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Traber reexamines the practice of self-marginalization in Euro-American literature and popular culture that depict whites adopting varied markers of otherness to disengage from the dominant culture. He draws on critical theory, whiteness and cultural studies to counter an eager correlation between marginality and agency. The nonconformist cultural politics of these border crossings implode since the transgressive identity the protagonists desire relies upon, is built from, the center's values and definitions. An orthodox notion of individualism underpins each act of sovereignty as it rationalizes exploiting stereotypes of an Other constructed by the center. The work closes by positing a theory of identity based on Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of the emptied self. In recognizing the already mixed quality of being, identity is made a vacuous concept as the standards for determining self and difference become too slippery to hold.
