



Oriana Fallaci: The Woman and the Myth

Santo L Arico

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Based on his own extensive personal interviews with the writer, Santo L. Aricò provides the definitive biography of Oriana Fallaci, a popular and flamboyant Italian journalist, war correspondent, and novelist who, in the public imagination, approaches mythical proportions and who, with every work she produces, creates and re-creates that myth.

Pushing the boundaries of biography, Aricò maps out Fallaci's personal psychological journey through life, paying particular attention to her ongoing and painstaking attempts to establish her own mythical status. He first examines her formation as a literary journalist, emphasizing the high quality of her writing throughout her career. From there, he concentrates on the way in which Fallaci's personal image began to emerge in her writings as well as the way in which, through her powerful narratives, she catapulted herself into the public eye as her own main character.

Aricò shows how Fallaci is born and reborn in each work and how with each work she takes on a slightly different shape. She became the heroine of her first novel, and even in her reportage on NASA and her interviews with astronauts, she became the star. She kept the spotlight on herself as a war correspondent in Vietnam. In her articles on Mexico's suppression of student protests during the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, she starred as a champion of liberty and bitter foe of totalitarianism. Her greatest starring roles, however, came in interviews with such political mammoths as Gandhi, Walesa, and Kissinger. In telling the story of how Fallaci built her own myth, Aricò explains the theory of mythmaking in general, showing how it motivated her writing. He explains how her childhood in Florence laid the foundation for her entire career and how at the start of that career, she often blurred the distinction between journalism and fiction. Drawn to acting—especially in her Hollywood stories—she managed to become the leading lady in all she wrote.

Aricò concludes that Fallaci's literary, journalistic writings intimately fuse with her theatrics, forming a combination that relentlessly propelled her embellished, edited image before the public eye.

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