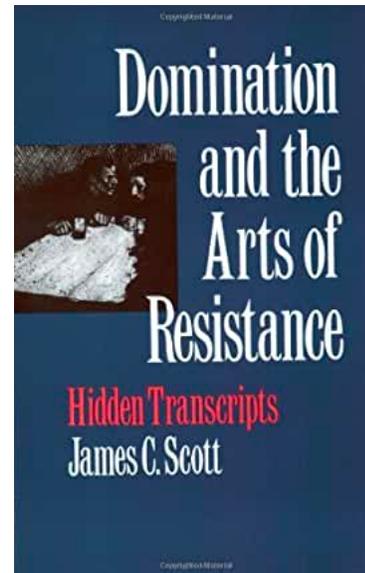


# Domination and the Arts of Resistance by James C Scott

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James C. Scott in his penetrating examination of domination and its historic precedents in Domination and the Arts of Resistance published in 1990 has captured my attention for these past days. He carefully examines the ways that the abuse of power has been more or less successfully dealt with down through the ages. Even though his work seems to reflect a past era, it appears to me timeless. It also highlights how the overthrow of oppression often ushers in the new oppressor, who under the guise of liberator captures the good will of the newly freed only to erect the new form of oppression. It reminds me of a well-meaning friend who heroically attempts to solve a friend's problem, only to discover that solving the problem was not really the issue. Staying the center of attention was really the issue of the "friend".



While diligently applying talent, time and treasure to solve the current problem, the person needing the attention was just as diligently creating new problems to be solved, sometime even at the expense of pain for themselves, because the real issue was their need for attention at any cost. Once that was seen, the well-meaning person/citizen withdraws from the futile attempts thereby freeing energy and resources to develop real problem-solving responses.

I feel that a close reading of this book might be a liberating experience today. In these times of cell phones, internet, texting and who knows what else will be available in the future, we, once freed from our illusions of domination might actually meet the real needs of our time. "Mother nature" will have the ultimate say. "She" isn't influenced by the old "they who have the gold make the rules" standard. No amount of gold will provide the necessary conditions for my great grandchildren to live humane lives if clean air and water are unavailable. So I now wear diaper pins to remind myself that every choice I make they will have to live (or not be able to live) with. I plan to have extras in my pocket to give to those who ask why the pin. At 82, it is my form of resistance so aptly outlined in this penetrating work of James C. Scott. Get your library to find it for you. It might provoke a lot of interesting reflections for you too.