Abstract and Keywords

'Why, even with the proliferation of poststructuralist theoretical understandings of identity, do people routinely talk in terms of "real" and "fake" selves?' (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005: 168). This chapter examines the deeply rooted assumption and sedimented way of talking about selves as essentialized, authentic, and real. Such viewpoints, along with the tendency to pit 'real selves' against 'fake selves' are often promulgated even in social constructionist, poststructuralist, and critical work, leading to a number of unintended and problematic consequences. The authors review research related to real and fake selves, and expand upon how Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) metaphor of the 'crystallized self' has extended and opened up additional research that explores: (1) the discursive struggles of resistance and self-disciplining in relation to the preferred self; (2) the difficulty of viewing multiple facets of identity as valuable rather than contradictory; (3) the gendered work involved in boundary-spanning; (4) critical intersectionality; and (5) qualitative research. The authors close the chapter by discussing how the new materialism in organizational studies might extend and inspire future research in terms of crystallized identities and organizations.

Keywords: crystallized self, authenticity, self-subordination, resistance, self-disciplining, materiality

Introduction

WHY, even with nuanced, poststructural, and relational theoretical understandings of identity do people still talk in terms of 'real' and 'fake' selves? In this chapter, we explain how the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy serves as an ideological discourse that functions in several ways, producing specific outcomes for organizations and their members. This case was made originally by Tracy and Trethewey (2005) who empirically demonstrated how the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is created and maintained through contemporary literature, scholarly theories of identity, discourses of power, and everyday organizational talk (p. 392) and practices. In turn, they provided an alternative metaphor for conceptual-

izing and talking about identity—something they called the 'crystallized self'—which highlights the ways identities are multifaceted and constructed in and through relationships and larger discourses even though they may feel solid and immutable.

In this chapter, we review Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) primary arguments and examine the ways that the 'crystallized self' has been taken up, extended, and problematized in research. For example, the metaphor has been used to explore gendered boundary work (Denker, 2017; Gill, 2006), challenge psychological theories of leadership (Fairhurst, 2007), invite intersectionality (Eger, 2018; Zingsheim, 2011a, 2011b), unpack discursive struggles (Bardon et al., 2017; Baumeler, 2010; McEwan and Flood, 2018; McEwan and Mease, 2013), navigate contradictions (Dykstra-DeVette and Canary, 2019), and imagine qualitative research (Ellingson, 2009).

Tracy and Trethewey (2005) chose to focus on how identity is fluid and always in process. However, in the final section of this chapter, we take up the question of what happens to the 'crystallized self' when we take seriously the idea that identities are not just communicatively constructed but simultaneously 'an assemblage of flesh, bones, nerves, organs, and skins' (Cooren, 2018: 283). In response to this question, we develop several areas for future research.

The 'Crystallized Self': A Synthesis

In this section, we review the key components of Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) argument about the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy, its problematic outcomes, and an alternative. We begin by demonstrating how the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy reveals and replicates itself. Considering Foucauldian notions of how power produces reality, identity, and 'rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1977: 194), the real–fake dualism is important not because there are necessarily 'true' differences between 'real' and 'fake' selves, but because people talk and act as if there are. The power of this discourse, as such, is not in its capacity to reveal truth with a capital T, but from its ability to *claim* truth or knowledge. As American television personality Stephen Colbert might say, the power of the real–fake bifurcation comes from its *truthiness* (Narvaez, 2010)—the duality seems true at a gut or intuitive level regardless of evidence to support it, and therefore, people behave and act in ways that support the separation and difference between a real/stable and fake/fluid self. Second, we explain how the dichotomy results in strategized subordination (Brown and Lewis, 2011; Deetz, 1998), perpetually deferred identities (Hochschild, 1997), a process termed 'auto-dressage', compartmentalization of identity, and the production of organizationally preferred 'good little copers'—who dutifully observe organizational norms and expectations (Newton, 1995: 60).

One of the issues that contributes to the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy is that the English language is ill-equipped for talking about identity in ways that might disrupt the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy. The 'crystallized self' metaphor provides a positively valenced term that might allow us to talk about, conceptualize, and perform identity in new ways.

