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A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States

By Ali Behdad

Duke University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States, Ali Behdad, In "A Forgetful Nation", the renowned postcolonial studies scholar Ali Behdad turns his attention to the United States. Offering a timely critique of immigration and nationalism, Behdad takes on an idea central to American national mythology: that the U.S. is 'a nation of immigrants', open-armed and welcoming to foreigners. He argues that Americans' treatment of immigrants and foreigners has long fluctuated between hospitality and hostility and that this deep-seated ambivalence is fundamental to the construction of U.S. national identity. Building on the insights of Freud, Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida, he develops a theory of the historical amnesia that enables the United States to disavow a past and present built on the exclusion of others. Behdad shows how political, cultural, and legal texts have articulated American anxiety about immigration from the Federalist period to the present day. He reads texts both well-known - J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer, Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America, and Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass - and lesser-known - such as the writings of the nativist nineteenth-century political...



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