

Mount The 137

by Cristian Vogel

The bridge is a discriminant: it structures itself through exclusion. Once crystallized as this exclusive structure, the bridge aligns its fixed field, relinks the differential, and assigns Lucky Connor and Hope each their sphere of systemic control.

“Listen, Hope. We can get over this. I’m sure of it. Just needs a different way of looking at things, thats all. The rivers not a problem, its a lot of solution. We could feather across maybe even bridge. Think links then locomotions, think fresh alloy acts, all the latest mixtures. We’re doing fine. I trust in you.” At the sound of his voice, the old pack horse turned from its intense contemplation of the river to look at him. He saw how hot and overclocked it seemed - “Don’t trust in me” he perceived in a flicker - Connor shook his head. Poor Hope, profoundly repulsed by the river, unable to step into it or get across. He had tried to drag and shout and force the machine, but it would not enter the water. He was facing a sticky stuff situation in this flux flow. If they stayed together, they were stuck here on this bank. If they seperated, he would be back on his own, his stuff unpacking itself everywhere, probably still unable to move very easily. They had worked so hard on solving this one, but even so, he was worried. He wondered if all the patterns they had been synthesising and conjoining were ever going to transform this frail flux. Clumsy attraction and awkward repulsion were exacerbating the flow here. And now deep in it, they were blocked, not moving anymore. Whirlpools of sticky feedback had been appearing in the flux around them as they deliberately tried to understand unthinkable liquid links. Maybe it was already too late - stagnation had begun to set into patches and patterns. They really needed to cogitate fast - a hurried solution, to cross the solution.

The subject—object dichotomy, bridged by the magical concept of need. Things might run quite smoothly here if the general system of production-consumption were not disrupted by the insoluble problem of supply and demand. Can one still speak of autonomy of choice, or is it a question of manipulation? Perhaps the two perspectives can be synthesized?

A sketch from Agnete's album flickered under his skin - it sang, "...*hope is the pack horse I'm feeding my last sugar cubes to....*" - Connor let the song go round and round. He rummaged in one of the saddlebags, found the last box of sugar and opened it. There was only one cube left. He took it out carefully and fed it to Hope. For a moment, the flux was amicable, buzzy with new nucleotides from all the fast pattern linking. Yes, there would be alloys or vessels or boats or bridges or something synthesised very soon, there had to be. When the nucleotides would eventually go out and go low, he was really confident that a solution would emerge and they would both be able to cross. He looked fondly at his pack horse. It had turned back to mapping out the characteristics of the water, crunching away. Lucky Connor smiled and rubbed his chin, looking out over the flowscape once more, taking it all in, foolishly optimistic.

While retaining their discreteness, Lucky Connor and Hope are capable of multiple projections. But (through all these combinatory possibilities) the code of the Vessels never ceases to monitor and systematically control meaning.

With the palm of his hand, he shielded his eyes from the bright fluxlight and framed the shimmering river scene. In the distance, the over bank, the nextlevel, flashing bass drums and neon hand claps. Connor longed to be there, exultant or serene in all of that nextlevel flow. Merman was there already. Connor would see him dancing sometimes, or smoking doing nothing, or drinking cocktails with Mnemosyne and Ivy. One was a goddess of infinite love, the other a bequeather of requisite poison - their music so beautiful, so intense, so attractive - and all those mixes goblets of suspended moments - precision synthesis by a master mixologist. Oh yes, he was well aware that if the desire took him he could wade out and swim across, on his own. It had happened like that before. He had left his stuff behind and jumped straight in. He had worn only his skin, flickering with the proudest signals from his open manifest. The water had crystallized into exclusive structures as he swam across. Swimming was effortless, addictive even. When he arrived to the other bank, holding his head up high, he fell hopelessly into Ivy's arms - she embraced him deeply and then pushed him way - he was suddenly immersed in a very different river. As he sank, his manifest became tangled in the long old chains laying under the water (those upon which all rivers and Time run). The currents and whirlpools of the sub-riverflow were so much stronger than he had ever known - under the surface there were awkward silences and exploding voids and negative loops - and the flux would not release him. He almost didn't make it. He saved his flickering skin by grabbing hold of time locks along the bottom and following their

chain, hands and feet slipping over the benthos slime, one step next step. Eventually he got back, further away but safe on the banks of the conventional - exhausted but stronger. Without a doubt, on this next attempt, he was only going to cross with Hope's tech. Sure, there was still time, because Time was still.