(p. 393) The Real-Self↔Fake-Self Dichotomy

Many identity theorists have suggested that the self is socially and discursively constructed. These include researchers associated with symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959), relational ontology (Cooren, 2018), organizational identification (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004), and critical and poststructuralist research (Alvesson et al., 2008). However, ideas about the self as fluid, malleable, fabricated, and multiple have not taken strong hold in the popular imagination, and common discourses continue to frame identities in fairly simplistic (realist) terms as either empirically 'real' or instead as 'fake' and inauthentic performances (Gill, 2006).

Myriad contemporary discourses reinforce the notion that 'real' or 'authentic' selves can be discovered through spiritual and self-help practices. A range of books and television shows (e.g. *Dr. Phil*) make up multimillion dollar industries helping people to find their, so-called, authentic selves. A search on Amazon.com in 2018 using the phrase 'finding your true self' pulled up 381 books for sale, and another 3,000 connected to the keyword 'authenticity'. Many such works are marketed primarily as audiobooks, which allow users to listen repeatedly to the ways they can differentiate their 'essential' or 'core' self from the 'social' self that is concocted to please others (Beck, 2001).

We also see remnants of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy in identity theories, such as those associated with emotional labour. Emotional labour is 'the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display' to be 'sold for a wage' (Hochschild, 1983: 7). The emotional labour concept, which continues to be discussed widely (e.g. Malvini Redden, 2013; Scarduzio, 2011), is based on the premise that emotion is something individual and real that is fabricated through performances. Performing emotional labour, from this standpoint, is psychologically difficult because it creates a clash between supposed authentic, inner, personal emotion, on the one hand, and the supposed outer, contrived, expressed emotion on the other. Of course, we might expect the preservation of this real-self↔fake-self dichotomy in essentialist feminist research. However, even self-ascribed postmodern and poststructuralist theorists occasionally reify the idea of dichotomous real and fake selves. Mumby and Putnam (1992), for example, in their research related to bounded emotionality, have been critiqued for conceptualizing self-identity in integrated terms, 'assuming that a person has a single self that, transcending context, can be known' (Martin et al., 1998: 437).

The bifurcation is entrenched in our language and strengthened through pervasive discourses of power such as entrepreneurialism (du Gay, 2004) and managerialism (Deetz, 1998) that colonize the private sphere and encourage excessive careerism (Wieland et al., 2010). When employees submit themselves to overwork and corporate values, they place organizational rewards above alternative options such as leisure, family, community, and the pursuit of meaningful work. Meanwhile, they actively engage in remaking and recreating their selves to match corporate and entrepreneurial ideals. This may come in the form of purchasing products that make us appear professional, or engaging in self-branding techniques (Lair et al., 2005)—such as ensuring we have a large number of endorse-

ments on networking websites such as LinkedIn, or an impressive following on Twitter (Page, 2012). (p. 394) Although self-branding practices have historically been associated with employees in mediated or creative industries, even academics are increasingly pulled into self-promotion and self-monitoring of their publishing metrics, and in doing so, support neoliberal academic discourses that increasingly mimic a corporate model (Duffy and Pooley, 2017).

Together, such practices result in a variety of problematic outcomes, the form of which depends on employee status: employees who have high status jobs are encouraged to 're-al-ize' a managerialist, colonized, and entrepreneurial self—a self that is 'more real' and valued than their non-organizational selves. However, when organizational selves are stigmatized, low status, or spoiled, employees may work instead to separate their 'authentic and real' selves from their 'just a job' and therefore 'fake' selves.

Problematic Outcomes of the Real-Self↔Fake-Self Dichotomy

Employees who work towards adopting and real-izing organizationally prescribed identities may engage in self-subordination (Deetz, 1998) without necessarily being compelled to do so by a rule, policy, peer, or supervisor. For instance, many academic employees (without prompting from their university or supervisor) have enrolled themselves on websites such as Academia.edu, Google Scholar, and Publons. Academia.edu is ostensibly a place to share scholarship. However, it is a for-profit company (despite its .edu website address). The website provides analytics on citation and article downloads, sends emails to users about how they rate compared to their peers, and encourages subscribers to pay for enhanced access. Google Scholar gathers scholars' research in one place and provides metrics on citation levels and impact ('H-index') scores. Publons is designed to showcase peer review and editorial contributions, but also disciplines those scholars who do not review their colleagues' work (labour that is typically unpaid). When employees immerse themselves in such systems they are more likely to begin reporting (on their vitas, employee evaluations, and on social media) where they rate. Like knowledge workers who bring in cots to sleep on when their jobs require they stay at work all night (Deetz, 1998), reliance on and self-reporting based on these systems results in self-subordination.

