so fixed are American reflexes in these matters that opinion-makers can imagine the remedy lies in still more spectacle. It would serve the cause of uniform justice, *The New York Times* lately suggested, to televise all criminal trials.

The want of humility in "our talking America," as Emerson called it, has long been part of our eagerness for distinction. Citizens in a democracy are always looking for new grounds for approval. Practically, this means finding reasons connected with merit, or with social conformity, or both. No earlier observer could have guessed how suddenly this would change to a quest for exemption from the social order—a contractual exclusion which itself becomes a source of distinction shared with others. Pausing to note the way impeccable political time-servers affect to speak from the margins, Bly brings together his cultural and educational themes in an aphorism: "If your arguments have been rejected by four or more institutions, they do not need any evidence at all to be accepted." I recently heard a high-school teacher attending a talk on Abraham Lincoln inform the speaker that Lincoln was a slave-owner. The truth was in some documents that had never been translated.

The Reagan years were a turning point. You will not find quite these words in *The Sibling Society*, but Bly says as much in other words, and his remarks on the subject are just wrong enough to be irritating. Reagan was "a poor father by all accounts," while leaving the impression of a good and fatherly person, but this need not be hypocrisy, nor does it follow that he was "utterly unable to stand for any important 'traditional' values." Stand for them is exactly what he did, as a mascot stands for a team. He felt the force of those values as a thing of the past, which gave a reflected glory to Americans in the present, and required in observance neither acts nor habits of self-sacrifice. "He managed to represent limitless acquisition, disguised as family," says Bly, but fondness for money was surely a recessive note in the Reagan personality, and that was part of his appeal. Familial piety was more important, and if he summoned only the echoes of paternal dignity, echoes can often succeed by their shallowness: the depth is supplied by our memory of the original.

Reagan's was a piety without a burden, a loyalty that floated free of specific duties, and we have only begun to see how much his illusions will cost. Yet Bly succumbs to an ordinary failure of observation when he says that this president showed an "envy of the rich." Reagan never conveyed a particle of that sentiment, being always utterly trustful of the rich and successful, an old man who shone with the confidence that "a boy like me," as he called himself at a late press conference, would have a house built for him and the future taken care of by the benevolent order that attends to such things. He conveyed gratitude extremely well—something that does not go with envy.

We could wish for a gratitude more discriminating of its patrons and less willing to bankrupt the future at their pleasure. That kind of moral and personal strength has few public exemplars today, and a more inquisitive mind than Bly's might ask why this is so. Gianni Vattimo in *The Transparent Society* described philosophically many of the same phenomena as *The Sibling Society*, but he did his best to feel encouraged: the leveling of manners is democratic; the reluctance to blame or praise heroically, or to decide hard cases, may be a benign effect of tolerance; and with the dismantling of the Enlightenment ideas of reason, judgment and historical continuity citizens are arriving by default at the conclusion postmodern theory has reached by sophistication. The uneasy signs in our time of "disorientation" and "weak thinking"—words that Vattimo uses in a favorable sense—are therefore healthy and may foster less violence than their enlightened precursors. Once we have given up the idea of human nature, and realized that we are infinitely malleable, why not suppose our adjustment time will grow shorter and shorter?

A surprising number of intellectuals are comforted by some such view of contemporary life. Faith in progress was always strong in America, and it has never flourished more wildly than now, but progress for us means almost exclusively technological improvement: traveling faster, talking faster, making money faster. Capitalism lives on this faith as credulously as Marxism. If a piece of improvement can be executed all across the society, we ought to do it in a clean sweep, for the good that we lose is calculable, the good that we gain incalculable. But all the new tools a people master cannot assure their generous use. Technology travels a different road from political stability, moral well-being or aesthetic achievement, and it is for us to say whether a decent society is compatible with what the master siblings want to call progress. Anyway, the choice of manners is separate from the choice of materials. Bly's intuitions about the decomposition of authority may be confirmed or qualified by empirical observers, but in questions like this it is not only empirical answers that one wants. His call to "face the children," half formed as it is and half-unhinged, is also an earnest warning to count the casualties, the ones who will never grow up.

DAVID BROMWICH teaches English at Yale and is the author of *Politics by Other Means: Higher Education & Group Thinking* (Yale University Press).

