

Wm. F. Buckley, The Jeweler's Eye, New York, 1968.

Harold- Thought you might want to share in the fun Buckley had with Schlesinger, in this very amusing piece. -HR.

Somehow Unsatisfactory • 251

to hell and back, but always depends upon himself to get out of the jam.

Mr. Mailer is properly denounced by philosophical taxonomists as a solipsist—a man for whom reality is confined to himself and his own experience. Still, it is a relief—sort of a halfway house to the proper blend of the individual and tradition—to read a novel in which the protagonist doesn't depend for his salvation on life rafts cast out into the sea of hope by Marx, Freud, or U Thant.

I confess that Mr. Mailer's tours through the night spots of hell are not my idea of recreation, even with pad and pencil in hand to jot down what one has Learned About Things. I do not enjoy spelunking in human depravity, nor do I wish my machine to tape-record the emunctory noises of psychic or physical human excesses. Even so, there is hope in Norman Mailer's turbulent motions.

The violation of Arthur Schlesinger

March 30, 1963

Just after Mr. Kennedy's inauguration, I met with Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian and dogmatic theologian for the Americans for Democratic Action, in public debate in Boston on the subject of the welfare state. It was on that occasion that Mr. Schlesinger, countering some point or other I had made, announced that the "best defense against Communism is the welfare state." Now everybody expects that professors will say foolish things from time to time, but Professor Schlesinger had just then taken leave of Harvard to accept a position as special assistant to the fledgling President of the United States, so that a great deal of publicity was given to that remarkable statement. And those who felt a decent interval would surely be allowed to elapse before an egghead academician would presume to press such homeopathic nonsense about how to deal with Communism on practical men of exalted station must have sobered on witnessing the professor's grand

entry into the lecture hall, twenty minutes late, escorted by screeching police cars; it obviously hadn't taken long for Mr. Schlesinger to acquire princely habits.

And along with them, it is my sad duty here to report, he seems to have lost—an occupational risk for humble folk who suddenly find themselves supping with the great—whatever sense of humor he once possessed.

Mr. Schlesinger had been accustomed to such fawning audiences as he regularly came upon at Harvard and elsewhere in the academic world, where they preach academic freedom and practice liberal indoctrination, and was visibly disconcerted on discovering from the audience's reaction that one-half of those present were adamantly opposed to his views and those of the New Frontiersmen. Under the circumstances, he thought to curry the opposition's favor by handing me, as their spokesman of the evening, a most redolent bouquet. Quoth Arthur: "Mr. Buckley has a facility for rhetoric which I envy, as well as a wit which I seek clumsily and vainly to emulate." The crowd (or my half of it) purred with pleasure. As an old debater, I knew exactly what he was up to, and determined, when my turn came to rebut, to say something equally oleaginous about Arthur. But I had only fifteen minutes, before getting up to speak, during which to compose a compliment, and I guess my imagination failed me—I forget.

And indeed I forgot about the whole incident until a couple of months ago when I received a letter from a lady in Boston who had been there that night. She cited Mr. Schlesinger's cream puff to illustrate his exemplary "fairness to the opposite political camp." It happened that at just that moment I was supposed to furnish my publishers with some quotations for the jacket of my new book, *Rumbles Left and Right*. I thought it would be mad fun to include the words of Arthur Schlesinger—you know, sort of the literary oxymoron of the year.

Well, sir, you'd have thought this was the biggest swindle since the Donation of Constantine. A few weeks ago, while minding my own business, I received a frantic telegram from my publisher announcing that Arthur Schlesinger, having seen the blurb in an advertisement for my book in *National Review*, demanded to know where and when he had said any

such thing about me. I wired back: "MY OFFICE HAS COPY OF ORIGINAL TAPE. TELL ARTHUR THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO USE UNCTION IN POLITICAL DEBATE BUT NOT TO TAKE IT SO HARD: NO ONE BELIEVES ANYTHING HE SAYS ANYWAY." Needless to say, I sent a copy of the telegram to Mr. Schlesinger, with the postscript: "Dear Arthur: I am at work on a new book which, however, will not be completed until the spring of 1964, giving you plenty of time to compose a new puff for it. Regards." And then, on the upper left-hand corner of the letter, properly addressed to Mr. Schlesinger at his august quarters (The White House, Washington, D.C.) I wrote, "Wm. 'Envy His Rhetoric' Buckley," with my return address.

That, apparently, did it. Before even Arthur could say "I believe in free speech," the firm of Messrs. Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst let it be known to my publisher and to *National Review* that they would demand an apology—or Schlesinger would sue. Now there is a very good case to be made for everyone's apologizing who has ever quoted Arthur Schlesinger; but isn't it droll to be asked to apologize to Schlesinger for quoting from Schlesinger? Messrs. G. W. & E. have solemnly announced that I have "invaded Mr. Schlesinger's privacy." A most interesting complaint, considering that Mr. Schlesinger's words had been uttered before an audience of 1,500 or so, before television and radio, and before members of the press and the wire services. For someone who wants what he says to be kept private, and as I say, all the world should cooperate in securing Mr. Schlesinger's privacy, that's a strange way to go about it, wouldn't you say?

Though, I dunno, lots of things about Schlesinger seem strange, and I intend to have a very interesting time with Messrs. Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst going into some of them. Ernst, by the way, is the great Morris Ernst, the free-speech specialist who so strongly believes in free speech that now his firm threatens an injunction to keep my *Rumbles* from being published and *National Review* from being distributed, unless I apologize to Schlesinger for exercising my right of free speech by quoting Schlesinger.

