

A
Filliou
Sampler

by Robert Filliou



1967
A Great Bear Pamphlet

ubuclassics

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A FILLIOU SAMPLER

ROBERT FILLIOU

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Robert Filliou

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A Play Called FALSE!

**DISHONEST FAITHLESS!
DECEITFUL MENDACIOUS
UNVERACIOUS!
TRUTHLESS! TROTHLESS! UNFAIR!
UNCANDID!
DISINGENUOUS SHADY SHIFTY
UNDERHAND UNDERHANDED!
HOLLOW HYPOCRITICAL INSINCERE
CANTING JESUITICAL
SANCTIMONIOUS PHARISAICAL!
TARTUFFIAN DOUBLE DOUBLE-
TONGUED DOUBLEFACED!
SMOOTHSPOKEN SMOOTHSPOKEN
PLAUSIBLE!
MEALYMOUTHED INSIDIOUS SLY
DESIGNING DIPLOMATIC
MACHIAVELLIAN!
BROTHER!**

1st Act:

chorus of leading citizens sing:

me cago en tu leche
te cagas en su leche
se caga en mi leche
nos cagamos en vuestra leche
vos cagais en su leche
se cagan en nuestra leche

2nd Act:

simultaneously:

playing of the national anthem
and
free soup for the poor who alone form the guest audience
soup made and served by the leading citizens

3rd Act:

while the leading citizens pick up the empty dishes and wash them, chorus of the poor:

ha ha ha ha ha ha ho ho

hu hu hu hu hu hu hi hi

ho ho ho ho ho ho hu hu

hi hi hi hi hi hi ha ha

ha ha ha ha ho ho hu ho

etc.

March, 1958

Yes

—an action poem—

(The poet sits on a chair. Behind him, a lecturer introduces him soberly to the audience, and reads as follows:—)

Part One—The Adult Male Poet

The body of the adult poet stands at an average height of 5' 5" and, on the average, weighs approximately 145 pounds.

It is covered with and protected by a thin and elastic membrane, the skin, consisting of the epidermis and the dermis of the poet. The hair and the nails of the poet are mere derivatives of his skin. The surface area of the skin covers about 1.8 square meters (17.2 square feet) of the body of the average poet.

The body of the poet is built around a framework of bones, called the skeleton. When the poet is first born, the bones are still soft; but as the poet grows in stature, his bones get harder.

The skeleton of the poet consists of three main elements: the head, the trunk and the limbs.

The Head: this consists first of the skull, a hollow box containing the brain of the poet, to which his ears are attached; second is the face, with openings for the eyes, the nostrils and the mouth of the poet.

The Trunk: this also consists of two parts,—the chest and the belly of the poet, separated by a slight depression, called

the waist. It is in his trunk that the spine of the poet is found, and which is made of rings of bone protecting the spinal cord, the ribs of the poet (twelve pairs of them), the breast bone, two collar bones, two shoulder blades, and, at the lower end of the spine, the pelvis of the poet. Keep in mind, however, that minor differences occur when the poet is spineless.

The Limbs: such are called the arms and legs of the poet. The arms—two of them—consist each in the upper arm, the forearm, and the hand of the poet. It would be superfluous to enumerate the many uses of this hand; thanks to the perfection of it, guided by the intelligence of the poet, he is able to realize the marvels of his art.

The Legs of the poet—also two of them—consist in three articulated parts: the thigh, the lower leg and the foot. The poet stands upright on his legs, this being one of the characteristics that distinguishes him most from animals. What distinguishes him most from animals, however, is his intelligence and his highly articulate speech.

All poets present the characteristics which we have just described, but the diverse agglomerations of poets show, among themselves, some differences that suggest distinguishing among them.

—thus the yellow poet has yellowish skin, prominent cheekbones, thick hair, slanted eyes, a large nose and thick lips.

—the black poet has a colored skin, varying from golden brown to deep black, kinky hair, a flat nose, thick lips, and very strong, powerful jaws.

—the white poet has pinkish skin, an oval-shaped face, straight hair, eyes slit horizontally, a straight nose and thin lips.

—the red poet has a copper skin, unruly hair, prominent cheekbones, a hooked nose, and thin lips.

i—of the Necessity of Alimentation

Just as a steam engine does not function without water and coal, and the motor of an automobile stops when short of gasoline, the poet, in order to furnish poetry, must be fed regularly. It is food that gives the poet strength and heat.

The first thing a poet does with food is to chew it. This consists of breaking the food into small pieces, mixing it up with his saliva, thus making it easier to swallow and to digest, and chewing it well. The poet needs for this a complete set of teeth, that is to say a total of 32, 16 in each jaw, consisting of cutting teeth or canines, and grinding teeth or molars.

