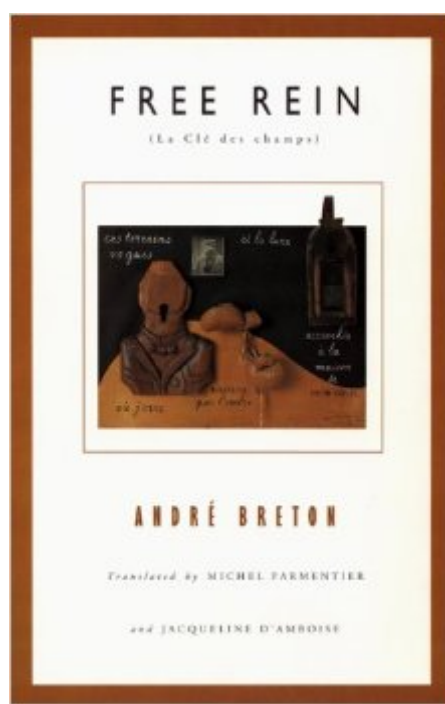


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Synopsis

Free Rein is a gathering of seminal essays by André Breton, the foremost figure among the French surrealists. Written between 1936 and 1952, they include addresses, manifestoes, prefaces, exhibition pamphlets, and theoretical, polemical, and lyrical essays. Together they display the full span of Breton's preoccupations, his abiding faith in the early principles of surrealism, and the changing orientations, in light of crucial events of those years, of the surrealist movement within which he remained the leading force. Having broken decisively with Marxism in the mid-1930s, Breton repeatedly addresses the horrors of the Stalinist regime (which denounced him during the Moscow trials of 1936). He argues for the autonomy of art and poetry and condemns the subservience to the revolutionary aims exemplified by socialist realism. Other articles reflect on aesthetic issues, cinema, music, and education and provide detailed meditations on the literary, artistic, and philosophical topics for which he is best known. Free Rein will prove indispensable for students of Breton, surrealism, and modern French and European culture.

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