
André Breton: Literary surrealism within the Field of Cultural Production

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Abstract

The literary texts of André Breton have been a great influence upon society and contemporary cultural thought, despite their tentative reception in Paris during the 1920s. The innovative, automatic writing style which Breton developed in order to disseminate his Surrealist theories and philosophies, coupled with a hardened aesthetic sensibility for design, make Breton's published works an important area of discourse within contemporary book history studies. Furthermore, his work encompasses many areas of exploration, including the visual arts and humanities, sociology, science, politics and economics. Despite the many flaws in Breton's concepts, Surrealism as a literary movement has matured into an important field within the confines of reader reception theories and hermeneutics. The sociological foundations, when analyzed through the philosophies of influential twentieth century thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu and Wolfgang Iser, help to explore the core factors which enabled Breton to conceive the Surrealist movement.

Key Words

André Breton, Surrealism, Audience, Reception Theory, Society, Text

Introduction

André Breton is something of an enigma. A complex and multi-faceted individual who, if the truth be told, could only have been a product of post World War One France at a time during the 1920s when both society and art were being drastically reshaped and redefined for a post war generation. Breton, the chief exponent of a revolutionary modern art movement which became to be known as Surrealism, was directly influenced by the horrors he witnessed during the trench warfare of the Great War. Great for whom, has never truly been established; a wry and somewhat ironic tone of discomfiting voice, aware of a conflict which devoured human life on a scale which is incomprehensible to the modern audience. Human misery which manifests itself through a social nadir, is best evaluated and expressed through the art which each generation produces, a reflection of the sociological, economic, aesthetic and political changes brought about by that particular catastrophic event. André Breton certainly adheres to this exponential thought.

Feeding from the avant-garde table of Dadaism, Breton's Surrealist ideologies were both a reflection and refraction of a society psychologically scarred and wounded by the war. What makes this trajectory even more impressive is that Breton conceived Surrealism primarily as a literary movement. Breton rekindled a passion for the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, a writer who "[...] became the voice of his political and philosophical, as well as aesthetic bearings [...]" (Polizzotti, 1995: 28). Interpreting the phenomenological and psychoanalytical philosophies of Sigmund Freud, the Pataphysics of Alfred Jarry and experimental writers such as the Comte de Lautreamont and Guillaume Apollinaire, Breton was to absorb the fears and uncertainties of post war France to develop and disseminate the most important

European art and literary movement of the twentieth century. His writings took the form of poetry, manifestos, short stories, even a novella – the alternative love story *Nadja*, which to this day still confuses and bewilders its audience.

Today, André Breton as an influential and creative writer is almost overlooked within the contemporary fields of hermeneutics and literary reception history. Art history has claimed Breton for itself, as an artistic Svengali, a prophetic philosopher who foresaw the development of the visual arts field throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty first. For the field of literary criticism, Breton is closer to St John the Baptist, a lone voice who prefigured the artistic coming of Surrealism. The commemorations acknowledging the commencement of the First World War also entwine with the burgeoning beginnings of Surrealism: Breton enrolled at the Sorbonne Medical School during 1914 to begin his study of neurology and psychiatry. One year later, he was conscripted into the French army to serve as a neurologist within a military hospital on the front line, at Nantes. It was this traumatic experience which awakened in Breton the core philosophy of Surrealism, an artistic form of nihilism where the self would become paramount to artistic expression.

The word *Surrealism* first appeared in the preface of a play called *The Breasts of Tiresias* (*Les Mamelles de Tirésias*) written in 1903 by the poet Guillaume Apollinaire (Apollinaire, 1918: 12). Apollinaire was one of the early exponents of literary non rational thought who would later influence André Breton. The Surrealist movement, by its very nature as a non conformist ideology, spins its tentative web into a number of varying humanities and disciplines: sociology, economics, aesthetics, philosophy, psychology, politics, literary and

art history. As a literary movement, the analysis of these disparate, yet wholly encompassing fields allows us to dissect and explore how Breton's writing was originally shaped and characterized and how his texts are viewed and appreciated today.

