Leo Strauss Persecution And The Art Of Writing

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Persecution and the Art of Writing Leo Strauss, 1988-10-15 The essays collected in Persecution and the Art of Writing all deal with one problem—the relation between philosophy and politics. Here, Strauss sets forth the thesis that many philosophers, especially political philosophers, have reacted to the threat of persecution by disguising their most controversial and heterodox ideas.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *Persecution and the Art of Writing* Leo Strauss, 2013-05-10 The essays collected in Persecution and the Art of Writing all deal with one problem—the relation between philosophy and politics. Here, Strauss sets forth the thesis that many philosophers, especially political philosophers, have reacted to the threat of persecution by disguising their most controversial and heterodox ideas.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Persecution and the Art of Writing , 1973 leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Persecution and the Art of Writing Leo Strauss, 1976

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Persecution and Art of Writing Laura Strauss, 1952-06-01

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Perversion and the Art of Persecution Sean Noah Walsh, 2012 In this critical work on the political thought of Leo Strauss, Sean Noah Walsh addresses Leo Strauss's claims about esotericism in the philosophic texts of Plato. He challenges Strauss's understanding of esoteric writing as an attempt by Plato to secretly encode the highest truths exclusively between the lines in order to avoid persecution. Indeed, through the character of Socrates, the speaker with whom Plato is inextricably associated, Walsh asserts that Plato's exoteric writings were sufficiently incendiary and provocative to demonstrate that a fear of persecution was not his highest priority. The politics that follow from Strauss's thought depend on the interpretation of these Platonic philosophical bases and by analyzing how the problem of fear has been confronted in the works of Plato and Leo Strauss, Walsh offers a direct and thorough account of the politics that emerge from Strauss's esoteric reading of political philosophy. Applying Lacanian psychoanalysis, Walsh investigates the discourse of Straussian esotericism. and examines Plato's writing for examples of exoteric risk, subjecting both Plato and Strauss's writings to Lacan's psychoanalytic technique for interpreting the function of desire in discourse. Given the continuing influence of Strauss's ideas on contemporary politics, particularly within American foreign policy, Walsh's examination of this Straussian esotericism for these effects will prove an interesting read for political theorists, international relations scholars, and philosophers alike.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Philosophy Between the Lines Arthur M. Melzer, 2014-09-09 "Shines a floodlight on a topic that has been cloaked in obscurity . . . a landmark work in both intellectual history and political theory" (The Wall Street Journal). Philosophical esotericism—the practice of communicating one's unorthodox thoughts "between the lines"—was a common practice until the end of the eighteenth century. Despite its long and well-documented history, however, esotericism is often dismissed today as a rare occurrence. But by ignoring esotericism, we risk cutting ourselves off from a full understanding of Western philosophical thought. Walking readers through both an ancient (Plato) and a modern (Machiavelli) esoteric work, Arthur M. Melzer explains what esotericism is—and is not. It relies not on secret codes, but simply on a more intensive use of familiar rhetorical techniques like metaphor, irony, and insinuation. Melzer explores the various motives that led thinkers in different times and places to engage in this strange practice, while also exploring the motives that lead more recent thinkers not only to dislike and avoid this practice but to deny its very existence. In the book's final section, "A Beginner's Guide to Esoteric Reading," Melzer turns to how we might once again cultivate the long-forgotten art of reading esoteric works. The first comprehensive, book-length study of the history and theoretical basis of philosophical esotericism, Philosophy Between the Lines is "a treasure-house of insight and learning. It is that rare thing: an eye-opening book . . . By making the world before Enlightenment appear as strange as it truly was, [Melzer] makes our world stranger than we think it is" (George Kateb, Professor of Politics, Emeritus, at Princeton University). "Brilliant, pellucid, and meticulously researched." —City Journal