Once his food is chewed, the poet swallows it, and it passes down the gullet (or “oesophagus”) into the stomach of the poet. There the food is reduced to a semi-liquid paste by the digestive juices of the poet, and it passes into a long, thin tube called the small intestine of the poet, and from this small intestine in due time into a wider tube of the large intestine.

The stomach of the poet works at least two hours after every meal.

If the poet did not take good care of it, it would tire easily. This is why:

—the poet eats at regular hours

—the poet does not eat too rapidly, in order to avoid indigestion

—the poet eats slowly, so that his food is well impregnated with his saliva

—the poet observes a well-balanced diet, building up his body with lean meat, fish, cheese, the yolk and white of egg, peas, beans, etc., accumulating energy with bread, potatoes, sugar, butter and margarine, fatty meat and fish, and protecting his health with fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, animal fats and wholewheat bread (The best food of all, nevertheless, is milk, which contains proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and mineral salts. This explains why poets drink all they can get.)

—the poet brushes his teeth mornings and nights, and following every meal, for the little bits of food remaining between his teeth rot if they are not removed, and give to the poet’s breath a horrible smell.

—the poet defecates at least once a day, for the digestive waste of the poet, if it stays too long inside his large intestine—which ends up with the anus of the poet—will cause certain poisoning.

ii—The Blood of the Poet

When you sever a poet’s jugular vein, blood does not stop running out from the wound until the poet is dead. But if you saw up a poet whom you have just strangled to death, his body does not bleed. This is because the blood of the dead poet is motionless, while the living poet’s blood is always in motion, propelled by his heart, so it keeps circulating through his blood vessels.

The blood of the poet is

bright red in his arteries, which are the blood vessels along which the blood passes from the heart. It is brownish red or purple in his veins, which are the blood vessels along which the blood returns to the heart. Its specific gravity ranges from 1,050 to 1,060. Its viscosity is about five or six times that of water. As to quantity, blood constitutes five to seven per cent of the body weight of the poet. For an average adult poet weighing 145 pounds, this would amount to five to six liters (nine to eleven pints).

Plasma constitutes about 59% of the blood of the poet, and water 91 to 92% of that plasma. It is obvious, then, that one thing all poets have in common is that 55% of what runs through their veins and arteries is water. The rest is made up of corpuscles and platelets.

The distribution of the blood of the poet is influenced by such factors as gravity and activity, as a moment's reflection will show. Thus if while reading his poem to an audience, the poet raises his hand high above his head, the skin of his hand becomes paler and the veins less obvious. Sedentary poets are often afflicted by varicose veins, and congestion of the veins of the liver and of the intestines. Walking poets are less liable to this trouble, because the flow of blood through their veins is assisted by the massaging action of their muscles.

It is also well known that when a poet feels faint, his head should be kept low, so that his brain will not be deprived of nourishment. In the majority of cases this is automatically insured by the poet's falling to the ground.

The blood of the poet is forced around the poet's body by the heart of the poet which is a powerful pump with thick muscular walls. This heart is divided into right and left sides, and each has its upper chamber called an "auricle" and its lower one, called a "ventricle."

The late Professor Pascal once

said of this heart that it is hollow and full of garbage. However, exactly what he meant by this is not clear.

iii—The Poet's Breathing

The poet writes as he breathes. This points to the importance of respiration, which the poet carries out with the help of his nose, his nasopharynx, his larynx, his trachea, his bronchi and his lungs. While it is notorious that the poet can live several days without taking food, he couldn't even remain one minute without absorbing air. He does it constantly, he never stops, day or night.

Parenthetically, however, let us note that in spite of this, the poet is unable to appreciate the fact that his lungs are constantly slipping over the inner surfaces of his chest, or, for that matter that his stomach is in contact with his intestines. You see, there is no tactile sense in the deeper parts of the body of the poet. It is thought that at one time the poet was conscious of all the inside workings of his body, but he decided that it would be better if these became automatic and unconscious so that he might devote his attention to higher things.

When this automation stops, the respiratory movements of the poet cease. They must be artificially imparted to the chest wall until the poet resumes his automatic breathing. This is particularly important in the case of the apparently drowned poet. The technique of artificial respiration which used to be favored was that described by Schafer: the poet was placed face downward, with a cushion or folded coat under the lower part of the chest, and the resuscitator knelt on the ground athwart the poet. Then a forward and backward rocking movement of his chest was induced by throwing the

weight of the body forward on to the hands, and then raising the body slowly to the upright position.