In the modern age, Surrealism is primarily seen as being a visual art movement, an encapsulation of Richard Wagner's beliefs, attributed to K. F. E. Trahndorff's philosophy of Gesamtkunstwerk – a total embodiment of art. Whilst it is now almost impossible to apply a post modernist dissection of Surrealism without referring to the visual elements, especially the painting, sculpture, film and photography which Breton later embraced to add further aesthetic dimensions to his manifestos and book publications, it is the aforementioned scientific disciplines which must be considered when applying a literary reception theory to Breton's texts. There are many contradictions and falsehoods which emerge from these texts, such as the impossible application of Surrealism into the Communist agenda and the naive interpretative perception of the movements' audience. The concept of 'audience' will form the crux of this research essay, an exploratory discourse regarding the relevance of Breton and the Surrealist movement within a modern context and understanding. I believe it is time to re-evaluate the contemporary perception of Surrealism, asking whether the movement is simply a relic of the early 20th century, or if the fundamental concepts and beliefs are still as relevant to a modern, technological age, dominated by a mass media culture.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his highly influential *The Rules of Art* argues that it is difficult to analyse art outside of its own, self-imposed habitus:

[...] the science of art cannot be given its own object of study unless there is a break not only with traditional art history, which succumbs without a fight to the ‘fetishism of the name of the master’, [...] but also with the social history of art, which only seemed to break with the presuppositions of the most traditional construction of the object (Bourdieu, 2014: 229).

This “fetishism” which Bourdieu quotes, is attributed to the German philosopher, writer and literary critic Walter Benjamin, relating to an article which he composed regarding the art collector Eduard Fuchs (Benjamin, 2002: 251). The belief that art can only survive once it has been distanced from its creator, when all of the sociological and economical extraneous attributions have been removed, must be treated with caution when relating to the literary works of André Breton. Benjamin believes that Breton was manipulating the habitus of post First World War society to develop a new form of expression:

[...] Breton had said right from the outset that he wished to break with a practice that places before the public the literary expressions of a specific form of existence while withholding that form of existence itself (Benjamin, 2009: 144).

Breton himself wanted to dispel this conception that Surrealism was born out of the habitus. Writing in his *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, he stated:

Surrealism is psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express, verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised reason, without any aesthetic or moral concern (Breton, 1977: 26).

This belief that Surrealist thought and expression can only develop within the individual and not from the existential parameters of one's own life and environment, may seem contradictory. It is the external influences upon our lives which help to formulate our thoughts. Wolfgang Iser agrees with Freud that ideas and creative endeavour can be brought to fruition through non conscious states of being, including dreams:

[...] what can never become present, and what eludes cognition and knowledge and is beyond experience, can enter consciousness only through feigned representation, for consciousness has no barrier [...] consequently, ideas can be brought forth in consciousness from an as yet unknown state of affairs, indicating that the presence of the latter does not depend on any preceding experience [...] the dream thoughts are staged as they push something through into consciousness that is not identical to themselves (Iser, 1997: article).

The subconscious is an important part of reception theory application which needs to be analyzed when exploring the literary texts of André Breton. Within the confines of this research essay and discourse, three key texts by Breton will provide a historical framework which will allow for further exploration of the literary receptive gamut. These texts are the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* published in 1924, *La Révolution Surréaliste* published between 1924 and 1929 and *Nadja* published in 1928.

I am indebted to the American avant-garde academic Mary Ann Caws, whose work exploring Breton's literary texts and his obsession with the alignment of Surrealism with Communism,

and the paradoxical naivety these two disparate ideologies encountered, has proved invaluable (Caws, 1998).

Manifeste du Surréalisme

André Breton published his *Manifeste du Surréalisme* in October 1924 through the Paris based publishing house Editions du Sagittaire. Working for Sagittaire was a radical young literary critic called Léon Pierre-Quint and it was he, along with Philippe Soupault, who was instrumental in bringing the manifesto to print. A former exponent of Dadaism, Soupault was the co-founder of the Surrealist movement alongside Breton. The manifesto was born out of an alternative journal which Breton and Soupault produced called *Littérature*. It was through this publication that Breton developed his automatism writing style. *Littérature* contained the word 'litter' and Breton believed that through his automatist writing, he was discarding all of France's literary past and consigning it to history. Breton wanted to give the reading public something new, a style which broke down the barriers of convention and rationality and distorted reality. Literary criticism was divided. Whilst the more liberally minded sections of the press celebrated Breton's creative use of linguistics and his rich vocabulary, ideas which could be moulded into a number of different interpretations, others were less enthused. The American poet Louise Bogan, a contemporary of Breton's, called his writings "childish and formulaic" (Bogan, 1946: 121-123). Ironically, both Bogan and Breton's work occupied the same positions within Bourdieu's literary field.