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss and the Crisis of Rationalism Corine Pelluchon, 2014-01-14 How can Leo Strauss's critique of modernity and his return to tradition, especially Maimonides, help us to save democracy from its inner dangers? In this book, Corine Pelluchon examines Strauss's provocative claim that the conception of man and reason in the thought of the Enlightenment is self-destructive and leads to a new tyranny. Writing in a direct and lucid style, Pelluchon avoids the polemics that have characterized recent debates concerning the links between Strauss and neoconservatives, particularly concerns over Strauss's relation to the extreme right in Germany. Instead she aims to demystify the origins of Strauss's thought and present his relationship to German and Jewish thought in the early twentieth century in a manner accessible not just to the small circles devoted to the study of Strauss, but to a larger public. Strauss's critique of modernity is, she argues, constructive; he neither condemns modernity as a whole nor does he desire a retreat back to the Ancients, where slaves existed and women were not considered citizens. The question is to know whether we can learn something from the Ancients and from Maimonides—and not merely about them.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies Leo Strauss, 1988-10-15 All political action has . . . in itself a directedness towards knowledge of the good: of the good life, or of the good society. For the good society is the complete political good. If this directedness becomes explicit, if men make it their explicit goal to acquire knowledge of the good life and of the good society, political philosophy emerges. . . . The theme of political philosophy is mankind's great objectives, freedom and government or empire—objectives which are capable of lifting all men beyond their poor selves. Political philosophy is that branch of philosophy which is closest to political life, to non-philosophic life, to human life.—From What Is Political Philosophy? What Is Political Philosophy?—a collection of ten essays and lectures and sixteen book reviews written between 1943 and 1957—contains some of Leo Strauss's most famous writings and some of his most explicit statements of the themes that made him famous. The title essay records Strauss's sole extended articulation of the meaning of political philosophy itself. Other essays discuss the relation of political philosophy to history, give an account of the political philosophy of the non-Christian Middle Ages and of classic European modernity, and present his theory of esoteric writing.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem Heinrich Meier, 2006-12-25 This book, by one of the most prominent interpreters of Leo Strauss's thought, was the first to address the problem that Leo Strauss himself said was the theme of his studies: the theologico-political problem or the confrontation with the theological and the political alternative to philosophy as a way of life. In his theologico-political treatise, which comprises four parts and an appendix, Heinrich Meier clarifies the distinction between political theology and political philosophy and reappraises the unifying center of Strauss's philosophical enterprise. The book is the culmination of Meier's work on the theologico-political problem. It will interest anyone who seeks to understand both the problem caused by revelation for philosophy and the challenge posed by political-religious radicalism. The appendix makes available for the first time two lectures by Strauss that are immediately relevant to the subject of this book and that will open the way for future research and debate on the legacy of Strauss.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *The German Stranger* William H. F. Altman, 2012-06-07 Leo Strauss's connection with Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt suggests a troubling

