



# Toward a Global Thin Community: Nietzsche, Foucault, and the Cosmopolitan Commitment

*By Mark Olssen*

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## **Toward a Global Thin Community: Nietzsche, Foucault, and the Cosmopolitan Commitment** By Mark Olssen

"Toward a Global 'Thin' Community re-examines aspects of the liberal-communitarian debate. While critical of both traditions, this book argues that a coherent form of communitarianism is the only plausible option for citizens today. Using the theories of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, Olssen shows how we can overcome traditional problems with communitarianism by using an ethic of survival that he identifies in the writings of Nietzsche and others to provide a normative framework for twenty-first century politics at both national and global levels. "Thin" communitarianism seeks to surmount traditional objections associated with Hegel and Marx, and to safeguard liberty and difference by applying a robust idea of democracy."

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

"Mark Olssen has written an ambitious book that grapples with both theoretical subtleties and the complexities of our contemporary situation. His proposed 'thin communitarianism' recognizes our social constitution while avoiding the totalitarian temptations that often haunt communitarian thought. The scope and sensitivity of this work constitute a real contribution to thinking about the politics of our time.

?Todd May, Lemon Professor of Political Philosophy at Clemson University, and author of *Gilles Deleuze*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

"Olssen's book breathes new life into the debates around liberalism and politics. His grasp of diverse philosophical traditions is stunning. This is an extremely erudite but eminently practical exercise which articulates an original but very topical 'third position' in political philosophy. Sociologists, political scientists and philosophers will all find themselves fascinated and challenged by Olssen's arguments."

?Stephen J Ball FBA AcSS, Karl Mannheim Professor of Sociology of Education, Editor *Journal of Education Policy* Education Foundations and Policy Studies Institute of Education, University of London

"In this wide-ranging and well-argued book, Mark Olssen skilfully exposes the limitations of liberalism and communitarianism, and offers a richer view of the human self. He uses it to advance a philosophically sophisticated and politically realistic global ethics that is sensitive both to human solidarity and national differences. A rich book. Warmly to be welcomed."

?Lord Bhikhu Parekh, member of the House of Lords, Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Westminster, and winner of the Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize for Political Philosophy in 2002.

"Mark Olssen's *Toward a Global Thin Community* is an intellectually energizing and beautifully written book. Refusing to accept either an individualism without limits or a notion of freedom removed from wider social responsibilities, he provides a vigorous defense of the common good, democracy, and public life. Not only does he offer the reader a useful understanding of the varied discourses of liberalism and communitarianism, he also draws upon a number of philosophical traditions to give us a brilliant and original theory of democracy. Olssen has produced a book of great insight, conviction, and hope for those of us concerned about the fate of democracy in the new millennium."-Henry Giroux, Global Television Network Chair Professor Communication and English Faculty of Humanities, McMaster University

"Mark Olssen's book is well researched and erudite...[he] deals with theoretical or philosophical issues and problems of contemporary politics equally well. Not only does he show the relevance of Nietzsche and Foucault today, but he also demonstrates the importance of political theory and philosophy for grappling with the complexities of the global politics of our time. Overall, this is an important, challenging and rewarding book."-Evangelia Sembou, *Foucault Studies*, No. 13, pp 201-204, May 2012

#### **About the Author**

Mark Olssen is Professor of Political Theory and Education Policy at the University of Surrey, U.K. He is author recently of *Michel Foucault: Materialism and Education* (Paradigm Publishers 2006).

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

**Annette Morrison:**

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