The End of the Affair

BY ANNE HOLLANDER

The Love Affair as a Work of Art by Dan Hofstadter

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 314 pp., $24)

Dan Hofstadter's title is somewhat misleading. The work of art that he treats is entirely literary and entirely French and was only created somewhere between 1780 and 1920. He means to show how the conduct of a love affair in that time and place could resemble the creation of a work of literature, could generate works of literature, could be based on other love affairs found in works of literature, could always best flourish inside the nourishing matrix of literary language, certainly among literary people. Love itself is very much beside his point.

Literary language, the agent of passion during Hofstadter's period, was put to intensive use in personal letters and private journals, many of which relied on—or reacted against—the tone and the vocabulary and the emotional assumptions found in previously published examples by earlier French writers, as if to verify the authenticity of the writer's own passionate experience, which was also destined to reach the public eventually in literary form. It all tended to confirm the old saying that if nobody ever learned to read, few would ever have been in love. It also confirms the enduring idea, now sustained in our televidiotic world, that love craves an audience.

But the natural repositories of love's language in France were (and no doubt still are) autobiographical novels. Most of these were cruel tales based on a writer's own love affair, fantasized personal histories that might also reflect the language of other narratives and other writers' personal letters and journals besides the author's own. The mixture could be even further enriched, since not all the writers contributing to the amorous French literary river were the two actors in an affair at all. All their friends, rivals, relatives, accomplices, observers and, later, readers were attentive literary people eager to produce expressive commentary or even different versions and visions of other people's passion, all in the larger service of written language.

Hofstadter finds this state of affairs exclusively French, and most acutely the case during the period he has chosen. And the French intimacy between sexual feeling and literature does find apt illustration in a string of frivolous late eighteenth-century French paintings and engravings titled *La Lecture*, or *Reading*. These show a solitary girl reading. She holds a book in one hand and uses the other hand to caress herself under her skirt. Various lightweight French artists seem to have done one of these images; it was apparently a standard theme. Girls who read, we are instructed, are nicely ripened for seduction, no doubt especially by men who also read and can deploy persuasive amorous language from books.

Hofstadter appears to be telling us that in the conduct of a literary love affair—an undertaking aimed not at direct emotional resolution but at constant transmutation into language—all behavior was not founded, say, on the desire for future seduction or happiness or children, but on the desire to have the memory of it, for the sake of its own literary reconstruction. The worst agonies of jealousy and frustration might arise merely from an awareness of the beloved's memory, of her private mental narrative of a past love, and not from present acts, circumstances and feelings. Or his, of course. Alfred de Musset, in his beautiful poem "Souvenir," says: "*Un souvenir heureux est peut-etre sur terre\ plus vrai que le bonheur.*" On earth a happy memory is perhaps more real than happiness; and of course he implies that it's realer still in a perfect poem, though he doesn't come out and say so.

So the love-affair-as-work-of-art that Hofstadter invokes is never a piece of work created out of the living material at hand. He is a writer, not a historian, and this book is about writing, not about love. He is interested in the experience of love as memory translated into language, because it leads to the secret of any truthful writing about life. It turns out (surprise!) that memory, just like love, won't really work without fantasy and imagination. Art and truth have to keep merging in the creative management of memory, in order to produce the authentic recapture of the past, which is its recapture in writing, where it counts, and not in a prosaic court of law, for example, where fact and fantasy must try to rend themselves apart for society's sake.

Hofstadter ends his book with Proust, considering him at once a culminating figure in a long tradition and a prophet of the modern love stretching beyond him, toward us and our more cinematic, unlettered passions. The cast of characters in this quirky volume is idiosyncratic, not inclusive. There is no Balzac and Mme. Hanska, no Flaubert and Louise Colet, no Stendhal whatsoever, no Mérimée and no Maupassant: no big literary lovers from the middle of the nineteenth century. Instead, bridging a large temporal gap between ripe Romanticism in the first third of the century and emergent Modernity at its far end, there is a carefully interlocking chain of writer-lovers and their writer-friends and writer-enemies, a looping chain of language that binds the end of the century back to

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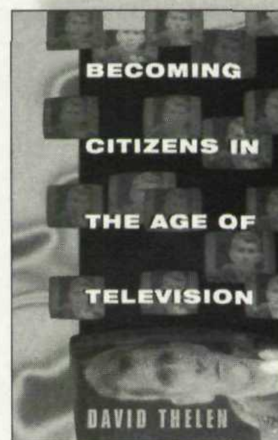

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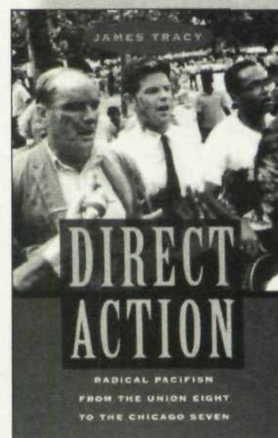

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before it began and on into our own.