Second, when employees are focused on creating their best possible self in the service of their work, non-work relations and activities can be marginalized. For example, employees in the USA are spending increasing numbers of hours working, and fewer hours vacationing. According to the International Labour Association (Miller, 2018), Americans work 137 more hours per year than Japanese workers, 260 more hours per year than British workers, and 499 more hours per year than French workers; furthermore, nearly 86 per cent of American males and 66.5 per cent of females work more than 40 hours a week. Meanwhile, Americans on average take fewer than 13 vacation days per year, compared with 30 paid holidays/vacation days per year in France and Finland (Miller, 2018). Clearly, American workers are spending their time at work, rather than engaging with other activ-

ities which can result in 'perpetually deferred' and potential selves. These imagined, but never realized, selves do odd things like fill their bookshelves with books that are never read and buy camping equipment that sits in the garage unused and gathering dust (Hochschild, 1997). In this model, friends, family, (p. 395) and communities are also left with deferred lives, as care for family is outsourced (Hochschild, 2003), and civic engagement declines (Sander and Putnam, 2010).

A third process associated with real-izing the preferred self is a practice Tracy and Trethewey (2005) coin 'auto-dressage'. Typically, dressage refers to a specific type of training that makes horses 'calm, supple, attentive and keen' as well as 'obedient' and willing to 'enthusiastically respond to refined, invisible signals' (Savoie, 1998: 3). 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 and Carter, 1998: 54). Tracy and Trethewey (2005) take the dressage concept a step further by arguing that when employees, themselves, choose to identify primarily with work and engage in self-subordination, they practise dressage not only to show the master that they are under control, but to essentially perform their training and complicity for themselves. This may come in the form of refusing vacation or parental leave time even when taking the vacation might create more opportunities for all parties involved. Another example of auto-dressage are employees who choose to dress professionally when going to the office, even on the weekend when it is unobserved. In short:

> This type of activity…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.

> (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005: 181)

Whereas professional employees tend to align their 'real' self with organizationally preferred identities, people who work in low status jobs are often encouraged by supervisors and organizational norms to distance their identities from their organizational positions. Research exploring jobs in which employees engage in subservient, dirty, or distasteful activities (e.g. custodians, supermarket clerks, home health aides, correctional officers), suggests employees are encouraged to think of their work as 'just a job' rather than a 'real job' (Clair, 1996; O'Connor and Raile, 2015). Thus, employees aim to compartmentalize their work identities in the guise of protecting an 'authentic' self. For example, in low status (largely female-dominated) work such as waiting tables, prostitution, serving as flight attendants, or being bank clerks, employees are disciplined to think of their work as a performance with front and back stages (Miller et al., 2007). In frontstage venues, organizational norms often require that employees look happy by smiling, act interested by nodding, and sound professional by asking questions. They are not told to really *feel* or *be* happy, attentive, or professional, but to simply *act* this way (Tracy and Tracy, 1998).

Other stigmatized employees—especially those who work in contexts of high security and danger—are often asked to compartmentalize their work selves to keep their contaminated work selves from seeping into and affecting their private lives. For example, prison guards, considered by other law enforcement officers to be 'the scum of law enforcement', may be asked to 'leave home at home and work at work' (Tracy, 2001: 175). Public service employees such as firefighters tend to view their work and life as in competition with one another, with home being a more fulfilling and peaceful space. Bochantin (2016), for example, reports one firefighter as describing leaving work as akin to escaping Alcatraz Island. Finally, workers whose personal identity markers do not mesh (p. 396) with those traditionally associated with a profession may try to suppress 'real' aspects of themselves at work to appear organizationally appropriate. Women mask their pregnancies (Gatrell, 2011), transgender employees hide their gender identity (Jones, Under Submission), and older employees hide their age (Trethewey 2001)—sometimes, quite literally, to survive in their organizational setting.

