Muhammad Ali has attained mythical stature in American life. But in recent years Ali has been subjected to an image makeover by corporate America as it seeks to homogenize the electrifying nature of his persona. Thomas Hauser argues that there has been a deliberate distortion of what Ali believed, said, and stood for, and that making Ali more presentable for ad agencies by sanitizing his legacy is a disservice to history and to Ali himself.

My Personal Review:
This is, along with Hauser's biography of Ali, probably the best and "closest to the truth" book we have on the Greatest of All Time.

Hauser is an honest sports journalist who, although obviously enamored of his subject, never tries to hide the flaws of this internationally renowned and original personality. Indeed, more than cynical would-be writers like Mark Kram (whom Hauser addresses directly in this book), he has come to that place so many fans, writers and adoring celebrities never could: the actual Ali behind all that myth, bravado and unmatched boxing skill.

Through his exhaustively readable collection of quotations from not only Ali himself but sports figures like Reggie Jackson, Ernie Terrell, Angelo Dundee, Ron Lyle, Sylvester Stallone (and of course Joe Frazier), the confused but courageous core of the man then and now emerges.

What is revealed is a wildly exuberant, spiritual, sometimes volatile and sometimes serene man who himself could often not tell the difference between himself and the fictions created about him. His courageous refusal, at any cost, of being inducted into the draft to fight in Vietnam is juxtaposed with his readiness to do things like call Joe Louis an "Uncle Tom" and shoot off his mouth whenever he felt himself or his ego threatened.
For one of the toughest SOBs to ever live, Muhammad Ali had a very pronounced sensitive side, and his excessive showmanship and extreme bravery were often manifestations of a need to hide this side of himself. As a result, he made quite a few enemies. His uncritical allegiance to the Nation of Islam is also shown for what it was; a frenzied response of a black athlete to show white America that he was not afraid to adopt radical, dangerous positions and still kick butt in the ring.

The essentially religious side of Ali emerged in later life, and the obvious time out of Parkinsons ripped him away from the cameras to reflect on some of his more radical beliefs (apartheid). What people need to remember is that this is a guy who grew up in Louisville Kentucky when racism against blacks was its height. That explains quite a bit about "the true nature of his beliefs".

An endlessly entertaining, superb book on the man seen through the eyes of others and himself by an insider.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
The Lost Legacy of Muhammad Ali by Thomas Hauser - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!