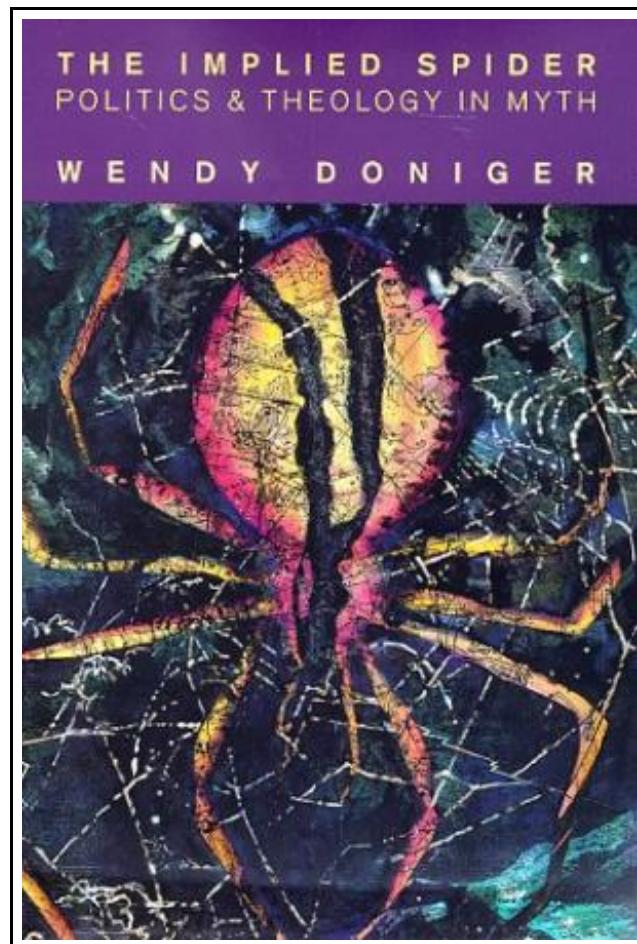


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Columbia University Press, United States, 1998. Hardback. Book Condition: New. New.. 235 x 158 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. At this time of heightened political sensitivities, it may seem impossible to make serious comparisons among different cultures. And at a time when human difference is so relentlessly celebrated, it may even seem impossible to talk about the traditions and experiences that join us across race, religion, and nation. Wendy Doniger offers a powerful antidote to the paralysis of postcolonial intellectual life. In this spirited, enlightening book, she shows just how to make sense of, and learn from, the extraordinary diversity of cultures past and present. Tapping a wealth of traditions, from the Hebrew Bible to the Bhagavad Gita, Doniger crafts a new lens for examining other cultures, and finding in the world's myths--its sacred stories--a way to talk about experiences shared across time and space. Of all things made with words, Doniger writes, myths span the widest of human concerns, human paradoxes. Myths, she shows, bridge the cosmic and the familiar, the personal and the abstract, the theological and the political. They encourage us to draw various, even opposed, political meanings from a single text as it travels through different historical contexts. And she demonstrates how studying myths from cultures other than our own can be exhilarating and illuminating. Myth, Doniger shows, provides a near-perfect entree to another culture. Even if scholars such as Freud, Jung, and Joseph Campbell typically overstated the universality of major myths and suppressed the distinctive natures of other cultures, postcolonial critics are wrong to argue that nothing good can come from a systematic comparative study of human cultures. Doniger offers an engaged, expansive critical tool kit for doing just that. She suggests critical and responsible ways in which to compare stories--or texts...

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