Certainly, activities to fabricate, compartmentalize, or pass may feel akin to resistance for the employee involved. However, cynicism and pretending can provide a 'specious sense of freedom' (Fleming and Spicer, 2003: 162) as employees continue to act within organizational norms and rules. What's more, compartmentalization distracts employees from the fact that their work actually does shape their behaviour and ways of being outside of the workplace. Prison guards, for example, experience trouble turning off their hardened persona at home (Tracy, 2004) and sex workers can experience intimacy challenges and sexual alienation in their private life (Sanders, 2005). Employees should be more sceptical when organizations ask them to merely 'perform' a certain organizational persona and keep their 'private' and 'real' selves compartmentalized and presumably (but erroneously) unscathed. Activity at work shapes employees' identities even when they clock-out and go home.

The 'Crystallized Self' Metaphor

Tracy and Trethewey (2005) argue that fresh linguistic alternatives have the potential to facture the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy and help people focus on the political, constructed, relational, and fractured aspects of identity. They propose the metaphor of the 'crystallized self', building upon Richardson's (2000) notion of crystallization in conducting creative analytic practices in qualitative research. 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: 934)

This metaphor of identity as a multifaceted crystal contrasts with the idea that identity is a two-sided 'real'/'fake' coin. Furthermore, it resists the notion that identity is suffocated, flattened, and colonized by corporate, managerial, and entrepreneurial interests (Deetz, 1998; du Gay, 2004). Rather, the metaphor highlights multidimensionality, complexity, and fluidity. What is seen depends on the angle of repose, and despite the fact that crystals may feel or appear hard and solid, their shape and form depend on the fluctuating conditions of their natural construction.

Although the notion of a 'crystallized self' highlights the power of discourses, ideologies, and organizational norms for constructing identity, Tracy and Trethewey (2005) suggest several ways that people might exert agency to craft a multifaceted self. First, they encourage people to experiment with routinized scripts and language—and disrupt scripts that assume an essentialized or colonized notion of self. For example, people could (p. 397) altogether abandon banal questions like, 'What do you do?' and instead ask critically inspired questions (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 2004) such as 'Where are you going in life, and to whom is this development most desirable?' Second, people can deliberately place themselves in unfamiliar territories and within discourses that challenge or at least provide texture to their typical ways of being. For example, Hochschild (2016) went so far as to leave her liberal home of Berkeley, California and travel to Louisiana for an extended time to understand and write empathically about the viewpoints of tea-party conservatives. In short, Tracy and Trethewey (2005: 188) encourage people to traverse and hold in tension multiple conflictual discourses, contexts, and ways of being—to live 'a life wrapped in a quilt of many colors rather than one suffocated by a monochromatic blanket'.

Real, Fake, and Crystallized Identities Today

According to a 2018 Google Drive search, Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) essay has been cited 341 times, and according to statistics kept by the journal *Communication Theory*, as of August 2018, it is the journal's 31st most highly referenced article in its history and its 10th most referenced article published since 2005. In this section, we analyse how this work has been used as a lens to explore: (1) the discursive struggles of resistance and self-disciplining in relation to the preferred self; (2) the difficulty of viewing multiple facets of identity as valuable rather than contradictory; (3) the gendered work involved in boundary-spanning; (4) critical intersectionality; and (5) qualitative research.

Discursive Struggles of Self-Disciplining and Resistance in Relation to a Preferred Self

The 'crystallized self' has served as a powerful lens for researchers who are interested in analysing the discursive struggles of self-disciplining and resistance. More specifically, the 'crystallized self' has been used to make sense of the way(s) people both resist and enact ideal identities imposed upon them by their organizations. For example, an examination of identity at Disneyland asks, 'how do corporations attempt to regulate [or seek to discipline] the ways middle managers draw on discourses centered on "effectiveness" and

"ethics" in their identity work, and how do these individuals respond?' (Bardon et al., 2017: 940). The authors analysed how managers responded to a corporate-sponsored programme aimed at creating productivity and morality—attributes that were privileged by their employer. Bardon et al. (2017) found that managers were not simply the receivers of the programme's messaging; they actively engaged in taking up the corporate ideal of the 'practically wise' manager in which ethics and efficacy were jointly emphasized.

(p. 398) Another work that explores the tension between preferred organizational and marginalized individual identities deals with the disciplining of self as the 'enterprising subject' in relation to the powerful discourse of entrepreneurialism (Baumeler, 2010: 272):

> The organizational discourse of entrepreneurialism has created an idealized productive subject who reflects the interest of the organization. The current idea is that enterprises should release the individual's autonomy and creativity and direct them towards organizational excellence and success. Thus, employees are supposed to be transformed into entrepreneurial selves who are personally responsible for innovation, economic growth and the safeguarding of their own employability.