proximity to National Socialism but a serious critique of Strauss must begin with F. H. Jacobi. While writing his dissertation on this apparently Christian opponent of the Enlightenment, Strauss discovered the tactical principles that would characterize his lifework: writing between the lines, a faith-based critique of rationalism, the deliberate secularization of religious language for irreligious purposes, and an all or nothing antagonism to middling solutions. Especially the latter is distinctive of his Zionist writings in the 1920s where Strauss engaged in an ongoing polemic against Cultural Zionism, attacking it first from an orthodox, and then from an atheist's perspective. In his last Zionist article (1929), Strauss mentions the Machiavellian Zionism of a Nordau that would not fear to use the traditional hope for a Messiah as dynamite. By the time of his change of orientation, National Socialism was being led by a nihilistic Messiah while Strauss had already radicalized Schmitt's political theology and Heidegger's deconstruction of the ontological Tradition. Central to Strauss's advance beyond the smartest Nazis is his Second Cave in which he claimed modern thought is imprisoned: only by escaping Revelation can we recover natural ignorance. By using pseudo-Platonic imagery to illustrate what anti-Semites called Jewification, Strauss attempted to annihilate the common ground, celebrated by Hermann Cohen, between Judaism and Platonism. Unlike those who attacked Plato for devaluing nature at the expense of the transcendent Idea, the émigré Strauss effectively employed a new Plato who was no more a Platonist than Nietzsche or Heidegger had been. Central to Strauss's Platonic political philosophy is the mysterious protagonist of Plato's Laws whom Strauss accurately recognized as the kind of Socrates whose fear of death would have caused him to flee the hemlock. Any reader who recognizes the unbridgeable gap between the real Socrates and Plato's Athenian Stranger will understand why "the German Stranger" is the principal theoretician of an atheistic re-enactment of religion, of which genus National Socialism is an ultra-modern species.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>Spinoza's Critique of Religion</u> Leo Strauss, 1996-11-20 Leo Strauss articulates the conflict between reason and revelation as he explores Spinoza's scientific, comparative, and textual treatment of the Bible. Strauss compares Spinoza's Theologico-political Treatise and the Epistles, showing their relation to critical controversy on religion from Epicurus and Lucretius through Uriel da Costa and Isaac Peyrere to Thomas Hobbes. Strauss's autobiographical Preface, traces his dilemmas as a young liberal intellectual in Germany during the Weimar Republic, as a scholar in exile, and as a leader of American philosophical thought. [For] those interested in Strauss the political philosopher, and also those who doubt whether we have achieved the 'final solution' in respect to either the character of political science or the problem of the relation of religion to the state. —Journal of Politics A substantial contribution to the thinking of all those interested in the ageless problems of faith, revelation, and reason. —Kirkus Reviews Leo Strauss (1899-1973) was the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of political science at the University of Chicago. His contributions to political science include The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, The City and the Man, What is Political Philosophy?, and Liberalism Ancient and Modern.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>Socrates and Aristophanes</u> Leo Strauss, 1980 In one of his last books, Socrates and Aristophanes, Leo Strauss's examines the confrontation between Socrates and Aristophanes in Aristophanes' comedies. Looking at eleven plays, Strauss shows that this confrontation is essentially one between poetry and philosophy, and that poetry emerges as an autonomous wisdom capable of rivaling philosophy. Strauss gives us an impressive addition to his life's work—the recovery of the Great Tradition in political philosophy. The problem the book proposes centers formally upon Socrates. As is typical of Strauss, he raises profound issues with great courage. . . . [He addresses] a problem that has been inherent in Western life ever since [Socrates'] execution: the tension between reason and religion. . . . Thus, we come to Aristophanes, the great comic poet, and his attack on Socrates in the play The Clouds. . . [Strauss] translates it into the basic problem of the relation between poetry and philosophy, and resolves this by an analysis of the function of comedy in the life of the city. —Stanley Parry, National Review

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Reading Between the Lines - Leo Strauss

and the History of Early Modern Philosophy Winfried Schröder, 2015-09 Philosophical texts of the early modern era in which sanctions were imposed on those who entertained deviating views require a particular hermeneutical approach: According to Leo Strauss the interpreter's task is to uncover their esoteric messages. The contributions both address the methodological problems of Strauss's hermeneutics and discuss paradigmatic cases of candidates for a reading between the lines: Hobbes, Spinoza, and Bayle.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *Thoughts on Machiavelli* Leo Strauss, 2014-07-04 The esteemed philosopher's assessment of good, evil, and the value of Machiavelli. Leo Strauss argued that the most visible fact about Machiavelli's doctrine is also the most useful one: Machiavelli seems to be a teacher of wickedness. Strauss sought to incorporate this idea in his interpretation without permitting it to overwhelm or exhaust his exegesis of The Prince and Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy. "We are in sympathy," he writes, "with the simple opinion about Machiavelli [namely, the wickedness of his teaching], not only because it is wholesome, but above all because a failure to take that opinion seriously prevents one from doing justice to what is truly admirable in Machiavelli: the intrepidity of his thought, the grandeur of his vision, and the graceful subtlety of his speech." This critique of the founder of modern political philosophy by this prominent twentieth-century scholar is an essential text for students of both authors.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Liberalism Ancient and Modern Leo Strauss, 1995-12 Revered and reviled, Leo Strauss has left a rich legacy of work that continues to spark discussion and controversy. This volume of essays ranges over critical themes that define Strauss's thought: the tension between reason and revelation in the Western tradition, the philsophical roots of liberal democracy, and especially the conflicting yet complementary relationship between ancient and modern liberalism. For those seeking to become acquainted with this provocative thinker, one need look no further.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *Leo Strauss on Hegel* Leo Strauss, 2019-08-05 In the winter of 1965, Leo Strauss taught a seminar on Hegel at the University of Chicago. While Strauss neither considered himself a Hegelian nor wrote about Hegel at any length, his writings contain intriguing references to the philosopher, particularly in connection with his studies of Hobbes, in his debate in On Tyranny with Alexandre Kojève; and in his account of the "three waves" of modern political philosophy. Leo Strauss on Hegel reconstructs Strauss's seminar on Hegel, supplemented by passages from an earlier version of the seminar from which only fragments of a transcript remain. Strauss focused his seminar on the lectures collected in The Philosophy of History, which he considered more accessible than Hegel's written works. In his own lectures on Hegel, Strauss continues his project of demonstrating how modern philosophers related to ancient thought and explores the development and weaknesses of modern political theory. Strauss is especially concerned with the relationship in Hegel between empirical history and his philosophy of history, and he argues for the primacy of religion in Hegel's understanding of history and society. In addition to a relatively complete transcript, Leo Strauss on Hegel also includes annotations, which bring context and clarity to the text.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>Leo Strauss and the Politics of American</u> <u>Empire</u> Anne Norton, 2005-01-01 This provocative book examines the teachings of political theorist Leo Strauss and the ways in which they have been appropriated, or misappropriated, by senior policymakers.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *Method and Metaphysics in Maimonides*' *Guide for the Perplexed* Daniel Davies, 2011-09-15 This book investigates the substance and presentation of major metaphysical themes in Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed. Using rigorous philosophy it seeks to refute the view that the Guide hides an ''esoteric'' philosophical meaning beneath a traditional veneer, and offers a new explanation of his esotericism.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Natural Right and History Leo Strauss, 2013-12-27 In this classic work, Leo Strauss examines the problem of natural right and argues that there is a firm foundation in reality for the distinction between right and wrong in ethics and

