



# **Alterity and Narrative: Stories and the Negotiation of Western Identities (SUNY series, Negotiating Identity: Discourses, Politics, Processes, and Praxes)**

*Kathleen Glenister Roberts*

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*Intertwines identity and culture to demonstrate how identity is negotiated over a given history.*

Drawing from the fields of rhetoric, cultural studies, literature, and folkloristics, Kathleen Glenister Roberts argues that identity and the history of alterity in the West can be understood more clearly through narrative motifs. She provides analyses of these motifs including infanticide, universalism, the Tower of Babel, the warrior Other, the noble savage, entropology, and the trickster. With current intellectual conflict as its subtext, this book posits that identity is always negotiated toward Otherness. Roberts interrogates narrative constructions of Western biases toward non-Western Others, with each chapter addressing a Western historical moment through an exemplary narrative. This process shows that by imagining and objectifying Others, Western cultures were creating their own Selves. In confronting the ethnocentrism of past historical moments, Roberts invites us to recognize it in the present—in a new way. *Alterity and Narrative* asks that we afford Others the ability to transcend their own ethnocentrism, and therefore avoid well-meaning but naïve calls for “cultural sensitivity.”

“*Alterity and Narrative* is a good read ... the stories ... are, of course, classics; it is always fun to look at them again and in a new way.” — *Journal of Folklore Research*

“Roberts is spectacularly well informed and writes with a masterly but engaging style. Her productive integration of identity and culture contributes to narrative theory and cultural history both, and ensures that this book will be read seriously.” — Clifford Christians, coeditor of *Communication Ethics and Universal Values*

Kathleen Glenister Roberts is Assistant Professor of Communication and Rhetorical Studies and Director of the Communication Ethics Center at Duquesne University.

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