> (Baumeler, 2010: 280)

The notion of an ideal entrepreneurial self invokes 'auto-dressage' as one means by which self-disciplining is performed.

The crystallized metaphor is also used to represent the way self-interpretations are influenced by identity regulation goals of various groups in society—including the organizational identities imposed by management. Fairhurst (2007: 99) posits the 'crystallized self' against psychological conceptualizations of identity to explain the way discourse and power shape identity and suggests that while selves are often conceptualized as 'real' or 'fake' in the authentic leadership literature, the 'crystallized self' 'elucidates a self continuously under construction through language use and in social interaction'. This constructed self pushes back not only against a psychology of self, but also against a pathologizing of self.

In McEwan and Mease's (2013) study of online identity construction and maintenance, the 'crystallized self' is extended towards a new metaphor, 'compressed crystallization', in which the discursive struggle for identity unfolds online. The authors examine how social networking sites like Facebook—where individuals virtually present and represent their at-home selves—have become entangled with organizational selves insofar as potential employers are surveilling future hires' online selves and ostensibly making hiring/firing decisions on the basis of the person's mediated personal life. The authors propose 'compressed crystallization' as a new way to conceptualize the mediated self:

> In the computer programming world, data compression is a process used to encode information using few bits. Data is compressed by systematically reducing

redundancy, but compression also makes data less reliable. We use the metaphor of compression to consider how crystallized identities might be performed, produced, and read online.

(McEwan and Mease, 2013: 91)

Due to the lack of nuance and expression available in the online communication of self, people self-discipline by portraying socially ideal selves to a 'mass personal audience', aligning that portrayal towards the values of the audience they perceive as 'primary' (e.g. their organization, church, etc.).

Extending this research on 'compressed crystallization', McEwan and Flood (2018) analysed 4,725 responses to a Yahoo! news article that reported upon the threat of organizations requiring potential new hires to provide their Facebook login information, including private passwords. McEwan and Flood (2018: 1730) draw on 'compressed crystallization' to explain how people 'essentially flatten or compress various facets of self to perform an identity that is perceived as appropriate across multiple audiences'. They found that while some readers voiced resistance, others believed that workers should (p. 399) adapt to their future workplaces' rules and expectations. The analysis substantiated 'a discourse of compression' in which some employees shape themselves in light of overarching ideologies from educational institutions, professional/workplace organizations, and the church. However:

> …when produced through consent to organizational standards, rather than negotiation, the self is often viewed as never quite good enough. The standard of "professional" in one's personal life is a slippery discourse [as] perceptions of inappropriate behavior may be unevenly distributed among segments of the population.

(McEwan and Flood, 2018: 1731)

Compression of online identities problematizes the 'crystallized self' by highlighting the ways that online performances serve to strip nuance, complexity, and context from identity.

Multiplicity of Identity as Valuable Rather than Contradictory

The 'crystallized self' metaphor has also been used to frame that facets of identity interact with each other, and with the socially expected organizational self—sometimes paradoxically so. In a study of women entrepreneurs, people 'who ostensibly have more freedom and flexibility to make choices as to how to shape their material work-life', the 'crystallized self' elucidates the way women navigate their entrepreneurial identity in relation to their at-home selves (Gill, 2006). Gill (2006) argues that female entrepreneurs hold particularly complicated roles due to the societal expectation that women work full time and carry the burden of household labour. Here, multiple facets of identity impose on each other, creating a multiplex web of identification that sometimes enables and sometimes constrains. Indeed, self-employment may complicate and compound work-life identi-

ty negotiation, and result in identity dis/integration. While the 'crystallized self' may provide a generative vocabulary by which entrepreneurs can make sense of their multiple identities, Gill (2006) makes the case that this vocabulary has not been taken up by the people it describes.

Much like the study of women entrepreneurs, Svihla et al. (2016) demonstrate, in a study of engineering students, that celebrating conflicting facets of identity can influence students' success. Namely, when traditionally underappreciated facets of identity were labelled as productive to the creative process, students were more capable of moving through setbacks. Organizations can usefully encourage their members to perceive of their crystallized selves as not only permissible, but as an *asset*.