politics. On the centenary of Strauss's birth, and the fiftieth anniversary of the Walgreen Lectures which spawned the work, Natural Right and History remains as controversial and essential as ever. Strauss . . . makes a significant contribution towards an understanding of the intellectual crisis in which we find ourselves . . . [and] brings to his task an admirable scholarship and a brilliant, incisive mind.—John H. Hallowell, American Political Science Review Leo Strauss (1899-1973) was the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in Political Science at the University of Chicago.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity Leo Strauss, 2012-02-01 This is the first book to bring together the major essays and lectures of Leo Strauss in the field of modern Jewish thought. It contains some of his most famous published writings, as well as significant writings which were previously unpublished. Spanning almost 30 years of continuously deepening reflection, the book presents the full range of Strauss's contributions as a modern Jewish thinker. These essays and lectures also offer Strauss's mature considerations of some of the great figures in modern Jewish thought, such as Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Theodor Herzl, and Sigmund Freud. They also encompass his incisive analyses and original explorations of modern Judaism (which he viewed as caught in the grip of the theological-political crisis): from German Jewry, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust to Zionism and the State of Israel; from the question of assimilation to the meaning and value of Jewish history. In addition Strauss's two sustained interpretations of the Hebrew Bible are also reprinted. These essays and lectures cumulatively point toward the postcritical reconstruction of Judaism which Strauss envisioned, suggesting it rebuild along Maimonidean lines. Thus, the book lends credence to the view that Strauss was able to uncover and probe the crisis at the heart of modern Jewish thought and history, perhaps with greater profundity than any other contemporary Jewish thinker.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy Michael P. Zuckert, Catherine H. Zuckert, 2014-06-30 This critical study of the influential political theorist dispels popular myths and reveals the inner logic of his varied and notoriously complex writings. Political theorist Leo Strauss was unexpectedly thrust into the media spotlight for his alleged influence on neoconservative politics. With The Truth about Leo Strauss, Michael and Catherine Zuckert challenged the many claims and speculations about this complex thinker. Now, with Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy, they offer a more comprehensive interpretation of Strauss's thought, using the many manifestations of the "problem of political philosophy" as their touchstone. Strauss, they argue, sought to restore political philosophy to its original Socratic form. This is demonstrated through his critique of positivism and historicism, two intellectual currents that undermined his Socratic project. The authors also explore Strauss's interpretation of both ancient and modern political philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Locke. Finally, they examine Strauss's thought in the context of the twentieth century, when his chief interlocutors were Schmitt, Husserl, Heidegger, and Nietzsche. Leo Strauss and the Problem of Political Philosophy is the most in-depth treatment of this often misunderstood thinker, examining his ideas across his long career. It reveals Strauss's overall intellectual project: to decode how ancient and modern theory attempted to solve the problem of political philosophy. And it shows why Strauss considered the ancient solution both philosophically and politically superior.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss on Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra Leo Strauss, 2021-12-24 Although Leo Strauss published little on Nietzsche, his lectures and correspondence demonstrate a deep critical engagement with Nietzsche's thought. One of the richest contributions is a seminar on Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra, taught in 1959 during Strauss's tenure at the University of Chicago. In the lectures, Strauss draws important parallels between Nietzsche's most important project and his own ongoing efforts to restore classical political philosophy. With Leo Strauss on Nietzsche's "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," eminent Strauss scholar Richard L. Velkley presents Strauss's lectures on Zarathustra with superb annotations that bring context and clarity to the critical role played by Nietzsche in shaping Strauss's thought. In addition to the broad relationship between Nietzsche and political philosophy, Strauss adeptly guides readers through Heidegger's confrontations with Nietzsche, laying out Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's "will to power" while also showing how Heidegger can be read as a foil for his own reading of Nietzsche. The lectures also shed light on the relationship between Heidegger and Strauss, as both philosophers saw Nietzsche as a central figure for understanding the crisis of philosophy and Western civilization. Strauss's reading of Nietzsche is one of the important—yet little appreciated—philosophical inquiries of the past century, both an original interpretation of Nietzsche's thought and a deep engagement with the core problems that modernity posed for political philosophy. It will be welcomed by anyone interested in the work of either philosopher.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>History of Political Philosophy</u> Joseph Cropsey, Leo Strauss, 1981

