

## Leo Strauss: The Art of Writing and the Art of Reading

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The paper is a foreword for Russian edition of one of the most important political and philosophical texts by political philosopher Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the art of writing". The author explains the meaning of the text and describes Strauss' hermeneutics and rules of interpretation. We introduce Slavoj Žižek's original position on Strauss' view of exoterism and esoterism. Žižek writes in detail about Strauss' views in the appendix of his book *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle*. Author tries to answer the question whether Leo Strauss himself could write "between the lines" and whether he had reasons for it. He makes the conclusion that Leo Strauss not only could but did write esoterically. Author tries to fundamentally substantiate what Leo Strauss' reasons were and explains why exactly he could write esoterical language. Author believes that Strauss used this method already in earliest English-language book *On Tyranny*. In addition author states that "esoteric" Strauss was mentioned in the early career of the German-American immigrant philosopher Eric Voegelin, who understood the methodology of writing "between the lines" better than others. But what was written by Strauss "between the lines" will be a subject of another investigation.

*Keywords:* Strauss, Voegelin, art of writing, political philosophy, Žižek, compulsion, persecution, censorship

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## Persecution and the Art of Writing

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Leo Strauss' "Persecution and the art of writing" is one of the most important philosophical and political texts of the 20th century. The 1941 article in 1952 became a key part of the expanded eponymous book that would become the greatest source of specific methodology of studying the texts of the great philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Locke, etc. In this article Strauss suggests to read "great texts" exoterically and esoterically, that is, to read "between the lines" to better understand the authors' ideas. According to Strauss, the philosophers and "attentively book-reading intellectuals" who tried to tell the truth to society had reasons to fear persecution by the authorities or the social environment ranging from social stigma to the death penalty. Therefore, some philosophers, even in the "most liberal" historical periods have used a special type of "writing", the esoteric one. Authors do not use this method every time, but Strauss proves that there were reasons for great philosophers to write "between the lines", and tries to give us the means to see when it happened. Strauss considers Niccolo Machiavelli as one of the philosophers who could write between the lines. Strauss' article was not only regarded by historians as a central directive for working with texts, but also used as an accusation of Strauss himself for his "esoteric" writing. The article and the eponymous book have spawned controversy about the legacy of Leo Strauss.

*Keywords:* interpretation, art of writing, esoterism, compulsion, persecution, truth, exoterism, history of political philosophy

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## The Debate about the Foundations of the Political, or, Leo Strauss versus Carl Schmitt

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Schmitt and Strauss are often discussed in literature as if their conceptions of political had nothing in common. But as the author shows, Heinrich Meier careful study of the relation between Schmitt and Strauss tells us that the three editions of Schmitt's *Concept of Political* and Strauss' *Comments* (1932) may be seen as largely overlooked "hidden dialogue". In his *Comments* Strauss highly praised Schmitt for his affirmation of political and its constitutive role in the human existence in the face of its liberal negation. For Schmitt, the fundamental problem of liberalism was that it denounces the distinction between political, economy and morality and reduces the political to these other dimensions of human life. So understood, modern liberalism has a tendency to deny the sovereignty of the state and the existence of political as a higher instance of the human existence. Strauss' main disagreement with Schmitt in this "hidden dialogue" was that his critique of liberalism was not radical enough because Schmitt failed to recognise that not philosophers of Enlightenment but Hobbes was actually the "founder of liberalism" and the apologist of the "idea of civilization". According to Strauss, the first step in the radical critique of liberalism begins with the recognition of the naturalness of political, but such a step presupposes the return to the classical vision of politics. Therefore in his discussion and critique of Schmitt's *Concept of Political* Strauss defences the naturalness of the political and attempts to understand and defend the Socratic way of life as the realization of the philosophical love of truth.

