



In So Many Words: Arguments and Adventures

Robert Schmuhl

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Since 1975, Robert Schmuhl's writing and teaching have focused on American political culture and contemporary communication, particularly the news media. *In So Many Words* brings together nearly forty of Schmuhl's previously published essays, which have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, *American Journalism Review*, and *Notre Dame Magazine*, among others. From investigating contemporary political life, to assessing the current state of journalism, to ruminating on today's republic of letters, this volume demonstrates one writer's probing—and catholic—curiosity.

Arranged thematically, with the essays divided into three sections—Matters Political and Journalistic, Matters Literary, and Matters Personal—*In So Many Words* invites readers to ponder a wide range of issues, such as the debate over preemptive war, the compositional idiosyncrasies of wordsmiths, and the vagaries of media punditry. Variety, in both subjects considered and approaches pursued, is a hallmark of this collection. The essay form allows the author to move back and forth between longer and shorter expositions and serious or more playful perspectives.

The phrase “in so many words” carries two meanings: precision or exactitude in language and candor or plain speaking. This is a book that lives up to its title by presenting arguments and dramatizing adventures in no uncertain terms. Whether stimulating thought, generating controversy, or evoking laughter, the consistently high quality of Schmuhl's writing throughout *In So Many Words* offers both elucidation and enjoyment.

"If you—like most of us—find wisdom and wit in seriously short supply, you can get yourself an immediate refill by reading and relishing Robert Schmuhl's *In So Many Words*. In his inspired essay on U.S. foreign policy, 'Going Our Way,' Schmuhl proves to be a prophet—with both honor and wisdom; in 'Confessions of a Quote Slut,' his humor pulls back the curtain and reveals 'dark secrets' about those of us who make contemporary journalism. I am completely confident if you read 'Between Books' and 'Scout's Honor'—and the pieces in between—Schmuhl, just as he made me, will make you laugh and will make you think."
—**Mark Shields**, syndicated columnist, political commentator for *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* on PBS

"Bob Schmuhl is the guy I read when I want to understand how things political, cultural, and journalistic interact—and how the world works as a result. He's an analyst who is cool and collected, and so it's cool to know that he's collected, between cloth covers." —**David M. Shribman**, executive editor of *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, syndicated columnist, and Pulitzer prize winner

"I've known and respected the work of Bob Schmuhl my entire professional life. This collection of his work shines with enthusiasm for journalism, American culture, and the English language." —**Roy Peter Clark**, senior scholar, The Poynter Institute, and author of *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*

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