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss and His Catholic Readers Geoffrey M. Vaughan, 2018-05-11 This book looks at the work and influence of Leo Strauss in a variety of ways that will be of interest to readers of political philosophy. It will be of particular interest to Catholics and scholars of other religious traditions. Strauss had a great deal of interaction with his contemporary Catholic scholars, and many of his students or their students teach or have taught at Catholic colleges and universities in America. Leo Strauss and His Catholic Readers brings together work by scholars from two continents, some of whom knew Strauss, one of whom was his student at the University of Chicago. The first section of essays considers Catholic responses to Strauss's project of recovering Classical natural right as against modern individual rights. Some of the authors suggest that his approach can be a fruitful corrective to an uncritical reception of modern ideas. Nevertheless, most point out that the Catholic cannot accept all of Strauss's project. The second section deals with areas of overlap between Strauss and Catholics. Some of the chapters explore encounters with his contemporary scholars while others turn to more current concerns. The final section approaches the theological-political question itself, a question central to both Strauss's work and that of the Catholic intellectual tradition. This section of the book considers the relationship of Strauss's work to Christianity and Christian commitments at a broader level. Because Christianity does not have an explicit political doctrine, Christians have found themselves as rulers, subjects, and citizens in a variety of political regimes. Leo Strauss's return to Platonic political philosophy can provide a useful lens through which his Catholic readers can assess what it means for there to be a best regime.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism Leo Strauss, 1989-01-15 This concise and accessible introduction to Strauss's thought provides, for wider audience, a bridge to his more complex theoretical work. Editor Pangle has gathered five of Strauss's previously unpublished lectures and five hard-to-find published writings and has arranged them so as to demonstrate the systematic progression of the major themes that underlay Strauss's mature work. [These essays] display the incomparable insight and remarkable range of knowledge that set Strauss's works apart from any other twentieth-century philosopher's.—Charles R. Kesler, National Review

