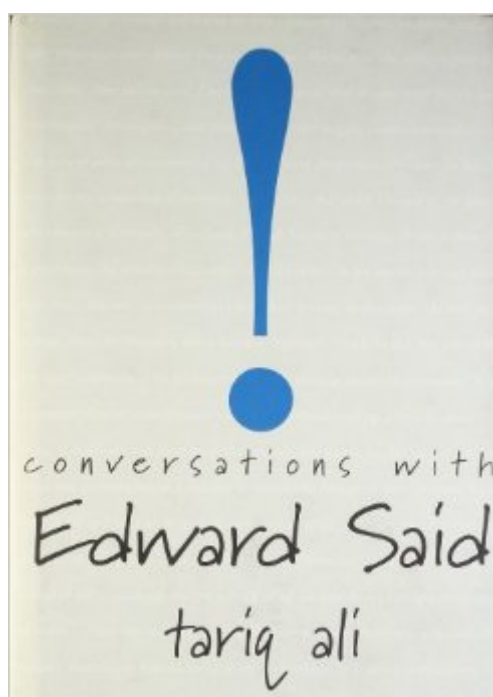


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Conversations With Edward Said



Synopsis

In these conversations with Tariq Ali, recorded in Edward Said's Riverside Drive apartment in New York in June 1994, about a decade before he finally lost his battle with cancer, Said brings his considerable intellect and deep personal engagement to bear on some of the most troubling and volatile issues of our time as he ranges back over his own dislocated existence, his initiation into politics, his involvement with the Palestine cause, his approach to the study of culture and his pervasive love of literature and music.Â Intimate, personal, thought-provoking and absorbing, these conversations capture Said as political activist, cultural historian, professor of literature and music aficionado -- and confirm his position as one of the most passionate and thoughtful intellects of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This short book includes the New Left Review article by Tariq Ali commemorating Said's life. The second part is the complete transcript of the conversation Ali had with Said, filmed for British Channel 4. The interview, though somewhat dated (1994) is an excellent glimpse into the thoughts of this extraordinary man. Ali's sensitivity and expertise make this interview all the more enjoyable. If you are familiar with Tariq Ali's work, you will already see some of the questions coming, as he refers to Arab history in a way few others do. Though a quick read, an incredible treat. Read also David Barsamian's interviews with Said, they reveal his subtle take on the Israel-Palestinian issues.

Edward Said is a prolific interviewee and this is only the most recently released of a number of available books that collect his interviews (I know of four, but there may be others). The book is very slim. Each of the 128 pages has very little text on it. In this sense, the book is not nearly as rich as other collections. Still, it could act as an accessible introduction to Edward Said, as it covers all of the usual topics (his past, literature and art, Palestine, Orientalism). The interview never gets too far into scholarly issues, so it shouldn't be confusing. Also, if you are particularly interested in Tariq Ali, you may want to pick up this book to see the interaction between these two. But other collections are much more rewarding, as they allow Said more space to go into detail. He is a fascinating thinker and a remarkably talented interviewee, able to encapsulate penetrating analysis in simple, conversational form. This collection can only be a primer, because his interviews can be so thought-provoking with more space. If you are interested in Said's views on politics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I'd recommend the interviews with David Barsamian ("The Pen and the Sword" and "Culture and Resistance"). But if you really want to understand him as an intellectual, the most significant collection I have read yet is "Power, Politics and Culture".

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