Hofstadter starts with Benjamin Constant, born in 1767, and his different lady-loves, including Mme. De Staël (1766-1817) and Mme. Récamier(1777-1849). Then he moves on to the latter's lover, Chateaubriand (1768-1848), and then easily onward to the famous liaison between Alfred de Musset (1810-1857) and George Sand (1804-1876), who lived long enough so that Proust (1871-1922) was a 5-year-old when she died, already learning to remember, who in turn grew up with a deep admiration for Anatole France (1844-1924), whose great literary love affair was with Mme. Caillavet, the last of the true literary salonnières and one model for Mme. Verdurin, at whose house the young Proust finally met France, and whose daughter-in-law was one model for Gilberte.

All of these figures have some connection with the important critic Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869)—who inhabits the center of the nineteenth century, and all corners of this book—and with each other, sometimes through him. By the century's last years, Anatole France and Proust had long since absorbed the works of Madame de Staël, Chateaubriand and Constant, had seen how Sand and Musset turned their private stress into published books, and had deeply considered Sainte-Beuve's reflections on all of them, and on the relations between a writer's work and life.

Their fin-de-siècle lives and writings were marked by this emotional and literary inheritance, still the historic birthright of all French writers who devote themselves to the métier with full consciousness of its continuing influence over modern literary efforts, even over modern memory and feeling. The implication still is that if highly literate French people fall in love, they automatically take up residence in the Palace of Letters, where perfect behavior should include making a contribution before leaving, adding a brick or a finial of their own to the great national structure, in one of the recognized national styles.

Anatole France and Proust, like Sand and Chateaubriand, had read the French literature of earlier centuries, where the founding French strategies for dealing with love and language had been set up in the Renaissance, based on antique sources modern French writers also knew. Sainte-Beuve himself had written critical works aimed at uniting these old French traditions with new Romantic ones, precisely to help forge a patrimony of purely French literary art dealing with passions and sensibilities. It all formed a creative force obviously stronger than love itself, and one that would make of love an eternally loyal French subject.

Sainte-Beuve's personal life had strong links with great writers, though his own autobiographical novel, temptingly called *Volupté*, was an artistic failure. Balzac, who disliked the critic very much, promptly rewrote Sainte-Beuve's bad novel very brilliantly as *Le Lys dans la Vallée*, as if to prove that a writer's autobiography more properly belonged to a better writer; and anyway all's fair in art. It was Sainte-Beuve who introduced Sand to Musset, and sniffed all around their notorious affair, and wrote about it and about their writings about it. He even had an affair with the wife of Victor Hugo, more directly exposing himself to the contagion of genius, although that, too, was a failure.

But Sainte-Beuve had also successfully written at length about the literary attachments and achievements of the generation before his, including a famous obituary of Mme. Récamier, the great beauty of her day, the adored of Constant, the lover of Chateaubriand and the staunch friend of Madame de Staël. He wrote about Chateaubriand's famously fanciful memoirs; about Constant's fierce novel *Adolphe*, with its desperate illumination of his affair with Madame de Staël (which Balzac, incidentally, also stole and rewrote as *La muse du département*). But *Adolphe* records only one of the several stormy liaisons written up in Constant's journals and memoirs and recorded in letters, all of which Sainte-Beuve also wrote about.

Sainte-Beuve, indeed, is the hero-villain of this book, the stand-in for the author with his confessed inquisitive pleasure in intimacy with literary passion. Sainte-Beuve had proved that such an intimacy can be achieved through literary effort itself; and we can see in these very pages how the devoted voyeur may successfully write himself into the boudoirs and the bedrooms of other writers, present or past, if equipped with sufficient zeal and application, some humility and some wit.

Hofstadter begins in a self-deprecating way, calling his enterprise "a game for a day," ostentatiously declining the higher seriousness of scholarly inquiry or deep critical analysis. He's after the higher gossip, the kind that takes a lot of fantasy and acknowledges no responsibilities. He approaches his writers' secrets in a casual, familiar style, boldly presuming on their acquaintance for our benefit, just like Sainte-Beuve. He wants to avoid the note of reverence at all costs, so he speculates in modern colloquial language about his people's feelings, actions, looks and motives as if they were all his friends, or friends of his friends.