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Leo Strauss on the Borders of Judaism, Philosophy, and History Jeffrey A. Bernstein, 2015-05-05 In Leo Strauss on the Borders of Judaism, Philosophy, and History, Jeffrey A. Bernstein explores how the thought of Leo Strauss amounts to a model for thinking about the connection between philosophy, Jewish thought, and history. For Bernstein, Strauss shows that a close study of the history of philosophy—from the ancients to medievals to moderns—is necessary for one to appreciate the fundamental distinction between the forms of life Strauss terms Jerusalem and Athens, that is, order through revealed Law and free philosophical thought, respectively. Through an investigation of Strauss's published texts; examination of his intellectual biography and history; and making use of correspondence, archival materials, and seminar transcripts, Bernstein shows how Strauss's concern with the relation between Judaism and philosophy spanned his entire career. His findings will be of use to those interested in the thought of Strauss, the history of Jewish thought, and the relation between religion, philosophy, and politics.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: *Leo Strauss and Islamic Political Thought* Rasoul Namazi, 2022-07-07 In this book, Rasoul Namazi offers the first in-depth study of Leo Strauss' writings on Islamic political thought, a topic that interested Strauss over the course of his career. Namazi's volume focuses on several important studies by Strauss on Islamic thought. He critically analyzes Strauss's notes on Averroes' commentary on Plato's Republic and also proposes an interpretation of Strauss' theologico-political notes on the Arabian Nights. Namazi also interprets Strauss' essay on Alfarabi's enigmatic treatise, The Philosophy of Plato and provides a detailed commentary on his complex essay devoted to Alfarabi's summary of Plato's Laws. Based on previously unpublished material from Strauss' papers, Namazi's volume provides new insights into Strauss' reflections on religion, philosophy, and politics, and their relationship to wisdom, persecution, divine law, and unbelief in the works of key Muslim thinkers. His work presents Strauss as one of the most innovative historians and scholars of Islamic thought of all time.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: On Tyranny Leo Strauss, 2013-11-15 On Tyranny is Leo Strauss's classic reading of Xenophon's dialogue Hiero, or Tyrannicus, in which the tyrant Hiero and the poet Simonides discuss the advantages and disadvantages of exercising tyranny. Included are a translation of the dialogue from its original Greek, a critique of Strauss's commentary by the French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, and the complete correspondence between the two. This revised and expanded edition introduces important corrections throughout and expands Strauss's restatement of his position in light of Kojève's commentary to bring it into conformity with the text as it was originally published in France.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>Ice Trilogy</u> Vladimir Sorokin, 2011-04-20 A New York Review Books Original In 1908, deep in Siberia, it fell to earth. THEIR ICE. A young man on a scientific expedition found it. It spoke to his heart, and his heart named him Bro. Bro felt the Ice. Bro knew its purpose. To bring together the 23,000 blond, blue-eyed Brothers and Sisters of the Light who were scattered on earth. To wake their sleeping hearts. To return to the Light. To destroy this world. And secretly, throughout the twentieth century and up to our own day, the Children of the Light have pursued their beloved goal. Pulp fiction, science fiction, New Ageism, pornography, video-game mayhem, old-time Communist propaganda, and rampant commercial hype all collide, splinter, and splatter in Vladimir Sorokin's virtuosic Ice Trilogy, a crazed joyride through modern times with the promise of a truly spectacular crash at the end. And the reader, as eager for the redemptive fix of a good story as the Children are for the Primordial Light, has no choice except to go along, caught up in a brilliant illusion from which only illusion escapes intact.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: Reading Leo Strauss Steven B. Smith, 2007-03-01 Interest in Leo Strauss is greater now than at any time since his death, mostly because of the purported link between his thought and the political movement known as neoconservatism. Steven B. Smith, though, surprisingly depicts Strauss not as the high priest of neoconservatism but as a friend of liberal democracy-perhaps the best defender democracy has ever had. Moreover, in Reading Leo Strauss, Smith shows that Strauss's defense of liberal democracy was closely connected to his skepticism of both the extreme Left and extreme Right. Smith asserts that this philosophical skepticism defined Strauss's thought. It was as a skeptic, Smith argues, that Strauss considered the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between reason and revelation-a conflict Strauss dubbed the "theologico-political problem." Calling this problem "the theme of my investigations," Strauss asked the same fundamental question throughout his life: what is the relation of the political order to revelation in general and Judaism in particular? Smith organizes his book with this question, first addressing Strauss's views on religion and then examining his thought on philosophical and political issues. In his investigation of these philosophical and political issues, Smith assesses Strauss's attempt to direct the teaching of political science away from the examination of mass behavior and interest group politics and toward the study of the philosophical principles on which politics are

based. With his provocative, lucid essays, Smith goes a long way toward establishing a distinctive form of Straussian liberalism.

