

Review of Chapter: # 25 of 'The Hindus, an Alternative History' by Wendy Doniger

Chapter Title: "Inconclusion, or, the Abuse of History"

The Lies Our 'History Teacher' Told Us:

The chapter is titled very aptly indeed. Throughout the book, Wendy Doniger has herself (sexually) abused the history of Hindus, and has depicted them as misogynist, oppressive and over-sexed perverts. And then she ends the book with a very amateurish 3 page chapter that has the rigor of an undergraduate student's mid-term paper.

She starts with two statements – one by Golwalkar (an RSS leader and luminary) and the other by Mahatma Gandhi. The intent is to insinuate that anyone who critiques the sexualized and distorted version of the history of Hindus belongs to the camp of the hated Hindu Nationalists and anyone who appreciates her version of history belongs to the camp of Mahatma Gandhi. And lest someone accuse her of bigotry and hatemongering, she tries to hide behind the egg that supposedly missed her, and plays victim.

'Egged' on by her perverse view of Hinduism, even at the end of her book, she does not stop attacking the people who might not agree with her. She creates a false equation of Hindu Nationalists with Islamists – a notion fashionable with some of her other colleagues like Martha Nussbaum, who even blame the Hindus for the slaughter of 165 Indians by Pakistani Jihadis on 26th November 2008!

Some distortions are pointed out below:

Some Errors in Chapter 25:

Some examples of errors in this chapter are listed below with comments –

#	Page #	Para # on the page	Erroneous statement in the book	Comments
1	688	2	"Agni, the name of the Vedic god of fire, is also the name of one of India's most powerful nuclear missiles. Pakistan named its missile	It is Doniger who has joined hands with Pakistani Islamists (or to put it in a Donigeresque way, 'she is in bed with Islamists') to abuse history here. The Indian missiles were named not after Vedic Deities, but after the elements

			<p>Ghorid, after Muhammad of Ghor. Why should the two warring South Asian nations reach back into Vedic and eleventh century history to name their nuclear warheads? What is the relevance of history to religious intolerance?"</p>	<p>– Agni (Fire), Akash (Ether), Prithvi (Earth) keeping in mind their special features.¹</p> <p>Right after India developed the Prithvi missiles, Pakistan responded by launching the Ghauri (not 'Ghorid' as Doniger mis-names them) and Ghaznavi missiles. The perpetually brain fevered Islamists of Pakistan imagined that India had named its missiles after the King Prithvi Raj Chauhan who fought and lost to Mohammad Ghauri – the Afghan invader. Therefore, to 'tease' India, they named their missiles after these fanatically Muslim Afghan rulers who had ravaged and raped the Hindu ancestors of modern Muslim Pakistanis, but are considered as heroes today in converted Pakistan!</p> <p>In short, the joke is really on these Islamists of Pakistan, and their apologists like Wendy Doniger for imagining things that do not exist (viz. seeing the Hindu king's name in a missile's name). Or, Doniger is seeing both the rabbit and the man in ether.</p>
2	690	1	<p>"....we must curb our optimism by recalling the violence embedded in many forms of bhakti, and by noting that it was in the name of bhakti to Ram that the militant Hindu nationalists tore down the Babri Mosque."</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Almost as a knee-jerk reaction, Doniger must balance any praise of Hindus with a negative equalizer. Five times in her book, and in totally irrelevant contexts (e.g., while discussing the Vedic period) she says that Muslim bigots 'recycled' materials to create mosques out of demolished temples, and projects this act of bigotry as some sort of religious syncretism! And yet when Hindus demolish a mosque constructed over a revered Hindu shrine by an invader, she condemns the Hindus!</p> <p>In her world, we Hindus are damned if we do it, and damned if we do not.</p>
3	690	2	<p>Writing about the cover painting of her book, Doniger muses – "It is an example of the contribution of a foreign culture to India with the Mughals, and an example of the</p>	<p>The claim about the Orissan origins of the cover picture appears bogus. In a legal notice sent to Penguin Publishers India Ltd. by the 'Shiksha Bachao Andolan,' it is revealed –</p> <p>QUOTE</p>

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_missiles_by_country#India_.28Asia.29 and "How Missiles Get their Names" in *The Times of India* (dt 20 January 2008) at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2008-06-20/india/27765781_1_missile-akash-names

			<p>intersection of court and village, as the image traveled from the Mughal court in Delhi to a village in the state of Orissa, the source of this contemporary example.”</p> <p>Elsewhere in the book (page 692), she thanks Katherine Ulrich for procuring the picture for her book from the Orissan village.</p>	<p><i>“...my client has got the following information from Santiarts- a Computer Graphics Company which is cited as the source for the jacket painting of your book. That this painting is not from Puri, Orissa as is falsely claimed by your book.</i></p> <p><i>Raasa Leela</i> <i>Serigraphed in 13 Colours</i> <i>Size 29” x 21”</i> <i>Code: APP 251 (included in the attached catalog received from santiarts.com).</i></p> <p><i>That this is a painting horizontally flipped and used on the book jacket by YOU NOTICEE.</i></p> <p><i>That the Publishers through the author seem to have acquired the serigraph without verifying the source.</i></p> <p><i>That my client states that if the above said is true, then YOU NOTICEE and the Publisher i.e. Penguin Group have used a plagiarized version, selectively chosen, chosen with deliberate intent”</i></p> <p>In other words, Wendy waxes eloquent on an image that may have been plagiarized, and not even from a village in Orissa!</p>
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