*Keywords:* Schmitt, Strauss, political philosophy, political theology, political, critique of liberalism

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## Glossarium

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This article is another fragment of Carl Schmitt's diaries written in January 1948. Main topics of Schmitt's records are the following: (1) The complexity of his personal situation. He mentions the troubles that have plagued him since the second half of the 1930s. The pressure from the Nazi regime was replaced by imprisonment and accusations by the victorious Allies. (2) The significance of the early modern philosophy. In addition to Hobbes whom he mentions very often, Schmitt considers the moral and political writings of Francis Bacon who influenced Hobbes so much. (3) Schmitt considers German idealism paying attention to Hegel's remark that even the most evil in humans as superior to nature. He demonstrates the connection between this question and the later writings of Max Weber. An assumption is made about the future catastrophic effects of the collapse of this philosophy. (4) S. Butler's dystopia "Erewhon" is addressed, the questions of technology and technocracy are formulated.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt, technics, Francis Bacon, Rainer Maria Rilke, Walt Whitman, machines, brave new world

## “The Only Voice that Government Gives Ear to”

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The published letter of Y. Samarin to A. Herzen is dated May 9, 1858. The first years of reign of Alexander II appeared to be the period of social revival. The atmosphere of upcoming reforms significantly changed the old attitudes and led to the unexpected rapprochements, including Herzen's rapprochement with the Slavophiles. This rapprochement was stimulated not only by practical reasons, but also by the ideological proximity that reached its peak in 1857–1858. The closest to Herzen's views at this time were the position of I. Aksakov, who started to actively contact Herzen and send him his works. Despite different view of the past, Herzen and Slavophiles turned to be very close in their visions of the future. At the same time, Slavophiles significantly modified their views in 1856, as the possibilities of practical action started to open, and began to compromise for partial realization of their goals. Samarin responded to the publication of the chapter of Herzen's *My Past and Thoughts*, that contained the recollections of Moscow Slavophiles, by challenging some Herzen's evaluations and simultaneously proposing a compromised vision of “common past”, focused on the shared tasks. Though the dialogue, indicated in the letter, didn't take place (Herzen actually did not close the dialogue in his answer to Samarin given in the letter to Aksakov), Herzen took some remarks of the interlocutor into account and made some adjustments to the image of the Slavophiles in next edition of *My Past and Thoughts* (1861).

*Keywords:* Samarin, Herzen, Aksakov, narodnichestvo, nationalism, Slavophiles

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## Letter of Y.F. Samarin to A.I. Herzen (May 9, 1858)

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## Cultural Sociology and Watergate: “Politics Beyond Everyday”

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## Watergate as Democratic Ritual

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The paper promotes a cultural sociological analysis of one of the most significant and hard-to-explain events in American history when the initial act of breaking and entering into the Democratic Party headquarters at the Watergate Hotel first didn't attract any substantial attention of contemporaries but later initiated a widespread political crisis. What is even more important, the wide national consensus was built as a result: deep cultural structures of American democracy, which had been implicit for the decades, came out on the surface of the public debates; the very event became major icon of political evil, widely recognizable and emotionally charged. That consensus removed the dissociation of the political and social life and partly harmonized conflicting groups of the public battles of the 1960s. Finally, it inspired several generations of Americans with belief in the advantages of contemporary democratic institutions, and seriously challenged Marxism as the major political authority of young American intellectuals. The very ability of a single event to process such extensive consequences in political mobilizing of various groups of people is one of the most important challenges for the contemporary social sciences. J. Alexander considers the dynamics, mechanisms and consequences of the event and its public resonance, building an explanatory model based on his cultural sociological theory. This model allows to reconstruct in detail the development and maintenance of the social consensus at the different levels of cultural structures and to explain its connection to the main elements of social and political context, public rituals and performances.

*Keywords:* cultural sociology, performance, sacred, profane, ritual, desecration, Watergate, scandal

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## Corruption — A Return of the “Old World” in the Modern Age?