The 'crystallized self' has also been extended to 'crystallized organizational identity' to account for the recognition of complex and contradictory factors in the organizing process (Eger, 2018). In an ethnographic study of a transgender outreach centre, Eger (2018) found that the organization supported all 'facets' of transgender experience, encouraging members to communicate in a way that highlighted their 'multiple, overlapping, and even conflicting facets requiring complex responses that exceed narrow, single-issue organizing' (2018: 274). Participants often faced multiple identity influences including homelessness, indigenous heritage, and transgender identity. Although some organizations might treat each facet of a person's identity separately (e.g. homelessness addressed in isolation from (p. 400) indigenous heritage or transgender identity), a crystallized organization recognizes all facets simultaneously.

Crystallization and the Gendered Work Involved in Boundary Spanning

Other ways the 'crystallized self' has been taken up and applied is in discussions of gendered identity (Fairhurst, 2007) and boundary work (Gill, 2006; Denker, 2017). For example, Gill's (2006) study of women entrepreneurs examined the discursive conceptualizations of work-life boundaries, including how women framed the intersection of their 'work' or 'home' selves. People often feel they must perform a preferred employee identity, and turn this performance on and off, transitioning between boundaries in order to portray the appropriate persona. Gill (2006) points to the 'crystallized self' as a more empowering perspective. In a similar vein, Fairhurst (2007: 105) argues that notions of 'authentic leadership' have become entrenched in discourses of gender inasmuch as gender 'has emerged as a deeply rooted organizing principle, playing a particularly strong role in matters of control, resistance, and organizational identity'. Here, 'femininity' can valuably be discussed alongside the identity construct of the 'alpha male' since they are intrinsically intertwined.

In an organizational autoethnography (Denker, 2017), the 'crystallized self' is taken up to explain how the author's experience as a bartender was implicated with emotional labour and aesthetic sexual performance. Denker struggled with her identity as both a scholar and someone who needed to make ends meet. Reflecting on her experience, she wrote:

> As "Kathy the bartender," I mixed a jigger of masked emotions, organizationally prescribed aesthetics, and commodified sexuality in the cocktail of enacted identity as I got drunk off the easy money and woke with a hangover of shame, guilt, and questions about representation. Within this text, I, "Kathy the scholar," examine my own "choices" with emotional labor, sexuality, and negotiated power.

> (Denker, 2017: 19)

Although people who work 'dirty jobs' are encouraged to present an organizationally preferred self—and therefore compartmentalize their authentic personas—the 'crystallized self' provides a way to make sense of discourse and power such that 'through our emotional labor we are both marginalized and powerful, and as we recognize both organizational power and the worker's claims to resistance, we see a more nuanced view' (Denker, 2017: 24).

Crystallization and Critical Intersectionality

Several scholars have extended the 'crystallized self' metaphor, to account for intersectionality (e.g. Eger, 2017) including movement towards a theory of 'mutational identity' (Zingsheim, 2011b). Zingsheim (2011b) examines how discourse (re)creates identities that reflect and can be analysed in relation to the 'contemporary mutants' of pop culture icons in the *X-Men* and *Heroes* series. Although Tracy and Trethewey (2005: 26) made the case that various facets of identity may reflect and refract both external and internal influences, a (p. 401) turn towards 'mutational identity' illuminates how the original metaphor did little in terms of 'how subjectivities also alter, grow, and shift through their interplay and through the discursive practices of identity negotiation', as well as in terms of 'accounting for how that process reflexively alters and (re)constitutes the discourses by which crystals are formed' (Zingsheim, 2011a: 26).

In this case, Puar's (2005) consideration of Deleuzian *assemblage* is especially useful for highlighting the inherent instability of identity due to its morphing nature and the mobility of space and time. The devised new concept, 'mutational identity', acts as a conceptual frame through which to view identity 'as characterized by evolution, multiplicity, embodiment, and agency' (Puar, 2005: 28). Furthermore, mutational identity analysis (Zingsheim, 2011b) demonstrates that the *X-Men* pop culture phenomenon—which others had viewed as indicating social progress—actually represents identities in ways that reify dominant discourses of whiteness, patriarchy, and heteronormativity.

