



Climate of Fear: The Quest for Dignity in a Dehumanized World (Reith Lectures)

By Wole Soyinka

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In this new book developed from the prestigious Reith Lectures, Nobel Prize—winning author Wole Soyinka, a courageous advocate for human rights around the world, considers fear as the dominant theme in world politics.

Decades ago, the idea of collective fear had a tangible face: the atom bomb. Today our shared anxiety has become far more complex and insidious, arising from tyranny, terrorism, and the invisible power of the “quasi state.” As Wole Soyinka suggests, the climate of fear that has enveloped the world was sparked long before September 11, 2001.

Rather, it can be traced to 1989, when a passenger plane was brought down by terrorists over the Republic of Niger. From Niger to lower Manhattan to Madrid, this invisible threat has erased distinctions between citizens and soldiers; we’re all potential targets now.

In this seminal work, Soyinka explores the implications of this climate of fear: the conflict between power and freedom, the motives behind unthinkable acts of violence, and the meaning of human dignity. Fascinating and disturbing, *Climate of Fear* is a brilliant and defining work for our age.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

During the Cold War, most Americans feared the possibility of a nuclear attack. As Nobelist Soyinka observes in these five stirring lectures, delivered at the Royal Institution in London in March 2004, fear can no longer be so easily named in this time of tyrannical and terrorist quasi-states. For Soyinka, the new atmosphere became clear in 1989, when a bomb destroyed a UTA passenger plane over the Republic of Niger. That act of political sabotage, following close on the heels of a similar and more publicized incident over Lockerbie, Scotland, established the contours of our contemporary climate of fear. Motivated by political and religious rhetoric that binds and blinds, small and fanatical groups recklessly commit such acts in order to gain power over others. Victims of such terrorist acts feel vulnerable and out of control since they cannot predict when or from where the next such attack might come. According to Soyinka, these victims then lose all dignity and freedom in a world turned upside down. While Soyinka brilliantly names our contemporary condition, he does not offer any suggestions about ways that the situation may be improved or our fears overcome. Agent, Carlisle & Company.

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From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Wole Soyinka--playwright, novelist, poet and polemical essayist--was born in Nigeria in 1934. Educated there and at Leeds University, he worked in the British theatre before returning to West Africa in 1960. In 1986 he became the first African writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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