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This innovative work offers a new approach to the study of self-representation, drawing on both the older study of lives tradition in personality psychology and recent work in narrative psychology. Gary S. Gregg presents a generative theory of self-representation, applying methods of symbolic analysis developed by cultural anthropologists to the texts of life-historical interviews. This model accounts for the continual shifting of identity among contradictory surface discourses about the self, as it shows how each discourse is defined as a reconfiguration of a stable cluster of deep structurally-ambiguous elements. Gregg not only examines the nature of narrative, but also addresses more mainstream issues in cognitive science, such as: How is knowledge of the self and its social world represented? What are the elementary units of self-cognition? How are cognition and affect linked?