

CHVMS

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Our pride is more offended by attacks on our taste
than on our opinions.

— Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions*

In these times of counter-revolution you're going to
encounter a counter-revolutionary man

— Butthole Surfers, *Piouhgd*

Preface

The titles are taken from Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1984). The page numbers are indicated below. The poems are lifted from five books in the Hardy Boys series written by Franklin W. Dixon: *The Clue of the Screeching Owl* (New York: Gosset and Dunlap 1962), *Danger on the Vampire Trail* (New York: Gosset and Dunlap 1971), *The Melted Coins* (New York: Gosset and Dunlap 1944), *Mystery of the Desert Giant* (New York: Gosset and Dunlap 1961), and *The Mystery of the Spiral Bridge* (New York: Gosset and Dunlap 1966). The title of the novel from which each sequence originated is also listed.

The method of poetic transcription is somewhat complicated. My goal was to preserve as much of the original text as possible within the parameters of two constraints: lines of ten syllables each, and unrhymed couplets, with each sequence ending on a single line. This method requires numerous minor rearrangements to the source text. This “editing” provides the occasion for aesthetic playfulness, which, as Bourdieu makes clear, is also political playfulness. I made this my theme.

“the unintended learning made possible by a disposition acquired through domestic or scholarly inculcation”

They sat in comfortable leather chairs
in their famous father’s study. Frank grinned.

Joe got up and paced. “Chet’s been bugging us
to go camping.” “He sure has,” Frank agreed.

“Chet wants to get a trailer tent, but he’s
short of cash.” Mr. Hardy said, “We might
work something out. Expense money, perhaps.”
“Pretty fuzzy picture,” Joe remarked. Biff

Hooper, a tall blond, appeared. “Hiya, guys,”
he said breezily. Biff was broad-shouldered,
an athlete—a powerful lineman,
fast and hard-hitting. His usual smile

was missing. “Something wrong?” asked Joe. “Could be.”
Biff hesitated. “It’s about Chet.” Chet

Morton, the boys’ chum, was on the grid squad
by virtue of his ample bulk, which could plug
a hole in the forward wall like a truck.

“What’s the matter?” Frank prodded. Just then

the phone rang. Joe picked up. “Chet? We were just
talking about you!” The voice of his chum

on the other end was curt. “I haven’t
time to gab. I’ve got to see you and Frank.”

Joe hung up and returned to the others.

“the accomplished socialite chooses his terrain”

At that moment, the doorbell rang. Before anyone could answer it, in walked Chet.

He was munching a banana. “H’ya,” he greeted. Then he disappeared into the kitchen. “Come out here, fellows,” he called. Chet Morton’s appearances were often made in this casual, unexpected fashion. He was a close chum of the boys.

When they followed him into the kitchen they observed him stuffing the banana into his mouth and reaching for a jar of cookies on the table. “Do you know,” said Chet placidly, “I’ve never been so excited in my life.” Joe: “What happened? Rich uncle leave you a pie factory?”

**“pleasures that are too immediately accessible
and so discredited”**

Chet looked hurt. The boys regarded their chum
with respect. Although they were very fond
of him, he was not very serious
about anything in life except food.

He took another handful of cookies—
such a big handful that his fist was trapped
in the jar’s mouth. Reluctantly, he dropped
several cookies. A finger to his lips,
he tiptoed out the kitchen door and trudged
across the back yard. “Wonders never cease,”
chuckled Joe, after their stout friend had gone.

“declarations of indifference are exceptional”

The boys went downstairs. Suddenly they heard a series of loud bangs. Aunt Gertrude ran out of the kitchen and gave a startled squeak. But her nephews grinned, recognizing the source. “That’s Chet’s jalopy, backfiring,” Joe said. This conclusion was verified by a cheerful whistle as Chet Morton came through the back door. Frank and Joe entered the kitchen just as Chet, their best pal, plopped his ample frame into a chair. A look of longing came over his freckled face. “Oh—oh,” Joe said knowingly. “Who’s ready for a second breakfast?” Chet was known far and wide for his enormous appetite. “We-ll, I could use a snack.” “Humph!” Aunt Gertrude sniffed. “After you scared us with that backfire?” “It’s getting better, isn’t it,” Chet said.

