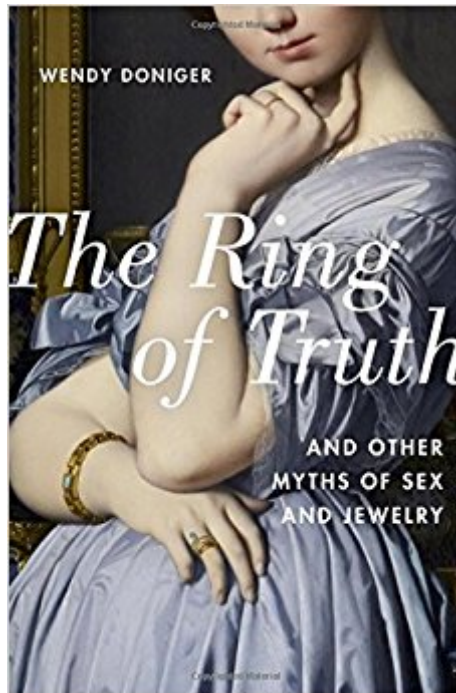




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The Ring Of Truth: And Other Myths Of Sex And Jewelry



Synopsis

Why are sex and jewelry, particularly rings, so often connected? Why do rings continually appear in stories about marriage and adultery, love and betrayal, loss and recovery, identity and masquerade? What is the mythology that makes finger rings symbols of true (or, as the case may be, untrue) love? The cross-cultural distribution of the mythology of sexual rings is impressive--from ancient India and Greece through the Arab world to Shakespeare, Marie Antoinette, Wagner, nineteenth-century novels, Hollywood, and the De Beers advertising campaign that gave us the expression, "Diamonds Are Forever." Each chapter of *The Ring of Truth*, like a charm on a charm bracelet, considers a different constellation of stories: stories about rings lost and found in fish; forgetful husbands and clever wives; treacherous royal necklaces; fake jewelry and real women; modern women's revolt against the hegemony of jewelry; and the clash between common sense and conventional narratives about rings. Herein lie signet rings, betrothal rings, and magic rings of invisibility or memory. The stories are linked by a common set of meanings, such as love symbolized by the circular and unbroken shape of the ring: infinite, constant, eternal--a meaning that the stories often prove tragically false. While most of the rings in the stories originally belonged to men, or were given to women by men, Wendy Doniger shows that it is the women who are important in these stories, as they are the ones who put the jewelry to work in the plots.

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Customer Reviews

"Doniger's exploration of the ring's symbolism as a manacle that binds a woman to a man is

particularly insightful, as is her witty deconstruction of the modern myth of the diamond engagement ring that proves to have much more to do with savvy marketing than any enduring romantic tradition."--Library Journal"Reading Wendy Doniger's book is not unlike reading Don Quixote, with all its familiar adventures peppered with memorable detours of love, adultery, and the foibles of jealous husbands and clever wives. She leaps easily from Sanskrit fables to Roman times, from medieval lore to the eighteenth-century French Court and modern Doris Day movies, landing wherever she wishes with her characteristic supreme knowledge of 'anytime and anywhere' and her contagious preoccupation with Sex."--Francis Ford Coppola"Only a great scholar like Wendy Doniger could bring together Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and Siegfried, Shakuntala and Marie Antoinette, Solomon and Shakespeare and so many others with such ease and lucidity in an endlessly mesmerizing ring."--Robert Calasso, author of *Ardor*"Why did I read this book, so passionately glued to it, hardly taking a break? The tales and the connections, the inner working of the layers of each tale kept working on my mind and my body. Wonder and amazement were the determining qualities of the book. I never stopped wondering what the next sentence would say, and the next tale would tell."--Velcheru Narayana Rao, Visweswara Rao and Sita Koppaka Chair in Telugu Culture, Literature, and History, Emory University

Wendy Doniger is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago and the author of over 40 books, including *On Hinduism* and *Redeeming the Kamasutra*.

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