He takes one sort of fictional route, placing himself among centuries-ago characters as an immediate and invisible observer, and then commenting to us fellow moderns on what he finds them doing. It works very well as a device for bringing the past to life, or us to life inside it; but Hofstadter's determinedly informal style can be disconcerting, as when he refers to someone having "pitched woo" to someone at an earlier time, or to a certain man as a "huntin'-and-fishin' type." Where are we, and where is he, at such moments? Neither in nineteenth-century France nor in late twentieth-century America.

George Sand is made central in the book as a prophetic woman, the first of the modern era to render female sexual passion in good literary language and to claim equality with men in this arena. It is true enough that the great French literary tradition about love tended to be about the masculine analysis of masculine feeling in the face of feminine beauty, sexuality, malice, purity, goodness, madness, dependency, perversity, whatever you like. Even brilliant and intelligent Germaine de Staël, inflamed by ideas, had very little to say about her half of the drastic affair between her and Constant. (In it she seems to have acted instinctively, providing the charm, caprice, dependency and so forth, while he did all the analyzing, brooding and writing.) Her writings are all about literature, politics and history, while her two novels about women are about freedom, art and individuality, not about love, and certainly not about this affair.

The original idea about literary love was that the woman ignites something in the man, and he takes over from there. Mme. Récamier was just such a woman; she was never a writer, but she evoked gallons of ink and sweat from gifted men while calmly smiling and sitting in her salon. Sand's idea was that the woman must be just as self-conscious, analytic and articulate about the course of a passionate affair as the man. Her own success in this is apparent in her letters, journals and magnificent autobiographical writings, and she tried to embody it in the heroines of her two early novels, *Indiana* and the nearly unreadable *Lélia*. The first, Hofstadter points out, is another theft, this time from Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, with the sexes reversed.

But Sand remains famous as a great woman, not as a great writer. Her legendary trousers have stamped her as the apostle of female sexual freedom, not as the apostle of female literary expression, even though she was even more notori-

ous in her day for all her other costumes, and she wrote unceasingly for decades. Unfortunately, all her other novels—dozens of them—were written for income, not artistic fulfillment. They were best-sellers that have not stood the test of time. They are still gripping, though, in the way best-sellers are, if you're not looking for greatness.

Hofstadter, like so many others, is captivated by Sand, which makes him furious with her for having falsified some of her letters before publishing them. He's not at all mad at old Chateaubriand for falsifying his memoirs. He says of Sand, "Her life was like a painting that never dried, and any time she wanted, she could paint into it, wet-in-wet"; as if, because she insisted that her artistry went into her life, just like a woman, she doesn't qualify for full artistic license. After all, she was writing it all up just like a man, and the rules for that are somehow different.

The Musset-Sand correspondence remains a landmark in French literary-erotic history. Women thereafter had to try to measure up as sentient, self-aware lovers and writers, and not just act or write on impulse; men had to take more realistic account of their mistresses' imaginative lives and complicated feelings, and not go on rendering them as salvific angels, delicious animals or dangerous mysteries. Later writings about love reflect this shift away from high Romanticism, even starting with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*; and it can't by any stretch be wholly attributed to George Sand. But she was indeed prophetic.

Hofstadter's modern judgment about Sand brings up the notable change in French attitudes about love's role in the writer's life during the period he considers. First we see the Romantic notion evidently motivating Constant and then Sand, that a consuming passion is essential to the creative imagination, and so love's unmitigated agonies must be invited and then augmented by turbulent, face-to-face *scènes* and *explications*, and the whole must form the daily stuff of self-exciting journal entries and an unbroken flow of letters. Sainte-Beuve could feel justified, in that epoch, in insisting on the crucial importance of a writer's personal experience to the quality and character of his writings. By the end of the century we find the belief apparent in Anatole France, that undergoing the constant pain of a consuming passion is stultifying and dangerous to good imaginative health, and so its worst horrors must at length be placed at a certain distance, a literary distance that will allow them to be processed at a remove.

A group of writings that Proust composed in 1908-10 were published after his death under the title *Contre Sainte-Beuve*; they show him opposing the nosy critic by articulating the view that the writer is always a separate person from the one who is living the life. This view seems to see even further, that the writer is the one who is remembering the life even while it is going on. The crucial thing that love offers writers, Hofstadter suggests, is the revelation that when language tries to convey the truth of love on the spot, it congeals it into a kind of falsity.

