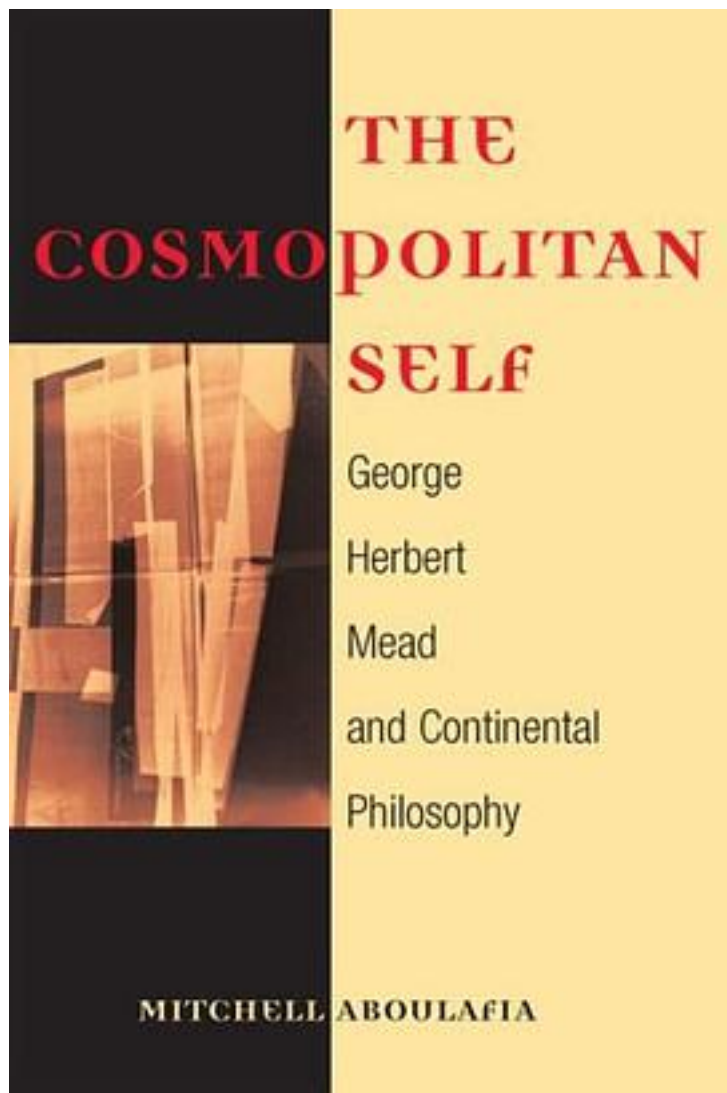


The Cosmopolitan Self



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In this incisive commentary, Mitchell Aboulafia examines the relevance of the American pragmatist philosopher George Herbert Mead to current debates on pluralism, universalism, and the fostering of a democratic temper. Addressing the relationship between Mead's notions of self and society and those of important continental thinkers, "The Cosmopolitan Self" demonstrates that Mead's ideas not only speak to resolving the tension between universalism and pluralism, they do so in a manner that challenges and advances the positions of these continental theoreticians. Aboulafia examines how Mead's insights illuminate Hannah Arendt's reading of Immanuel Kant's third Critique and Jurgen Habermas's understanding of the relationship among communicative action, universality, and individuation. Teasing out strands of agreement and disagreement among Mead and these theorists on topics such as impartiality and good judgment, Aboulafia develops a conception of universalism that is compatible with contemporary notions of pluralism. He also addresses the serious challenge presented to Mead's approach to pluralism by Emmanuel Levinas, who holds that true pluralism, presupposing an irreducible individualism, is fundamentally irreconcilable with universalism.

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