

The Second Plane by Martin Amis.
Jonathan Cape 2007.

The Second Plane comes trailing a great deal of controversy in its slipstream, but a rational and balanced reader would find it hard not to conclude that much of it may have been generated by animus towards the author rather than a genuine consideration of what he has written.

The Second Plane is a collection of Martin Amis' writing on themes inspired by the terror attacks on America of September 11th 2001. He writes honestly and frequently trenchantly about militant Islam and its impact, most notably in Terror and Boredom: The Dependent Mind, written for the Observer in 2006. The collection also contains his account of travelling with Tony Blair in 2007 and two short stories, one of which 'The Last Days of Muhammad Atta' written for the New Yorker in April 2006, is chilling, insightful and immensely powerful.

On reading The Second Plane one is forced to conclude that the charge thrown at Amis of Islamophobia is far from deserved, and that it is a sad sign of the hysterical times in which we live that an honest, serious and acerbic writer cannot express opinions on the dominant issue of our time without being attacked and undermined.

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