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: A Good Look at Evil Abigail L. Rosenthal, 2018-02-14 We meet with evil in the ordinary course of experience, as we try to live our life stories. It's not a myth. It's a mysterious but quite real phenomenon. How can we recognize it? How can we learn to resist it? Amazingly, philosophers have not been much help. Despite the claim of classical rationalists that evil is "ignorance," evil-doers can be extremely intelligent, showing an understanding of ourselves that surpasses our own self-understanding. Meanwhile, contemporary philosophers, in the English-speaking world and on the Continent, portray good and evil as social constructs, which leaves us puzzled and powerless when we have to face the real thing. Thinkers like Hannah Arendt have construed evil as blind conformity to institutional roles-hence "banal"- but evil-doers have shown exceptional creativity in bending and reshaping institutions to conform to their will. Theologians have assigned evil the role of adversary to the divine script, but professing religionists are fully capable of evil, while atheists have been known to mount effective resistance. More than broad-brush conceptual distinctions are needed. A Good Look at Evil maps the actual terrain-of lived ideas and situations-showing how to recognize evil for what it is: the perennial and present threat to a good life. Abigail Rosenthal proposes a new way of understanding one of the oldest mysteries--the nature of evil. Drawing on wide literary and philosophical resources, Rosenthal proposes that narrative self-understanding is the key to a good life. She traces the implications of this idea for understanding various types of evil, including the ultimate evil of Nazi genocide--which, she argues, cannot be understood in Arendtian terms as a kind of banality. Highly personal and original, Rosenthal's work offers new ways of grappling with some of the largest ethical questions. Adam Kirsch, author of The Global Novel: Writing the World in the 21st Century (2016) Rosenthal pinpoints the characteristic feature of evil--at least the leading type of evil--that distinguishes it from what is only morally wrong or very, very bad. It is based on her basic notion of an ideal 'life story' or plot. She extends both concepts from individual victims to races and populations as victims. [T]here is nothing banal or ordinary about evil, the intentional disrupting of the victim's 'ideal thread' or plot. ... In a fascinating new essay, Rosenthal revisits Hannah Arendt . . . applying her plot concept to Arendt herself in light of what is known about Arendt's long intellectual and personal relationship with Heidegger. Rosenthal argues that despite a splendid recovery from early adversity, Arendt went on to 'spoil' her own life story. And in a concluding piece, Rosenthal shows from her own experience how one can have reason to believe that a person's life story has been co-authored by God. William G. Lycan, author of Real Conditionals (2001) It is a most compelling and creative work. Rosenthal is analyzing the 'stories' that people tell us about themselves, in terms of both their lives and their work. She does so in an effort to understand genocidal evil-doers, both those who perpetrate and collaborate with it and those who cover up such crimes. Phyllis Chesler, author of An American Bride in Kabul: A Memoir (2013) As a person who wholeheartedly subscribes to the idea that we must be constantly attentive to, and increasingly watchful over, the 'plots' of our own unfolding stories, I found Abigail Rosenthal's A Good Look at Evil a welcome, revealing, and indispensable book about the slippery crevices of the moral life. I hope it is translated into many languages. Everyone should read it. Gail Godwin, author of Heart: A Personal Journey Through Its Myths and Meanings (2001)

leo strauss persecution and the art of writing: <u>The Truth about Leo Strauss</u> Catherine H. Zuckert, Michael P. Zuckert, 2008-04-15 Is Leo Strauss truly an intellectual forebear of neoconservatism and a powerful force in shaping Bush administration foreign policy? The Truth about Leo Strauss puts this question to rest, revealing for the first time how the popular media came to perpetuate such an oversimplified view of such a complex and wide-ranging philosopher. More important, it corrects our perception of Strauss, providing the best general introduction available to the political thought of this misunderstood figure. Catherine and Michael Zuckert—both former students of Strauss—guide readers here to a nuanced understanding of how Strauss's political thought fits into his broader philosophy. Challenging the ideas that Strauss was an inflexible conservative who followed in the footsteps of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Carl Schmitt, the Zuckerts contend that Strauss's signature idea was the need for a return to the ancients. This idea, they show, stemmed from Strauss's belief that modern thought, with its relativism and nihilism, undermines healthy politics and even the possibility of real philosophy. Identifying this view as one of Strauss's three core propositions—America is modern, modernity is bad, and America is good—they conclude that Strauss was a sober defender of liberal democracy, aware of both its strengths and its weaknesses. The Zuckerts finish, appropriately, by examining the varied work of Strauss's numerous students and followers, revealing the origins—rooted in the tensions within his own thought—oftheir split into opposing camps. Balanced and accessible, The Truth about Leo Strauss is a must-read for anyone who wants to more fully comprehend this enigmatic philosopher and his much-disputed legacy.

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