In the flux, Time is a mechanical ferry. It moves along an old chain lain under the water. It has a winding handle and a drunken operator. The river, or the water in the river, also moves on chains which run perpendicular to the ferry, long lines of links which eventually extend into the expanse of an ocean.

He lay on his belly and crawled up to the river edge. Cupping his hands over his ears, he tried to sink listen through the water, past the standing waves and early reflections of the surface. He listened in case he could hear the clinks of chains dragging across the bottom. The operator did not work at night, he was usually out drinking. But the morning fluxlight was really shining now - maybe Time might start up again, come over and pick them up. The solution could be that easy, that lazy. Just a matter of time. Lucky Connor rolled onto his back, and folded his arms under his head. Another song had begun spinning under his skin now - "...be still and know, be kind and rest, be still and know be kind and rest..." - he closed his eyes and lay a while. He dreamed of sugar being formed by music on distant asteroids.

Every strategy we invent is in the hope that it will unfold unexpectedly. We invent the real in the hope of seeing it unfold as a great ruse. From strategy we expect control, but from seduction we hope for surprise.

When the bridge emerged, the solution crossing solution, it was fast and vivid and its sudden sound woke him instantly. Hope had finally matrixed out all the mapping decisions and executed the patterns. The synthetic nucleotides had alloyed into an instant shimmering vertical stack. The tall structure stretched out across the river. It was constructed from crystal clock state machines, its edges honed by the strong resonances the clocks traced in the fluxscape. Lucky Connor was particularly impressed by the way Hope had used a sieve to make structural decisions about the clocks that made up the bridge. Connor always carried around a light green sieve in his stuff, and thats the one

Hope had used. He always kept it, because this particular sieve had a great pattern, one that expressed the space between all prime numbers. He had often wondered what it was really for - it was never much good at draining rice. He could see that Hope had used the sieve to sift out and frame fundamental decisions for the bridge structure - the height at which each clock was suspended, for example, had been chosen through the sieve, as had the speed of each clock being used. The lowest and slowest clock ticked - changed states - just once between one bank and the other. Its on-state cast a wide fresh crystal alloy across the fluxscape, stretching out exactly half way across the river. The highest and fastest clock ticked 137 times to reach the other side, leaving staccato fragments of crystal, high in the fluxlight. When a clock tocked itself into the off-state, it resonated an outline of its previous state. These empty outlines, transparent shadows or memories of stability, filled the gaps between each solid tick. In these intervals, the background of the river scene was pulled taut to become foreground. Unlike the reflective crystal alloy links of the on-states, the off-states of each clock refracted the view of the over bank and magnified Connor's projections of nextlevel flow - like mirages manifesting out of distant hot air into something so desirable, so close.

Hope tears dark light drunk serenity seduction exclusion tick tock foreground background crystal resonance - these were the patterns which had been shorn from flux and manifest, sieved and crystallised to give the necessary rigidity in each link and strength to the whole structure - a complex arcing bridge, which instantly reached across the river. The interlaced states of each clock now formed the steps they would take to cross, each step placed according to an ancient blueprint - indeed a beautiful bridge across a solution, built from desire, hope, music and sugar - some of the side effects of broken time.

As Lucky Connor powered down the packhorse he said to it - "There's no guilt. There's no passing the blame. This is about immersion now. Don't crawl before you can swim, dear Hope." - he unconnected the saddlebags from the machine and with one smooth movement, pushed it in the river. He watched it sink, grabbed his stuff and ran across the bridge as fast he could.



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A MuPsi text version of Mount The 137 by Cristian Vogel (Sub Rosa – SR375)

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*Additional Text appropriated from "For a Critique Of The Political Economy Of The Sign"
by Jean Baudrillard*