Another method, more in favor now, is known as “mouth-to-mouth respiration.” The principle on which this method is based is that expired air from the resuscitator’s lungs is breathed into the drowned poet’s lungs.

iv—The Excretion of the Poet

The body of the poet produces waste materials which must be gotten rid of in various ways. Sweat glands get rid of some waste. They are coiled tubes which produce the sweat, and the sweat leaves the body of the poet through little openings in his skin called “pores.” One can see the pores of the poet if you look at him with a magnifying glass.

The kidneys of the poet are his most important organs of excretion. They are at the back of his abdomen and the blood circulates through them. Under a microscope, one can see that the kidneys contain many small tubules, which filter off waste material from his blood. The yellowish liquid containing this waste material is called the “urine” of the poet.

The urine passes down two tubes called “ureters” to a bag called the “bladder” of the poet, where it is stored until it leaves his body. In both male and female poets, the urine leaves the bladder along a tube called the “urethra.” Normally the urethra is kept closed by a ring of muscle below the bladder. But when the bladder gets full, this muscle relaxes and allows the poet’s urine to flow out.

In the case of the female poet, the urethra opens to the outside of her body, between her legs. Just behind her urine-opening is the vagina of the female poet, which, in the case of the adult virgin female poet is closed by a

thin membrane known as the “hymen.” Around these two openings are folds or lips of flesh, which form what is called the “vulva” of the female poet. But of course she is praised also for her poems, which are just as beautiful.

In the case of the male poet, the urethra passes through a fleshy tube called the penis of the poet, which hangs between his legs.

Excretion is of such vital importance to the good functioning of the poet that the departed savant, Leonardo da Vinci, insisted that “the poet is a wonderful mechanism transforming good wine into urine.”

v—The Brain of the Poet

When the poet does not wear clothes, which protect him from the cold, rain, heat and curiosity, one can see his muscles, called biceps, triceps, tendons, etc. It is the movement of his muscles that makes the poet smile or scowl, wink his eye or screw up his nose.

The poet has many muscles, and each one must be shortened or lengthened at just the right moment and by just the right amount. When the poet wiggles his fingers, or pushes his pen across the page, you can see cords moving under the skin at the back of the hand. If they do not move just right, the poet may write “No” when he meant to write “Yes.” If they do not move fast enough, the poet may not be able to stop a sentence where he had intended. As a matter of fact, if the muscles all over the body of the poet did not contract or stretch in harmony with each other, he could not even stand up to read his poems.

The movement of the muscles of the poet is controlled by his nervous system, which includes the brain of the poet, his spinal cord, and his nerves. Electric messages pass along one nerve

cell to the next, and so travel from the head to the foot of the poet in the fraction of a second. That is why the poet is able to move out of the way quickly if something is thrown at him.

A cardinal property of all reflex actions of the poet is that his responses are purely automatic and independent of his will or desire. If the sole of the foot of the poet is tickled, his toes curl and his foot is withdrawn, no matter to what school the poet belongs. Likewise, the average adult poet spends about one third of his life in sleep. Very great adult poets, however, can do with as little as five hours of sleep a day.

The brain of the poet is really the expanded and highly developed upper part of his spinal cord. A poet once said that his brain was nothing but a bit of spinal cord with knobs on it. He was right, but he might have added that it is the seat of his intellect, his emotions, his speech, his balance and many other things as well.

All that can excite the nervous system of the poet must be avoided. Frequent attendance of films or television is harmful. Likewise the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs has a dismal effect upon the brain and the nerves of the poet. The poet's hands begin the shake. His sight decreases, he becomes sad, with sudden fits of irritation and anger. Little by little he loses all dignity, and may eventually sink into madness. Besides, it becomes difficult for him to reproduce himself.

vi—Reproduction and Senses of the Adult Male Poet

The main organs of reproduction of the adult male poet are the testicles and penis of the poet. When the adult male poet sees a female, his brain gives to his penis, which is a muscle, the appropriate orders. The poet is then said to have, or

not to have, an "erection." It stands to reason that only when the erection is achieved, and the consent of the female secured, can the penis of the poet be inserted into the vagina.

The frequency of these actions depends upon the information that his brain possesses regarding what goes on around the poet. This is why special organs allow the poet to hear, to smell, to taste, to feel and to see.

You may have wondered how the poet can hear things and voices. It's because of his eardrums. The eardrum of the poet is capable of vibrating in response to a large range of tones. The precise range differs from poet to poet. Some are able to hear the high-pitched cry of a bat, and some not.