Ah, well, it is a mad world. But I shall certainly put in for next year's Freedom Award. On the ground that the more time

Schlesinger devotes to me, the less time he has left over to devote to public affairs.

SCHLESINGER PROTESTS USE OF QUOTE
IN PROMOTION OF BUCKLEY TITLE

EDITORS, THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY:

The publishing house of G. P. Putnam's Sons placed an advertisement in the February 12 issue of the *National Review* which read, with appropriate typographical flourishes, as follows: "Watch for a new book by W. F. Buckley, Jr. . . . Here's what the critics say." There followed quotations from a number of critics, including a quotation ascribed to me expressing uncontrollable admiration for Mr. Buckley's rhetoric and wit.

Having never seen—or indeed heard of—Mr. Buckley's book, I was naturally startled to find myself listed among its critics. And, having no great admiration for either Mr. Buckley's rhetoric or his wit, I was equally startled to find myself listed among his fans. On application to Putnam's, I learned that the quotation ascribed to me came from the transcript of a debate between Mr. Buckley and myself—a debate which took place in January 1961, some two years before the new book was announced. It is further evident from an examination of the transcript that the remark was entirely ironic in nature—that, in fact, it reeked with sarcasm—and therefore that Putnam's use of it in promoting Mr. Buckley's book was invalid not only because it had no application to the book but also because its meaning was opposite to that implied in the advertisement.

When I pointed these things out to Putnam's early in February, Mr. Peter Israel, the editor-in-chief, finally wrote me (on February 26), "I am going to see to it personally that no further use of the quotation is made in our publicity or advertising for Mr. Buckley's book." He declined, however, to do anything about the use of the quotation on the jacket on the ground that "since the jacket has already been printed there is literally nothing I can do about its use at this point." He did not explain how Putnam's happened to put the quotation on the jacket without authorization in the first place or why, after I communicated with Putnam's on February 8, nothing was

done to stop the use of the jacket. I thereupon directed my lawyers to take up with Putnam's the question of the jacket or, alternatively, the possibility of working out with Putnam's a statement which would make clear that the quotation attributed to me was used without authentication or authorization and did not express my view of Mr. Buckley or his book.

The discussion with Putnam's was recently interrupted by Mr. Buckley, who seized the occasion to put out a release stating (a) that I had announced my intention of suing him and (b) that I was trying to keep not only his book but his magazine from being published. Both claims were false.

My desire remains a simple one—that is, not to be cited as among the enthusiastic "critics" of a book which, to this day, I have never seen, nor to have my sardonic statements in a debate presented to the book-buyer as solemn and rhapsodic praise. I might add that, speaking as an author, I would even think there might be a matter of publisher's ethics involved here—though it must be stated that Putnam's, while it has agreed under pressure to stop the use of the quotation, has continued to act as if the unauthorized application of a questionable and ambiguous quotation to a book unread by the supposed critic is in accordance with the highest traditions of the publishing profession.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.
3123 O Street, N.W.
Washington 7, D.C.
April 13, 1963

April 19, 1963

The Editor
Publishers' Weekly
62 West 45th Street
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote you in the last issue to register a series of complaints centering upon the appearance on the dust jacket of my new book, *Rumbles Left and Right*, of a quotation from Mr. Schlesinger, to wit, "He has a facility for

rhetoric which I envy, as well as a wit which I seek clumsily and vainly to emulate."

(1) Says Mr. Schlesinger: The statement was made "some two years before the new book was announced" about a book "which to this day I have never seen." Say I: Estimates of an author's generic skills are not self-lapsing, like soufflés. The author must do something concrete to change the critic's mind about him. If I have done any such thing, Mr. Schlesinger has yet to remark it, and if I have done such a thing in my new book, Mr. Schlesinger is unaware of it, having said repeatedly that he has yet to read it.

(2) Says Mr. Schlesinger: When I made the statement about Mr. Buckley in the first instance, it "reeked with sarcasm." Say I: As a matter of fact, it did not—and the vast audience who heard it clearly interpreted it as sincerely intended, perhaps because it took for granted Mr. Schlesinger's general sincerity. If he intended it sarcastically, then it must be said that his powers of sarcasm are becoming as dull as his wit, which by now everyone surveying his recent behavior knows is approaching the dimensions of a depressed area, worthy of federal intervention. But I should not want my word for it to be automatically accepted and would risk a thousand copies of *Rumbles* against a thousand copies of *The Politics of Hope*, to be sent to college libraries, that an impartial jury reading the transcript and listening to the tape recording, would rule that Mr. Schlesinger's sentence was *not* rendered with obvious sarcasm.

And a couple of supplementary observations of my own:

(3) Mr. Schlesinger is perfectly free to change his mind. Indeed, I wish he would change his mind about things much much more often than he does. But he is not free, having changed it or having been caught up in an act of hypocrisy, to go rampaging about making a nuisance of himself, getting lawyers to harass us, and planting the suggestion that either I or Putnam's behaved unconventionally or unethically. Under the circumstances,

(4) Putnam's has decided to bring out the next printing of *Rumbles*, which has already gone to press, without replacing the original jacket copy, and I shall continue to circulate Mr. Schlesinger's quotation until I have from him a letter (a) ad-

mitting he said it without sarcasm, (b) admitting I had every right to use it, and (c) requesting me to do him the personal favor of removing it. So long as he tries to get me to drop it under the pressures of Messrs. Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst, I'll go to the electric chair first and instruct my heirs to put on my tombstone,

Wm. F. "Envy His Rhetoric" Buckley, Jr.