This may not matter in ordinary love-as-politics, the kind for lovers who aren't writers, since between them the stakes are always changing, and no word is the last. But a truthful literary account must be created out of the imagination working on the stored memory, maybe with an assist from other people's writings; it can't be fixed in the daily overheated scribbles of an anguished and besotted pair. Proust's great work, in part treating of the more excruciating aspects of love, could be finally constructed only in immobile solitude in one room. There he could effectively blend the stored-up resources of memory and artistry, perhaps using some old letters and journals and some literature, maybe seeking some corroborative conversations. There he would willingly invite the pain only of the work. That alone would recreate the true emotional past that he sought.

Hofstadter finds a great lack in modern love, French or any other, in the decline of letter-writing. He blames much on the telephone, which interferes with the vital flow of real correspondence by adding important vocal exchanges that make surviving letters unintelligible, even to the parties themselves in later days. It's certainly very hard on the future snoop. The greatest boon the telephone offers to adulterers and all other lovers is the heady joy of future privacy, even though cellular phones are now proving this joy illusory; but something may yet be done about that. Meanwhile the ordinary phone does prevent literary lovers' ridiculous utterances from having a literary future.

Still, Hofstadter is right. The natural fetishism aroused by sexual passion makes letters immensely precious physical substitutes for the absent beloved, full of his words in his inimitable scratches, of fragrance and palpable contact with her hands and maybe lips, with hair and clothes, with the coffee, the heat, the whole atmosphere that surrounded its writing and sending—glorious traces of love's body, uncaptured on the transient phone, not so easily engendered on the computer screen. No wonder so many people have kept love-letters, at great risk to honor, maybe to life itself, certainly to future privacy.

Among writers, of course, the love-letter is still fundamentally a piece of writing. Any lover-writer might feel justified in keeping copies of letters sent, besides saving those received, just to let them be brooded over by future writers who would read with creative sympathy, not just prurient curiosity. A writer might feel right to keep them as a literary bequest, never mind the family and friends who would wince if they were published, or non-writing readers who might wince in sympathy. Many writers certainly burnt them, like Flaubert, and with relish; but when we read about a bunch of old love-letters destroyed by a great writer or a great writer's legatee, we usually don't cheer for the wisdom, we groan at the loss.

Hofstadter's book is all the more clever for working around the destruction of much amorous correspondence, as he tells us at the start, and building up his intrusions out of telegrams, other kinds of letters and other written material, especially journals and memoirs; and he happily reports that undestroyed love-letters are still turning up. I believe that he is wrong to think that letter-writing is over, despite the phone. Women are certainly still doing it, even by hand, and writers are doing it as always, no doubt with eventual publication in view. Published memoirs seem more numerous than ever, most of them putting only parts of the author's life under examination and dwelling on a period, a relation, a change, posing as letters to the world. Books like these are still teaching new writers how to cast intimate personal material into its most authentic mold, how to feel, to remember feeling, and then to write about feeling so that a reader can't help hearing its true inward echo in the language.

This book even seems to be one such memoir, perhaps a meta-memoir. It's Hofstadter's very personal, fanciful revel, disguised as detached historical meditation, in his invented intimacy with a sequence of French writers and their actual intimates, his own writer's reconstruction of their private struggles with love, memory, writing and each other, even across generations. His neat, somewhat patronizing essay on them is better executed than many of the patchy, blurry love affairs and their literary traces that he takes up and puts down. Hofstadter has desired to put them in order, to synthesize their haphazard material, to possess them as one brisk totality cast in the modern vernacular. His title might even more

accurately be *The Love Affair as This Work of Art.* He reveals himself to us, in showing how his people reveal themselves to him; and of course, like Sainte-Beuve, he is not so appealing as they are. He would be the first to admit this, and the final effect is to send us back to the works of his long-dead French friends, to conduct our own relations with them as we may, and maybe to write about them.

ANNE HOLLANDER is the author most recently of *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (Knopf).

Out of Chaos

BY TOMAS VENCLOVA

Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg by Joshua Rubenstein

(Basic Books, 482 pp., $35)

In the early 1960s, many intellectuals in the Soviet Union used to call Ilya Ehrenburg "our International Settlement." The nickname was invented by Alexander Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novy Mir,* the harassed liberal monthly. It referred to a peculiar arrangement in old semi-colonial China: the International Settlement was a part of Shanghai, which differed from the rest of the city, being inhabited mainly by prosperous British, Europeans and Americans, who were immune from Chinese law. Ehrenburg's position in Moscow was just as bizarre. He was not a member of the Party, but he was a very influential figure; he was Jewish and did not conceal it, but the usual restrictions applied to Jews seemed not to matter in his case; he served the system but was somewhat exempt from its iron rules—a distinction never merited even by Politburo men.