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In the paper a phenomenon of corruption is explored. Author provides arguments against the view that corruption is only typical of societies that did not transit to modernity or are still in process. According to this view, corruption is caused by cultural peculiarities or mentality. Author criticizes those sociological theories that explicitly or implicitly imply a model of an ideal society. In this model corruption is an evolutionary relic or pathological deviation. The author describes this way of theorizing as “theories of insufficiency”. In particular, he considers the advantages and disadvantages of a rational choice theory, a model of the principal-agent relations, a structural-functional perspective and modern system theory. He describes corruption as a form of authority at the intersection of various subsystems and argues that in order to study and understand classical and modern forms of corruption, one needs to look at its interconnections with structures of modern society and communications about corruption. Author comes to the conclusion that corruption, as a specific phenomenon typical of developing and transitional societies, should be challenged both from empirical and historical perspectives. This argument does not take into account institutional and cultural borders of liquidity and relations which emerge as a result of short term economic interests of transnational companies and corporations, and the aspiration for enrichment of local elites. Corruption is a highly modern phenomenon in the sense that it uses the difference of functional subsystems for maximizing personal or collective advantages within a field of action.

*Keywords:* corruption, rational choice theory, modern society, modernization, system theory

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## Statelessness as a Normal Pattern of Social Life: James Scott's Arguments

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## Four Domestications: Fire, Plants, Animals and... Us

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This paper is an abridged translation of two lectures given by James Scott at the Yale University within "The Tanner Lectures" project. In seeking to answer the question why throughout the entire course of human history all states seemed to pursue the only goal — to ensure by all possible means the sedentary life of their citizens — Scott suggests an "alternative" version of the historical process. While he rejects the dominant "civilizational narrative" about the backwardness, barbarity, savagery and other derogatory features of non-state communities, he concurrently develops quite another model and interpretation of the first agrarian states emergence referring to exactly the same set of historical evidence. Scott believes that we all are in constant danger of resisting the archaeologically based hypnosis of the greatness of empires. Until recently the idea of their unchallenged dominance has prevailed in scientific and non-fiction literature. As a result, a truncated version of human history dominates the science, which, on the one hand, focuses on the moments of statehood, "forgetting" about the long periods of complete absence of any signs of states; on the other hand, it ignores the fact that there always were large and well-populated areas outside small enclaves of imperial rule. Scott shows that in the course of history, humanity has lived most of its life up until recently without any states. This version of history does not match our current perception of the world as an almost completely and totally controlled administrative space.

*Keywords:* sedentarization, first states, stigmatization, state evasion, agroecological landscape, barbarism, civilization

## What is Ethnomethodology? — After 40 Years

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## What Is Ethnomethodology?

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The question of the ontological and methodological status of ethnomethodology is more than forty years long — it was formulated by Garfinkel in his first programmatic work *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) and since then has become an essential part of the discussion on the ethnomethodological research strategies. This question also introduces the second programmatic book by Garfinkel, *Ethnomethodology's Program*. In answering this question, we can detect a change in the conceptual apparatus of ethnomethodology and methodological bias toward the Durkheimian principle of studying the social as the “thing”. Garfinkel joins this principle with a unique phenomenological realism in the representation of social facts. The objective reality of social facts, the work on their creation, featuring, recognition, description, and transmitting, remains the main issue of ethnomethodology. However, the interpretation of social fact's objectivity (“thingness”) acquires different sounding and is organized by the different lines of argument — “there is the order in the Plenum”, “order is found in the properties of the phenomenal field of social facts”, and some others. In the earlier studies, the phenomenon of social order and social facts have been found in the variety of living, local, specific details and have been considered to be an achievement of the individuals (which Garfinkel calls “members”) who are organized and skilled in their everyday life. Now, these facts have become things of the social order, the phenomenon of ordinary society existing before and after the individuals and their achievements.

*Keywords:* ethnomethodology, social order, Garfinkel, immortal ordinary society, phenomenological realism, objectivity

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