During the 1970s, John Willett, writing a post modernist critique in *The Guardian* newspaper, was also unconvinced by the literary merits of the art manifesto:

[...] manifesto - prose, being a form of incantation (and / or bullshit), is particularly hard to translate, above all into a language so resistant to pretentiousness as ours (Willett, 1978: article).

Walter Benjamin reflected:

[...] anyone who has accepted that the writings of this group are not literature but something else [...] is also going to be aware that at issue here are quite literally experiences, not theories, and certainly not imaginings. Furthermore, those experiences are by no means confined to the dream [...] (Benjamin, 2009: 145).

Breton's first Surrealist manifesto was born out of a belief that the Great War had murdered all of the art that went before. Now a new chapter was about to commence. Breton believed that people and Parisian society in particular, was rotten, that the heart had turned black and was bleeding. The manifesto was to be an injection of enlightenment into the human soul. Breton had been traumatized by the shell shocked soldiers whom he had cared for during his time at Nantes but the stream of consciousness musings that the wounded soldiers had spoken whilst in a state of delirium, had left a lasting influence upon him. This was the commencement of Breton's attempts at trying to understand mental illness and how mental health issues were dealt with by society. Added to Breton's fascination with Sigmund Freud and the theories regarding psychoanalysis, this potent mix of distilled ideas and concepts were starting to formulate into a unique literature which looked deep within the human self for inspiration. Politically, Breton was drastically influenced by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*. This publication would anchor Surrealism

firmly in the heart of Marxist political ideology and contributed to a number of contradictory factors which began to pull the Surrealist medulla into differing directions. Breton, as the principal protagonist of Surrealism, was dictating just how malleable this new form of literary writing could be. He was advocating a new cultural and political revolution, Marxism supported by avant-garde writing in expressing the self. The dissemination of Surrealist philosophy into French society was apathetic. Most working class Parisians either had no interest in Breton's work, or worse still, could not comprehend the text. Editions du Sagittaire, desperate to support their fledgling investment, produced an advertisement which claimed that "The whole younger literary generation is talking about the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* by André Breton." This youthful generation, which Pierre Bourdieu calls the "low degree of consecration" (Bourdieu, 2009: 49), were not enthused. The only group of people who seemed interested in the manifesto were Breton's friends and Surrealist colleagues, and the heteronomous bourgeois society which Breton despised. Despite some strong critical reviews by the French literary press, the publication failed to connect with the wider audience. Breton was moving through the creative phase which Bourdieu calls *the struggle for recognition* (Bourdieu, 2009: 106). The American Surrealist scholar J. H. Matthews reflected upon this initial disappointment:

[...] In neither manifest, nor elsewhere, was Breton ever to arrive at a solution to the problem of how to make the public aware of the difference between language used surrealistically and the language of literature (Matthews, 1975: 4).

Breton had failed to find an expansive audience beyond his own acolytes and Parisian intellectuals. There was also the issue regarding Breton's writing style and the extreme limitations of the reader. Even today, parts of the prose, especially in an English translation, are clumsy and difficult to comprehend. After four years of war and the harsh political and economic climate which followed in the immediate aftermath, many people wanted to find escapism in conventional French literature. Paradoxically, Breton's work was published less than two years after James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in Paris, by Sylvia Beach. It can be argued that Beach and Breton may have formed an intrinsic working relationship, had it not been for Breton's excessively prejudiced stance upon homosexuality. For an individual who wanted to explore the liberation of consciousness and his open attitude towards mental health issues, Breton was surprisingly homophobic, although his relationship with Sylvia Beach was most likely damaged after she spurned his romantic advances. Art history considers the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* to be the inception of the Surrealist visual movement. Modern literary audiences are more perceptive to Breton's first major work as a curiosity in experimentation from the early 1920s. However, the influence of this text upon luminary writers such as William Burroughs, Charles Bukowski and Hunter S. Thompson, all exponents of 1960s counterculture writing, can cite Breton as a major literary influence. Burroughs' cut-up writing technique takes direct influence from Breton's automatism style and a visual deference to Breton's next project, *La Révolution Surréaliste*.

