

# Contents

Preface	vii
I. INTRODUCTION	
1 The Self and Mediated Communication <i>Debra Grodin and Thomas R. Lindlof</i>	3
II. SELF AND MEDIA CONTENT	
2 All Consuming Selves: Self-Help Literature and Women's Identities <i>Wendy Simonds</i>	15
3 Terms of Enmeshment: The Cultural Construction of the Mother-Daughter Relationship <i>Suzanna Danuta Walters</i>	30
III. SELF AND MEDIA PARTICIPATION	
4 Desperately Seeking Strategies: Reading in the Postmodern <i>Mary Ellen Brown</i>	55
5 "Gilt by Association": Talk Show Participants' Televisually Enhanced Status and Self-Esteem <i>Patricia J. Priest</i>	68
6 Mediating Cultural Selves: Soviet and American Cultures in a Televised "Spacebridge" <i>Donal Carbaugh</i>	84
7 Constructions of Self and Other in the Experience of Rap Music <i>Timothy A. Simpson</i>	107
IV. RELATIONAL SELVES AND THE MEDIATED CONTEXT	
8 Technology and the Self: From the Essential to the Sublime <i>Kenneth J. Gergen</i>	127
9 Therapy and Identity Construction in a Postmodern World <i>Sheila McNamee</i>	141

10	Parallel Lives: Working on Identity in Virtual Space <i>Sherry Turkle</i>	156
V. THE MEDIATED SELF AND INQUIRY		
11	Seeking a Path of Greatest Resistance: The Self Becoming Method <i>Thomas R. Lindlof and Autumn Grubb-Swetnam</i>	179
12	The Nature of the Individual in Communication Research <i>James A. Anderson and Gerard T. Schoening</i>	206
	Index	226
	About the Authors	229

# Preface

Several years ago, when we began this project on self and media, we did so with enthusiasm for this promising area of interdisciplinary investigation. As communication researchers, we observed how our mediated world has challenged assumptions about the self, both academically and in the popular imagination. That's what led to the development of this book. A tip-off for us about the saliency of a project on self and media came by way of nonscholarly responses to our topic. The mention of this book to friends and others who were not academics was met with uniform enthusiasm, indicating to us that issues of self and media need more articulation, not only in scholarly circles but in the culture "outside" of the academy.

Notions of the self as highly contained and stable have historically dominated research approaches in the social sciences, including the study of media. This means that many studies about the human experience of media decontextualize the self and do not emphasize socially constructed aspects of identity and experience. Over the past 20 years, the socially constructed nature of the self has been the premise of many important research projects, but during that time relatively little attention has been given to the relationship between self and media.

Although there has been some significant theoretical work in the area of self and mediated communication, there are still few actual research projects, particularly those involving research participants. This volume is a first attempt to bring together some of the original research that is currently being done in this area. In addition, several chapters are theoretical. In working together as editors, we found ourselves deepening our interests in the topic of self and media, and also recognizing how far-reaching a topic it is. For example, during this project, we both developed a strong interest in issues of mediated communication and community. Many of the pieces we've collected for this volume are not just about the self but about self in relation to others, and in context.

A number of people contributed their expertise toward the development and completion of this book. Conversations with Mick Presnell, Nina Gregg, Andrea Press, and Kelly Coyle helped with the initial development of the project. Autumn Grubb Swetnam was a sounding board along the way. The University