In a country in which the struggle against "cosmopolitanism" was a citizen's fundamental duty, Ehrenburg flaunted his European tastes and emulated Western standards in his appearance and his behavior, with more than a modicum of success. Visitors to his apartment in Moscow could see works by Picasso and Léger on the walls, as well as his famous collection of pipes, described in *Thirteen Pipes*, Ehrenburg's collection of stories. The inhabitant of this spectacular apartment spoke French as well as Russian, and he treated his guests to Gitanes acquired on a recent trip to Paris, where half of the city's celebrities were his friends, or to Stockholm, where he maintained a long and involved affair with a Swedish woman. All this took place in the period when Europe was, for all practical purposes, as unattainable for a Soviet citizen as Alice's Wonderland, and officially depicted as the source of all evil.

Ehrenburg was an intermediary between two incompatible worlds. In the opinion of some, he provided a bridgehead for Soviet ideology in the West. In the opinion of others, a bridgehead for the West in the Soviet Union. Both views were probably true. And virtually the same pertained to Ehrenburg's position between Russia's past and Russia's present. *Novy Mir* printed his autobiography, *People, Years, Life,* in which he related his meetings with diverse historical figures, from Tolstoy and Pasternak to Lenin and Beria. (Anna Akhmatova used to call the book *People and Beasts.*) Many young people, myself included, appreciated Ehrenburg's memoirs, since *People, Years, Life* introduced us to hundreds of writers and artists who were destroyed in the Stalinist purges or never mentioned for other compelling reasons.

Still, those of us who were prompted by *People, Years, Life* to seek more knowledge—and there were many such people—soon found that the book consisted mainly of half-truths. It was also silent on very large, even crucial chunks of history. Ehrenburg's ellipses were sometimes worse than lies. Perhaps it could not have been otherwise. But here again Ehrenburg played an ambiguous role: revealing a part of the unmentionable past for the younger generation, he nonetheless presented it in a Soviet light. Again he made use of his privileges: no one else would have been allowed to print such things in the official press. (*Samizdat* was not widespread at the time, though it was the wave of the future.) He was attacked, of course, by censors and critics. He fought the censorship, trying to persuade the Politburo that cutting his memoirs would harm his image in the West and therefore hamper his role as the Soviet "ambassador of peace." Still, he was his own best censor. He usually managed to find the middle ground, equally acceptable and equally unsatisfying to the authorities and to the reader.

Everybody knew that Ehrenburg's position was as precarious as it was unique, but nobody doubted that he would survive. He was born to survive and had been in worse predicaments in Lenin's and Stalin's times. In addition to his status as an "International Settlement," he was the very embodiment of the slippery and shadowy post-Stalin period known as "the thaw"—a term, incidentally, that he coined. In his very weak novel *The Thaw,* Ehrenburg was the first to write about the early political and cultural stirrings after Stalin's death. The title of that book, if not the book itself, enjoyed such tremendous popularity that several generations, by force of an optical illusion, were inclined to believe that "the thaw" was not just described by Ehrenburg, but caused by him.

Perhaps nothing revealed Ehrenburg's status—Joshua Rubenstein is right to put the word "tangled" into the very title of his biography of Ehrenburg—more clearly than the celebration of his seventieth birthday in 1961. The story of that anniversary forms a focal point of Rubenstein's book. It was an official affair: Brezhnev himself, not yet a Secretary General but the strictly ceremonial Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, presented him with his second Order of Lenin. At the same time Ehrenburg was publicly praised by leading liberal writers for his dedication to freedom of thought. He received congratulatory telegrams from Marshall Konstantin Rokossovsky, a martinettish figure who was anything but a dissident, and from Anna Akhmatova, the great and persecuted poet. (It is impossible to imagine another occasion for their signatures to appear side by side.)

As one of many young men of letters who used to visit Akhmatova, I remember that Ehrenburg was not exactly her favorite. At her most charitable, she would say: "Well, we see each other rarely. But there is no enmity between us, no enmity." She valued him but kept her distance. (So did Rokossovsky, for different reasons.) Attempting to preserve his loyalty to both camps, Ehrenburg was accepted, to a degree, by both—and, to a larger degree, alienated from both. Perhaps the most precise formula for Ehrenburg's fate was coined by Marina Tsvetaeva, another great and persecuted poet, as early as 1921: "We were on friendly

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