La Révolution Surréaliste

Breton decided that in order to capture the imagination of the wider echelons of Parisian society, a more visual, as well as literary, publication was required. *La Révolution Surréaliste* saw Breton collaborating with photographers, visual artists, fellow writers and designers. Published sporadically between 1924 and 1929, *La Révolution Surréaliste* made use of a number of different editors: issue numbers one and two were edited by Pierre Naville and Benjamin Péret, both of whom later became active militants for Far Left political organizations. Antonin Artaud, the playwright and actor, edited issue number three whilst Breton himself edited the rest of the publications, from number four through to the final issue number twelve. Artaud suffered from neuralgia and clinical depression, and his psychological state influenced Breton. Mental illness would become a key exploratory component of Surrealism. *La Révolution Surréaliste* took the form of a journal and was directly influenced by the austere design of *La Nature*, the most popular scientific journal published in France during the 1920s (Heller, 2014: 146). Breton was aiming to take Surrealism into the mainstream, no longer a marginal, intellectual philosophy on the periphery of French society. The cost was four francs and the journal was available to foreign subscribers, at a cost of fifty five francs (Bury, 2007: 45). Breton wanted Surrealism to become an international phenomenon. *La Révolution Surréaliste* was once again published by Léon Pierre-Quint. The cover of the first issue was printed on a vivid orange substrate, although the graphics and typography were deemed too bland and constrained for a publication purporting subversion and an alternative ideology. “We must formulate a new declaration of the Rights of Man” was emblazoned across the front cover, Breton’s

political acknowledgement of Thomas Paine's 1791 revolutionary text supporting the French Revolution. Breton's politics were starting to engulf the Surrealists and from issue four, Breton seized control of *La Révolution Surréaliste* and became the sole editor.

This publication can be considered to be the beginning of Surrealism as a major arts movement. The content was deliberately disturbing and experimental, the dark automatist writings of Breton were now being interpreted visually by a litany of painters and photographers such as Pablo Picasso, Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst, André Masson, Joan Miró, Man Ray and Paul Klee. Some of the content was explicit and shocking. This violent rhetoric was vented towards a number of political institutions along with religion, bourgeois sentiments, high art, universities, asylums and prisons. There were few established institutions which did not come under attack from Breton who believed that he was leading his movement towards the revolutionary East "[...] not out of concern for the Russian workers' struggle for improved conditions, but initially out of disgust with the high value placed by the French bourgeois on Colonialism as the material possession of 'reality'" (Spector, 1997: 75). Even suicide was controversially celebrated as being a pure form of Surrealist expression. Breton believed that he to awaken society from somnambulating into another military nightmare, a prescient observance given the spectre of fascism was soon to propagate across Europe. The pressures of orchestrating the movement were beginning to tell on Breton, who was starting to behave both irrationally and irresponsibly. His demands and obsessive veracity to Surrealism was driving sympathisers away, especially now that the post war French economy was stabilizing and Capitalism was beginning to offer jobs and increased salaries. Georges Bataille, the writer and eroticist, could tolerate Breton's

dictatorial stance no longer and formed an alternative Surrealist magazine, *Documents*, which was even more avant-garde in content than Breton's publications, a "war machine against received ideas" (Ades, Baker, 2006: 11) was Bataille's stance, purporting to remove political ideology, especially Communism, from the core aesthetic principals of the Surrealist movement.

Public response to *La Révolution Surréaliste* was once again indifferent. The publication was supposed to coincide with the launch of the Bureau of Surrealist Research, a room which Breton rented and opened up to the public to confess their darkest desires, sins and thoughts. Visitor numbers were exceptionally low and the Bureau became more of a gathering place for Surrealist sympathizers and colleagues rather than the psychoanalytical experiment which it was deemed to be. Those who did come arrived with an air of bemused curiosity or mischief, believing that the Bureau was not something to be taken seriously. *La Révolution Surréaliste* was also not being taken seriously and the publication gained more attention from the censors and critics than it did from a wider audience. By 1929, the Surrealist movement was about to implode. Infuriated, Breton would expel any dissenting voice from his Surrealist clique, causing bitterness and loathing. By issue number twelve, without a publisher or distributor, Breton ceased publication.