The sense of smell is the most mysterious of all the special senses of the poet, and the one about which we know least. While the majority of poets can distinguish between the delicate perfume of a rose and the foul odors of gas works, there are some poets who, chewing an onion with the eyes closed and the nose blocked, cannot distinguish it from a strawberry. This goes to show that what we often describe as the tastes of a poet are really odors.

The tongue of the poet is sensitive to different varieties of taste. Some poets appreciate sweetness toward the tip of their tongue, and bitterness towards the back of their tongue. Some others appreciate bitterness toward the tip of the tongue, and sweetness towards the back. All poets, however, make extensive use of their tongues in the modulating and enunciating of the sounds and words of their poems.

In the skin of the poet there are sensitive nerve endings which tell him when, what and whom he is touching. If a slice of skin of the poet is examined under a microscope, these "touch nerves" can be seen just below the surface.

vii—Conclusions

Let us suppose, then, that the poet sees a woman passing by. He looks at her, that is to say, the lens of his eye focuses upon her. Her image is formed upon his retina, small and upside down. The optic nerve of the poet transmits to his brain the information allowing him to realize what is meant by the exact position, the shape, the color of the woman situated in front of the poet's eye.

The poet must then decide if this woman is his woman, or my woman, or thy woman, or her woman, or our woman, or your woman, or their woman.

Or again, supposing the woman looked at is elderly, he must decide if she is his mother, or my mother, or thy mother, or her mother, or our mother, or your mother, or their mother.

And if she is getting out of a car, if it is his car, or thy car, or her car, or our car, or your car, or their car.

And if all this takes place in a town, if it is his town, or my town, or thy town, or her town, or our town, or your town, or their town.

And if it is night, if it is his night, or my night, or thy night, or her night, or our night, or your night, or their night.

And if the time is his, or mine, or thine, or hers, or ours, or yours, or theirs.

And even before deciding, perhaps it is boring to decide. Better, he thinks, to accept all the possibilities in advance. Better to accept all the possibilities in advance and accepting them always, to remain beyond that region where everything is parcelled out, and everybody is owned by what he owns.

This at least is his ideal.

And he expresses this ideal in a poem, because he is a poet.

Part Two—His Poem

Yes.

As my name is Filliou, the title
of the poem is:

LE FILLIOU IDEAL

It is an action poem, and I am
going to perform it.

Its score is:

not deciding
not choosing
not wanting
not owning
aware of self
wide awake

SITTING QUIETLY,
DOING NOTHING

Paris, 1964

Note: This work was conceived for performance, and was done at the Cafe au Go-Go in New York, on February 8th, 1965, the first part was read by Alison Knowles, while Filliou sat cross-legged upstage, motionless and silent. For the second part, Filliou stood up, spoke the words which we have printed here, then returned to his former position. Philip Corner improvised an almost silent musical accompaniment. The performance continued until all those in the audience who seemed anxious to leave had done so. It should be noted also, that the title given here names Filliou as “Le Filliou Ideal,” but this title should be changed to designate any adult male poet who performs this work as “Le (name) Ideal.” (**Ed.**)

(la première opinion de moi
de ma fille Marcelle)

“quand on a les cheveux sales, la poésie c’est de se laver les cheveux”

papa il est papa*

(pour mes grands amis emmett et daniel)

les enfants ont de grands yeux, de grands dents, de grands nez, de
grands pieds et de grandes mains

daniel et robert sont les parents.

emmett est l’enfant.

ils l’habillent.

le font manger.

le promènent en poussette.

le portent sur leurs épaules.

lui racontent des histoires.

jouent avec lui.

le couchent et le bercent.

l’endorment.

*Or: enfant, le poème c’est d’avoir des parents.

*Or: grand, le poème c’est de rester enfant.

1961

(The first comment made about me
by my daughter Marcelle)

“if you have dirty hair, poetry is to wash your hair”

papa, that’s papa!*

(for my grownup friends, Emmett and Daniel)

children have big eyes, big teeth, big noses, big feet and big hands

Daniel and Robert are the parents

Emmett is the child

They dress him

They feed him

They take him for a stroll in his carriage

They take him on their shoulders

They tell him stories

They play with him

They rock him in his cradle

They sing him to sleep

*Or: when you’re a child, the poem is to have parents

*Or: when you’re a grownup, the poem is to remain like a child

1961

translated by Dick Higgins

Five Ways to Prepare for a Space Trip (A Performance Piece)

