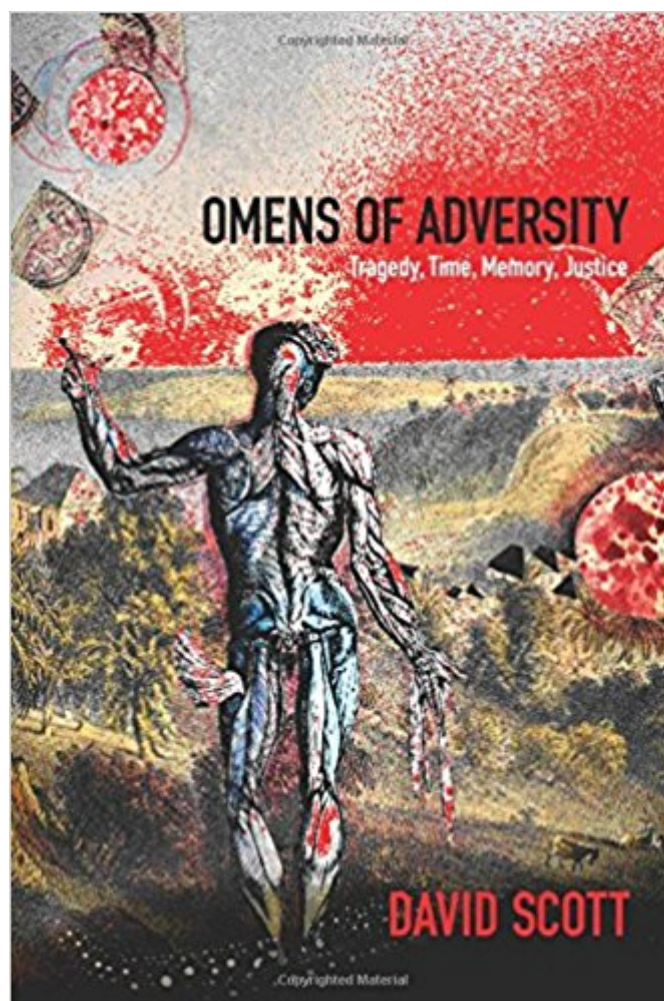


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Omens Of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice



Synopsis

Omens of Adversity is a profound critique of the experience of postcolonial, postsocialist temporality. The case study at its core is the demise of the Grenada Revolution (1979–1983), and the repercussions of its collapse. In the Anglophone Caribbean, the Grenada Revolution represented both the possibility of a break from colonial and neocolonial oppression, and hope for egalitarian change and social and political justice. The Revolution's collapse in 1983 was devastating to a revolutionary generation. In hindsight, its demise signaled the end of an era of revolutionary socialist possibility. *Omens of Adversity* is not a history of the Revolution or its fallout. Instead, by examining related texts and phenomena, David Scott engages with broader, enduring issues of political action and tragedy, generations and memory, liberalism and transitional justice, and the possibility of forgiveness. Ultimately, Scott argues that the palpable sense of the neoliberal present as time stalled, without hope for emancipatory futures, has had far-reaching effects on how we think about the nature of political action and justice.

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Customer Reviews

"*Omens of Adversity* is a deeply impressive and critical meditation on temporality, political action, memory, and history. It is a significant contribution to multiple fields, particularly Caribbean studies, and to ongoing theoretical debates about colonialism, postcolonial studies, and temporality."

(Laurent Dubois, author of *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*) "The strength of *Omens of Adversity* lies in its ability to productively and persuasively move across interpretive practices, weaving together a diverse array of sources.... The work has deep implications for thinking about

imaginations of the future" (Stephen McIssac TOPIA)"Scholars struggling with similar questions and concepts will find here food for thought." (Mark Thurner American Historical Review) "Omens of Adversity is a grim, sobering, and tragic book that should be required for all graduate and advanced undergraduate courses in postcolonial theory, Caribbean history, cultural anthropology, and others dealing with the "end of history" or political transition theory. Scholars with those interests should consider it a must read. It is not only a cautionary tale to constantly take stock of the past lest we live in a recurring catastrophic present but also one of the most intellectually gratifying and adventurous books of recent years." (Suzanne Simon American Ethnologist) "This conceptually very dense book is surely pioneering in the way that it redefines temporality and political action and gives a language and method to study past and/or failed revolutionary actions." (Charlotte Loris-Rodinoff Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute)"Omens of Adversity will be of interest to students and scholars of Caribbean and postcolonial studies, political theory, Marxism and Revolution, Trauma and Memory Studies." (Shalini Puri New West Indian Guide 2016-06-01)"Omens of Adversity is a thought-provoking and thoroughly inspiring book. Particularly illuminating is the notion of the contemporary neoliberal predicament as a stagnant, stranded present, devoid of promises of a better future." (Carl Rommel Social Anthropology 2016-08-09)"In many ways, Omens of Adversity is a continuation and deepening of a line of thought that social and cultural theorist David Scott has been developing for years. . . . Scott's larger project is marked by a progressively more strident analysis, a darkening view of what he sees as our increasingly strangulated set of political possibilities. As such, Omens demands serious engagement by social and political theorists." (Robert Nichols Political Theory 2017-06-01)

David Scott is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. He is the author of *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* and the editor of *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, both also published by Duke University Press.

The fall of the Grenadian Revolution in 1983 is a turning point in modern Caribbean history. Since the tragic October of that year, the Left and its vision of a non-neoliberal future have practically vanished from the scene. In covering this topic, however, the author engages in so much academic posturing that this book is truly one for the Ivory Tower. The interesting bits are drowned out by reams of useless postmodern theorizing. Those who need to learn the lessons of Grenada--young Caribbean women and men hoping to transform their countries-- will have no access to them here.

Explaining these events and their legacies in a clear and straight-forward manner, I believe, would have been much more work. If you're interested in the Grenadian tragedy and its memory, please see Bruce Paddington's excellent film, "Forward Ever: The Killing of a Revolution."

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