Pierre Bourdieu argued that avant-garde movements can have no immediate audience, only a future one (Bourdieu, 2009: 107), primarily because vanguard movements such as Surrealism cater for the intellectual and advanced social capabilities of the bourgeois class. Despite his proletariat beliefs, Breton was the cultural epitome of the vanguard artist. He

spent almost his entire adult life at the financial mercy of wealthy patrons, such as Jacques Doucet, a celebrated dress designer whose clientele was solely high society women. Doucet paid Breton to personalize first edition copies of his texts and also employed him temporarily to edit a catalogue of rare books and letters which he had acquired through his art dealerships. During the 1930s, Breton was patronized by the wealthy Belgian perfume merchant and bibliophile René Gaffé. Gaffé paid Breton to annotate first edition copies of his Surrealist texts with notes and marginalia. During the late 1920s, Breton published work through Editions Gallimard, although this relationship was always tense. Breton often accused the publisher's founder Gaston Gallimard, of not doing enough to keep Breton's texts in print and that his royalties were too low. Gallimard was to prove Breton's most influential patron because it was this publishing house that financed perhaps the most influential Surrealist text in the movement's short history: *Nadja*.

Nadja

Nadja must be considered the apogee of Surrealist literary achievement. The novella is a love story that is devoid of love and lacking a singular narrative, the tale of a chance encounter and the connotations that are attached to memory, place and situation. It is neither fiction nor documentary and subverts the notion that the everyday and mundane cannot be spectacular and wonderful. *Nadja* was in fact Léona-Camille-Ghislaine Delcourt, a beautiful but troubled young woman whom Breton had met whilst peregrinating around the Porte Saint-Denise in Paris. A biographical analysis of Léona Delcourt tells us that she suffered from debilitating mental illness. Just like Antonin Artaud before her, Breton used

Delcourt as an experiment in exploring and examining cogitable, psychological disorders. Delcourt began to see people where they were none and heard voices when no one was speaking. Her disintegration into madness was captured by Breton in his text and this alone makes *Nadja* a shocking work. Breton was using Delcourt as a living exponent of psychoanalytical automatism: he asked her to produce drawings and writings for him to examine (some of these appear as photographic peritexts within the novella). She was the living and breathing embodiment of Surrealism and Breton decided that he must chronicle the obscure conversations and delirious insights that Delcourt perorated. Delcourt adapted her pseudonym from an American dancer and was fascinated by the linguistic connotations regarding the name; *Nadja* is the beginning of the Russian word for hope (nadeyat'sya), an ideal that would soon diminish for Delcourt. Her delicate psychological state eventually collapsed after Breton ended his tense relationship with her and she was interned to a psychiatric hospital. She died of cancer during January 1941.

Breton wrote *Nadja* during 1926 by constructing a flow of the many notes and scraps of writing that he had collected throughout the time of his association with Delcourt. Once again, this is the cut-and-paste technique that would influence the counterculture literary revolution some forty years later, taking Breton's social opposition values to a new height of understanding and popularity.

Today, *Nadja* is regarded as a masterpiece. This is primarily because Breton makes no secret of the fact that his subject is suffering from a severe mental illness, a condition which was still treated as taboo during the late 1920s. Breton believed that social constrictions had

caused Nadja to become ill, blaming poverty and a broken society, ills which are still prevalent in modern societies. If Surrealism was to be the antidote, then society needed to be made aware that it was directly responsible for the demons which fractured it: demons of lethargy, greed, intolerance and financial insecurity. Breton argued that the psychological collapse suffered by Delcourt could be suffered by anyone, throughout all sectors of society. Money and power were not a form of defence. If Breton's philosophy is true, then Bourdieu's field of cultural production starts to become undermined. If the true and fundamental epicentre of Surrealism is the darkness which permeates inside each and every individual, in our fears, our insecurities and in our darkest thoughts, then the field's dependency on existing social parameters begins to fail. The one encompassing factor missing from Bourdieu's field is our innermost fear of dying and the concept of legacy. Death has the ability to neutralize social parameters, as dying is the one field which encompasses society as a whole, regardless of class, social stature, education or wealth. Breton had already commented on death within his *Manifeste du Surréalisme*:

Surrealism will usher you into death, which is a secret society. It will glove your hand, burying therein the profound M with which the word memory begins" (Breton, 1977: 32).

