; Tannen, 1991; Tracy, 2003; Wood, 2004). Communication scholars are well-poised to contribute to public conversations about various issues, including the plight of the working poor, national security, health care provision, technology, democracy and participation, globalization, relational health and wellness, and others. Yet, to do so, scholars must engage multiple audiences with multiple texts (Cheney et al., 2002; Goodall, 2000; Tracy, 2002). Unfortunately, it is rare for communication scholarship to find a home among an audience of popular readers who are in search of new and better ideas, ones that can help readers to story their own lives and identities anew (Goodall, 2004; Richardson, 2000).

If the idea of crystallization is taken seriously, scholars must conceive of a variety of types of leading-edge research, not only including peer-lauded theoretical breakthroughs and grant-funded research projects, but also those that find an audience among practitioners, laypersons, and the general public (e.g., Jamieson, 2000). Indeed, we hope that some-

day the idea of crystallization finds a home not only in communication journals, but also within popular media. Such mediated representations may advocate crystallization as a mode of being that is theoretically grounded and can provide its audience with tools for engaging various edges in their lives and seeing the beauty of a self that is not authentic to its core, but celebrated because of its multifaceted ability to refract life in a rainbow.

Conclusion

Currently, the persistence of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy perpetuates a depoliticized workforce. When the individual is positioned as solely responsible for cultivating a preferred self (whether that be the manager who aligns with an organizational ideal or a frontline service worker who tries to fake it), the production of that self remains largely hidden from view. When the self is taken as real, it requires little further analysis, and “notions of workplace reform or societal change are also therefore largely peripheral” (Newton, 1995, p. 49). Whereas organizations may appear to benefit from members’ acceptance of the organizationally specified identity, they, too, lose opportunities to negotiate more meaningful responses to members’ needs through this consent process (Deetz, 1995). Further critiques and empirical analyses of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy may ultimately encourage the possibility for more collective or social forms of resistance, including but certainly not limited to alternative vocabularies, metaphors, and everyday practices. Such efforts would bring into sharp focus the ways in which organizations, rather than solely individuals, are accountable for cultivating managerialist and entrepreneurial cultures, and may serve to create workplaces where members have not only the illusion of choice, but also an actual voice in constructing a conflictual variety of crystallized selves.

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