



# The Emperor of China, The Mute Canary & The Executioner of Peru

*Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes*

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**The Emperor of China, The Mute Canary & The Executioner of Peru** Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes  
This volume collects three savage plays from the man André Breton designated as one of the only "true Dadas" (alongside Tristan Tzara and Francis Picabia): *The Emperor of China* (1916), *The Mute Canary* (1920) and *The Executioner of Peru* (1928). The first two have long been acknowledged as highpoints in the Dada movement's contribution to the theater, but in their brutal depictions of violent sexuality and nightmarish tyranny, and their casts of manipulative bureaucrats, murderous henchmen, insane dictators, lascivious virgins, Ubuesque cuckolds and nonsense-spewing enigmas, these plays also echo the work of such other dissident surrealists of the era as Georges Bataille and André Masson. These unsettling theatrical works were significant anticipations of Antonin Artaud's Theater of Cruelty and the Theater of the Absurd of the 1960s.

**Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes** (1884-1974) was a French writer and artist, and one of the fiercest adherents of the Paris Dada movement, acting as the group's secretary, and for which he authored some of its most vitriolic texts. Disenchanted with the Surrealist movement that followed, Ribemont-Dessaignes allied himself instead with such other Surrealist dissidents as René Daumal and the Grand Jeu. Throughout his long life, Ribemont-Dessaignes authored a sizable oeuvre of novels, plays, poetry, essays and memoirs, none of which has to date been translated into English.

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