Death is the ultimate Surrealist expression because it is beyond explanation. It gives credence to Breton's infatuation with the concept of suicide during his time as editor of *La Révolution Surréaliste*. Breton was once again asking society to confront their greatest fear. The Bureau was created to allow for this discourse to take place, but most people, just like

in our modern societies, could not bring themselves to discuss this final act. Death had been all too prevalent during the Great War. The concept of memory is the closest experience we can have to death, a faded thought which has been manipulated by our own subconscious. *Nadja* is Breton's existential attempt to confront death and his own mortality, with the memory of a woman who had lost her grip on reality and was closer to the 'alternative realm' than anyone he had ever met. The opening line of the text asks the question 'Who am I?' It could quite easily have been 'who are we and what will we become?'

Nadja was published by Editions Gallimard in May 1928, selling almost half of its 3,300 print run in the first week and was celebrated by fellow writers and reviewers who admired its context and "accessible reading style" (Polizzotti, 1998: 300). The newspapers were initially less enthusiastic until some two months later when a review in *L'Europe nouvelle* claimed "a book that marks a date in the history of literature, a turning point in the evolution of sensibility." *La Voix* declared the work to be "Surrealism's masterpiece" (Polizzotti, 1998: 301). There were a number of less welcoming reviews, but these were rare. Perhaps the biggest critic was Breton himself. He bemoaned the quality of the accompanying illustrations, including photographs of Nadja's writing and artwork. There was no photograph of Nadja herself. These images were meant to act as a visual guide around Paris and to entice the reader into becoming an interactive flaneur.

In his essay on Surrealism, Walter Benjamin argued that the novella would appeal to the "jumped up petit bourgeois" sentiment, although he does state that the work "achieves the true, creative synthesis between a work of fiction and *roman-à-clef*" (Benjamin, 2009: 147).

Despite the novella's reputation in France, it would be the 1960s before an English language translation appeared, published by the controversial Grove Press in America. By the 1980s, *Nadja* was on its eleventh print run in the United States alone. The first British publication did not appear until 1999, when Penguin released the text as part of their Twentieth Century Classics series (Poynor, 2012: article). Today, the reputation of *Nadja* is asserted and secure. Mary Ann Caws, the American Surrealist scholar believes that *Nadja* is the one text which receives the most celebration and enthusiasm from her own students and this is the reason why the work has made the trajectory into the mainstream canon of contemporary literature. Furthermore, the novella gives *Nadja* herself the lasting legacy that she otherwise would never have obtained.

Conclusion

André Breton's reputation as one of the leading figures in twentieth century art is secure, but his position within the literary canon is still debateable. Reader reception theories, when applied to Breton's oeuvre, will suggest an individual whose works failed to resonate with the mass audience which he sought and that there were too many contradictory elements disfiguring the ideology and primary concepts within Surrealism. Whilst most of society looked upon the Surrealists as a subversive group of like minded individuals, the movement was embraced by the intellectual and bourgeois audience, the 'high degree of consecration' which Bourdieu applied within his field of cultural production, who could understand the subtle and challenging aspects of the group's philosophies. It can be argued that Breton was naive in his belief that Surrealism could influence the political and cultural fields, despite the serious application to make their work as widely accessible as possible.

Wolfgang Iser's theories on reader reception would suggest that Surrealism as a literary movement was too isolating for a mainstream audience. All writers and artists are reliant upon an audience in order to disseminate their arguments and ideas, but to try to impose philosophies which are politically motivated and which deal with concepts outside of the mainstream habitus, will result in a failed determinant. Only through a post modern re-evaluation does Surrealism make sense. Breton's exploration of mental illness is still seen as a significantly brave development, especially at a time when institutions in France were overcrowded and treatments were erratic, despite government attempts to address the problem (Coffin, 2005: 225-228). The implementation of the individual at the heart of creativity is perhaps more relevant today than ever before, an age of complete self expression through social media, platforms which are the legacy of Breton's Bureau; his work asks us to look deep within ourselves and explore our innermost fears. And finally, the literary consultation regarding death, in which Breton advocates the self as a means of breaking down all social inequalities and the cultural divisions which compose Bourdieu's field. His non linear, experimental writing paved the way for the literary counterculture movement during the 1960s, in which censorship, audience and social conformity was finally deconstructed and allowed to breathe.

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