- 1—undress.
 shave your head.
 put on a yellow dress.
 sit on your heels.
 after an indefinite time:
 stand up.
 remove the yellow dress.
 get dressed again.
 sit on your heels.
 wait for your hair to grow back.
 after an indefinite time:
 don't wait any longer for your hair to grow back.
- 2—take a box of matches from your pocket.
 open the box.
 throw the matches one at a time.
 stand motionless.
 after an indefinite time:
 gather up the matches and replace them in the box one at a time.
 after an indefinite time:
 throw the box of matches at the audience.
 stand still.
 after an indefinite time:
 go find the box of matches where it fell.
 return.
 stand still.
 after an indefinite time:
 take a cigarette from your pocket.
 move toward the audience.
 ask a spectator for a light.
 sit down.
 smoke the cigarette while looking at the empty stage.
 the cigarette finished:
 leave.
- 3—do what you like.
- 4—blot the expectant audience
 from your thoughts.
- 5—do what you like.

Paris, 1963
translated by Marilyn Harris

3 No-Plays

No-Play #1

This is a play nobody must come and see. That is, the not-coming of anyone makes the play. Together with the very extensive advertising of the spectacle through newspapers, radio, T.V., private invitations, etc. . . .

No one must be told not to come.

No one should be told that he really shouldn't come.

No one must be prevented from coming in any way whatsoever!!!

But nobody must come, or there is no play.

That is, if the spectators come, there is no play. And if no spectators come, there is no play either . . . I mean, one way or the other there is a play, but it is a No-Play.

No-Play #2

In this No-Play, time/space is of the essence. It consists of a performance during which no spectator becomes older. If the spectators become older from the time they come to the performance to the time they leave it, then there is no play. That is to say, there is a play, but it is a No-Play.

1964?

Almost Complete Biography

(footnote to thousands of meals; hectolitres of drink; tons of waste; millions of miles; hundreds of encounters, most of them friendly; scores of loves, several genuine; 143 months of sleep; eons of dreams; two children; 36 trades; n+1 wretchedness and joys; since birth 1/17/26 in Sauve, Gard, a province in the south of France.)

After 5 years in Los Angeles, Calif., and 3 in the Far East, spent 1954-59 in Egypt, Spain and Denmark and returned to France in 1960.

Main Gallery Shows. 1959-1960: First action poetry, first visual poetry. Festival d'Avant-Garde, Paris. 1961: Galerie K pcke, Copenhagen: mummifications, measurements. *Premiers Po mes Suspense*, Paris. 1962: Galerie L gitime, Paris. Galerie One, London: the Misfits' fair. 1964: *Platitudes en Relief*, in collaboration with Daniel Spoerri, Galerie J., Paris and Galerie Zwirner, Cologne. 1966: Exposition Intuitive, Galerie Jacquelin Ranson, Paris. 1967: The Key to Art (?), with photographer Scott Hyde, Tiffany's windows, N.Y.

Principal Publications. Co-author, *A Five-Year Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of South Korea*, the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, 1953. *Num ro Sp cial de la Revue Phantomas*, Brussels, 1964. *Ample Food for Stupid Thought*, the Something Else Press, N.Y., 1965 (\$5.00). *Je Disais   Marianne*,  dition Mat-Mot, Cologne, 1966. *C'est l'Ange; l'Esclave F.; Berger R vant qu'il  tait Roi; Comment Profiter de la Cr dulit  des Futurs Cosmonautes; Hommage Dansant au Mammif re M., M. le Malheur, Monsieur, Madame le Malheur M.*; (plays)  ditions Richard Thialans, Li ge, 1966. *Monsters Are Inoffensive*, with Roland Topor and Daniel Spoerri, Fluxus, N.Y., 1967. *L'Immortelle Mort du Monde*, Something Else Press, Inc., N.Y., 1967 (\$5.00). *A Filliou Sampler*, idem., (\$0.80).

In Preparation. *Games at the C dille*, with George Brecht, to be published by Something Else Press, Inc., Autumn, 1967. *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*, to be published in 1968. *Whispered Art History*, to be published by  ditions d' tat, Prague.

Co-inventions. With Emmett Williams, 1962-65: The Spaghetti Sandwich, The Pink Ear Plug, The Pink Spaghetti Handshake, Extra-sensory Misperception. With George Brecht, 1965: La C dille qui Sourit.

Records. *Whispered Art History*, 12 records for jukebox Kunstbibliotek Copenhagen, 1963.

Architecture. Le Po poidrome, project for a permanent creative center, in collaboration with Joachim Pfeufer, 1963.

Action Poetry. Numerous performances in Copenhagen, Paris, London, Stockholm, Tokyo, Berlin, New York, etc. since 1961.

