



Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese, and Western Perspectives (S U N Y Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought)

Nicholas F. Gier

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A comparative philosophical consideration of the extremes of humanism, or "Titanism," this book critiques trends in Eastern and Western philosophy and examines solutions to them.

This work in comparative philosophy uses the concept of Titanism to critique certain trends in both Eastern and Western philosophy. Titanism is an extreme form of humanism in which human beings take on divine attributes and prerogatives. The author finds the most explicit forms of spiritual Titanism in the Jaina, Samkhya, and Yoga traditions, where yogis claim powers and knowledge that in the West are only attributed to God. These philosophies are also radically dualistic, and liberation involves a complete transcendence of the body, society, and nature. Five types of spiritual Titanism are identified; and, in addition to this typology, a heuristic based on Nietzsche's three metamorphoses of camel, lion, and child is offered. The book determines that answers to spiritual Titanism begin not only with the Hindu Goddess religion, but also are found in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, especially Zen Buddhism and Confucianism.

"The act of cross-cultural comparison, particularly in religious studies, is an art that once flourished but is now routinely challenged from a whole host of technical and specialist fronts. Gier's text, essentially a comprehensive essay of normative comparative philosophy, is especially refreshing in such a world, as it effectively brings together an impressive range of scholarship (Western philosophy and theology, comparative mythology, Jaina, Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian Studies) to create a truly comparative text with a distinct, original, philosophically and religiously important thesis. Gier's category of 'Titanism,' which functions as an ethical critique of mystical religiosities from the standpoint of a constructive postmodern and humanistic standpoint, enables him to accomplish this synthetic and normative feat, and to do it in a way that does not collapse the very real differences between these traditions into a simplistic perennialism or universalism. This is one of the few books that I have read that actually makes sense of what a 'postmodern' perspective is and how it might function. This is no mean accomplishment." -- Jeffrey J. Kripal, author of *Kali's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Ramakrishna*

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