Crystallization and Qualitative Research

Finally, the crystallized metaphor has continued to hold sway in the world of qualitative research methods. Tracy and Trethewey (2005) were originally inspired by the imagery of the crystal as proposed by qualitative researcher and sociologist Laurel Richardson (2003). Subsequently, Ellingson (2009) drew both from Tracy and Trethewey as well as Richardson, using the metaphor as a framing device for a range of qualitative research activities. As a methodological philosophy, crystallization provides an alternative to posi-

tivist notions of triangulation to reach consistent and reliable truth. In contrast, crystallization focuses on multiple realities and forms for their own sake:

> Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them.

> (Ellingson, 2009: 4)

New language and frameworks make a difference. The notion of crystallization as an alternative to triangulation has now reached beyond Richardson's field of sociology to the larger community of qualitative research (e.g. Chang et al., 2016; Denzin, 2012; Tracy, 2010).

Crystallizing Future Identity Research

In this chapter, we have provided an overview of the powerful discourse of the real-self↔fake-self dichotomy, its problematic outcomes for employees, and an alternative way of conceptualizing identity through the 'crystallized self'. Furthermore, we have synthesized the ways that other researchers have taken up, extended, and problematized aspects of crystallized identities. In this third section, we discuss how consideration of another key area (p. 402) of literature—namely, organizational materiality—holds promise for future research, not only related to crystallized identity, but also for crystallized organizations.

Much recent theorizing argues that organizing processes and outcomes are constructed through a complex combination of discursive construction and materiality. On the one hand, a major contribution to the study of identity by organizational communication scholars is a focus on the communicative and discursive construction of organizing (CCO) (McPhee and Zaug, 2000). This approach suggests that organizations are not 'containers' where communication happens, but are instead constructed, contested, and dismantled through communication (Fairhurst and Putnam, 2004). CCO is valuable in many ways, including that it situates organizational identity as always fluid and in the process of becoming. However, research in the last ten years has argued that communication scholars' focus on discourse and CCO has glossed and marginalized the ways that organizations and employees are *also* material (Cooren, 2018). A focus on materiality suggests that in addition to examining the ways communicative interactions and relationships construct and sustain identities, it is simultaneously valuable to focus on the ways that identities are fabricated by and manifest in material things like objects, contextual spaces, bound timeframes, and bodies (Ashcraft et al., 2009).

Real, Fake, and Crystallized Identities

Tracy and Trethewey (2005), like many of their contemporaries, chose to highlight the communicative construction side of the discursive–material dialectic. This leaves the other side of the dialectic prime for future research. Specifically, we believe that researchers may find fertile ground in attending to the following question: *What happens to the notion of the 'crystallized self' when we take seriously the idea that identities are not just communicatively constructed but simultaneously 'an assemblage of flesh, bones, nerves, organs, and skins'* (Cooren, 2018: 283)? Among other things, this question asks us to consider the idea that, 'as any assemblage, we have a certain identity or singularity (we are also universes)'. In other words, our bodies have a way of looking, sounding, and smelling that is enduring despite diets, vocalic lessons, and perfumes.

A focus on materiality asks researchers to consider not only what aspects of identities are material, but how materiality influences identity construction. As an example, consider a person's regional accent. Certainly, someone could make the case that one's accent is a facet of a 'crystallized self' created through years of language and relationality. However, one might also argue that accent is as much or more a result of the material geographic region in which someone is born, learns to talk, and is socialized. In this second viewpoint, a material space constructs identity. In the United States, Wisconsinites like the first author end up with a nasal tone, whereas Southerners end up with a charming drawl. Physical spaces (whether they are regions, shapes of offices, or the amount of light in a room) shape the 'crystallized self', and new areas for research emerge by considering these issues.

Not only do materials (along with discourses) crystallize identities, but people, through their talk and behaviour, also serve to construct and recreate facets of non-human materials. In these ways, we believe that crystallization and the sociality–materiality dialectic are quite compatible. Take for example, the cigarette. Advertisements and young people's behaviours made cigarettes a status symbol for American college-aged co-eds in the 1950s, whereas today, cigarettes are largely eschewed by American college-age students (Dennis, 2015). What used to be a 'ciggy' is now a 'cancer stick'—even though the material make-up of the object has stayed relatively consistent. As another example, clowns used to (p. 403) be light-hearted entertainers for children but today are frequently characters in horror films (Kennedy, 2018).

