

PLASTIC CASINO

Synopsis of a danse macabre and song
(‘Two-faced Aria of the Pat Coordinator’)

The stage is full of low-lives at the death of the day. The DERELICT with smears for eyes dallies a paltry toy, under the ragged curve of a battered arcade a small transparent sphere with luminous plastic bricks inside, one red, one blue, one black, one yellow and translucent. The bricks are tiny, and scarcely enough in number to satisfy the municipal intrigues of a mite. Still, great is the fascination of the DERELICT with no eyes and no mouth (but only dusty smears where the sensory apertures should be) to crack the glass chamber like an egg, remove its contents bit by bit, dissemble paltry abortive structures and return them to the sphere and close it again, shake it so that the coloured bits dance about like confetti or the last vestige of snow in the baubles of sentimental dying magnates.

The HOMOGENS appear at the right, accompanied by the PAT COORDINATOR. Their designers’ sheaves unrolled show lumpish forms made of coloured bricks, just like those of the DERELICT.

PAT COORDINATOR (*scrutinising the plans*): The more the city fascinates
The more it oppresses
The rage I feel towards this city
In all its modernity
Which I can only admire
Still fills me with jealousy

HOMOGENS (*in chorus*): Jealousy! Jealousy!

PAT COORDINATOR: This city of the elect and privileged
Of wielders of power and decision makers

HOMOGENS: Decision makers! Decision makers!

PAT COORDINATOR: This city, this monster,
Creator of tramps and parasites in a day!

HOMOGENS: A day! A day!

Cut to: the whimpering lament of the derelict who has lost his bauble down one of the drains. He crouches over futilely poking his fingers through the slots.

DERELICT: The more I suppress

This overwhelming rage

The more I admire

This city so charming, merciless, dreamlike, paradisa!

The stage darkens and the pavement with the grill of the drain tilts up. The bars come apart exposing the murky gloom beyond. The lost charm of the DERELICT lights up incandescently and the brightly coloured chips swirl about on churned-up currents of air. More complex shapes appear, along with more varied colours and tones, and as the orb swells and takes possession of the stage a troop of human dancers clad in jagged costumes of a futurist ballet, simulate a crowded casino. The PAT COORDINATOR sways in drunkenly, his cravat loosened below his battered hat. The patrons with their tubular bodies their coats like Bauhaus tombstones, their goggle eyes half superimposed on orange semi-circular masks, look leeringly on.

This is consummate debauchery but all of an abstracted slickly patented manifestation, which cannot satisfy the PC for long; he searches desperately for a conspicuous body of flesh like his own. Reeling, he stumbles upon the CADAVER at roulette, who seems equally out of place, a death's head strayed out of Lucas Cranach, come to view with a connoisseur's prurience, the swollen follies of modernity gone mad. He has a strange manner of casting the roulette, preferring to swallow it first so it emerges glittering in the right socket as a surrogate eye, then tilting his head drops it on his skeletal hand:

CADAVER: This city, this monster

Which implacably rises up and destroys

This City, this monster.

Creator of superstars and derelicts in a day!

More customers throng into the casino, and as the crowd jostles shoulder to shoulder, the figures lose all trace of human resemblance and distinctness, and turn into leaping and interlocking circles, tiny arrow shapes lurching between rapidly expanding and shrinking lines of yellow green and mauve. The PAT COORDINATOR in his champagne paranoia fears death by drowning in this brimming constructivist soup. Narrowly detaching himself from the smothering throng, he grabs the body of a tombstone gambler nearby, and batters

the transparent confines of the gambling hall. They swell and wobble; shards of glass fly about and the angular inmates rise up to the ceiling and disappear.

The PAT COORDINATOR shaking his addled head, looks down at the pavement under the arcade where shattered glass has rained down from a plundered shop-window during the night, and various ornamental trinkets are lying scattered in the debris: a brush with a mother of pearl handle, a filigreed cake knife, brass tongs with jet flowers on the hinge. These are not static but primevally mobile writhing, flopping about with the grotesque aspect of fish drowning in air.

THE DROWNING ANTIQUES (in throaty whispers): The more the city fascinates

The more it oppresses

The rage I feel towards this city

In all its modernity,

Which I can only admire

Still fills me with jealousy

PAT COORDINATOR (sadly): Jealousy! Jealousy!

END

by

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