What these examples illustrate is that the way we interact and talk serves to crystallize, reframe, and provide new facets for a range of material things. These things include objects (e.g. are fur coats symbols of status, cruelty, or second-hand shopping?), spaces (e.g. is Las Vegas luxurious, tacky, or mundane?), time periods (e.g. is Memorial Day meant for remembrance, barbecue, or buying discount appliances?), animals (e.g. is a pit bull a security device or a beloved pet?), and human bodies (e.g. are Rubenesque figures a sign of affluence, sex appeal, or gluttony?). In short, the crystallized metaphor is not only useful for highlighting the multifaceted aspects of identity but can also be used to explore the multifaceted aspects of material things in the world.

Finally, a key part of research regarding materiality is that people never speak only for themselves, but also speak on behalf of policies, places, objects, documents, and other people. They serve as ventriloquists, making material objects speak (Cooren, 2012). Being a ventriloquist has ethical implications that overlap with one of Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) concerns—that human beings have some agency to choose the discourses that construct and crystallize their being. In terms of materiality and ventriloquism, Cooren (2018: 285) argues that when we have the luxury of choosing the entities for which we act as mouthpieces, 'we should also be prepared to respond for them. This is the condition of our responsibility, as it is also the condition of our ethical conduct.' So, what is the ethical implication?

Considering both Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) and Cooren's (2018) discussion of agency suggests that when people choose to voice a viewpoint, they also take on some mindful accountability for the discourses and materials from which that viewpoint emerges. For example, if people espouse viewpoints that are authored by a specific church, then they should be prepared to take on some ethical responsibility if the church is marked with scandal. If they choose to ventriloquize a colleague's idea, they have some responsibility to stand by the colleague when she/he drops in popularity. If someone chooses to talk about ideas authored by white supremacists, then she/he is also an agent of white-supremacist violence.

In short, what the materiality literature suggests when considered in relationship to the 'crystallized self' is that even when identity is multifaceted, human beings ethically should not and cannot abandon the discourses and things that construct them. That is, when people choose to re-inscribe and polish a facet of a crystallized material entity through their ventriloquism, then they should understand that they are essentially locking forces with the other crystals that also share that facet, and together, they are creating force and power in the world. Crystallization serves to bolster Cooren's (2018) notion that with such choices come power, responsibility, and accountability.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter lays out the ways that identity is neither real nor fake, even though people continue to talk and act as if it were. Maintaining the dichotomy has several (p. 404) problematic outcomes, including that people continue to kid each other and themselves. As high status employees attempt to real-ize their preferred identity, they delude themselves that the best way to deal with ideologies of corporate colonization and entrepreneurialism is simply to defer their lives, become good little copers, and to prance their way through self-subordination via auto-dressage. Meanwhile, employees in lower status positions are told to simply (and mythically) compartmentalize their identities, and not let the stigmatized things they must do at work influence their 'true' identity.

An alternative conceptualization of identity as crystallized has informed a range of research in the last thirteen years. The synthesis provided here suggests the 'crystallized self' has been used as a lens to explore: (1) the discursive struggles of resistance and self-

disciplining in relation to the preferred self; (2) the difficulty of viewing multiple facets of identity as valuable rather than contradictory; (3) the gendered work involved in boundary-spanning; (4) critical intersectionality; and (5) qualitative research. What is more, the metaphor of the 'crystallized self' plays well with materialism and relationality in organizational studies, and considering these literatures together suggests several areas for future research.

That said, we believe the 'crystallized self' will not reach its potential until such time that focused work is done to popularize the metaphor. Scholarship that aims to impact everyday people *must* move towards novel and generative understandings of self. People live their lives through the stories they tell and the language they use (Lawler, 2002), and 'the words we have are not always the words we need' (Ashcraft, 2000: 3). In this case, the words scholars have used for understanding a poststructuralist identity (words like 'constructed', 'multiple', 'fractured', and 'fragmented') have not been sufficient for penetrating the popular imagination and disrupting long-engrained divisions between essentialized ideas of 'real' and 'fake' selves. We hope that future researcher-practitioners will work towards public scholarship that will launch the 'crystallized self' into the public imagination, and thus create ways of being and doing scholarship that transform work, practice, and self.

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