“the relationship between supply and demand takes the form of a pre-established hierarchy”

The boys jumped into their car. In minutes they arrived at Chet's. A dark-haired, pixie-like girl came to the door. Iola, Joe's "special friend." Iola laughed. "He's behind the barn," she said. Trotting around the barn, they saw Chet near a brand new trailer-tent.

It was up, ready for occupancy.

"That's a beauty!" Frank said, "Where'd you get it?"

"And where'd you get the green stuff to buy it?"

Joe asked. Chet beamed. "One question at a time,"

he said, with a matter-of-fact air. "First, let me show you around this paradise."

The smell of newness pervaded the air.

The interior was bright and spotless.

Fold-out arms provided two bunks, sleeping four. Other facilities included

a lavatory, frigidaire, gas stove.

Joe exulted. "Cut it out," Chet replied.

"Come on," Joe said. "The facts." "To put it in language you understand, I put an ad

in the paper and landed a bargain."

"Go on," Frank prodded. Chet narrowed his eyes.

"When I camp, I want fun." "But we'd chip in expense money," Joe said. Their friend assumed

an attitude of superiority.

“refusal of what is...easily decoded and culturally ‘undemanding’”

“Summer vacation! Chet Morton exclaimed. The stout, good-natured boy lounged half asleep between Frank and Joe in the front seat of the powerful yellow convertible.

With a soft purr the car moved swiftly past the tilled fields of Pennsylvania farms.

Dark, eighteen-year-old Frank was at the wheel, his eyes on the highway. His brother Joe said, “There used to be witches here, Chet. See that sign? It’s to ward them off.” He pointed to a circular sign on a barn door. Chet opened one eye. “What is it?” he asked.

“A hex. It’s supposed to protect the farm against witches.” “Witches!” The plump boy looked worried. “Today?” “Sure,” said Joe. “If a witch puts a spell on a cow, she won’t give milk.”

Nervously, Chet looked at the next two barns, at the blue sky, and then all around. “Aw, nobody believes in that anymore. Stop kidding me. This is a vacation.

All I’m going to do is sleep and eat.” While their friend closed his eyes and settled back once more, Frank and Joe exchanged sly grins.

“he constantly overshoots the mark”

They were climbing a long hill when Joe passed a slow-moving truck. He stepped on the gas.

“Oh man, I forgot about our trailer!”

They were nearly parallel to the truck

when an oncoming vehicle loomed large.

Should he press forward or fall back? Either

was risky. In the back seat, Biff and Chet

froze. Frank offered no advice. Joe floored it.

Looking back, Chet saw the camper, tilted

on one wheel, barely clear the truck’s bumper.

Everybody exhaled. No one spoke. Joe

(sheepishly): “from now on I won’t forget.”

To ease the tension, Biff played a few notes.

“a bon vivant is not just someone who enjoys eating and drinking; he is someone capable of entering into the generous and familiar”

The sun was low on the horizon when Frank suggested they look for a campsite.

He studied the maps. Chet, who was driving, slowed down. A small lane led through a broken fence to a neat stand of apple trees. There were no houses in sight. Eagerly the boys

jumped from the car. In ten minutes the tent was unhitched. “Chet, you’re the chef!” Joe remarked.

“Get busy.” “Right,” Biff said. “I’m hungry.” He went off with Sherlock, while Frank and Joe stretched

out on the bunks. After an hour of work Chet called out, “Chow’s ready.” The boys relished

every mouthful. As soon as darkness fell they unzipped their sleeping bags and crawled in.

Sherlock walked round and round. He finally settled at the foot of Chet’s bag. They slept soundly until Sherlock woke whimpering.

“the propensity... to accumulate ‘gratuitous’ knowledge”

The drive to Forestburg, over narrow twisting roads, took hours. Joe, a keen student of history, used the time to comment on the people of Pennsylvania.

“After all,” he reminded them, “belief in witches wasn’t uncommon. The New England Puritans believed in them, too.” They emerged from the hills onto the main street of Forestburg. On one side, the cross streets climbed steeply upward; on the other behind large houses, a swift river ran. An old mill stood by the water. “That’s where people brought grain for grinding,” Joe explained.

“collective festivity... and the array of spectacular delights they offer... liberate by setting the social world head over heels”

Two Ferris wheels and a number of tents
came into view. A gay banner on top
of one read: KLATCH’S CARNIVAL. “Whoops!” Chet
shouted eagerly. “Let’s go in, fellows!
I can smell the popcorn from here!” Laughing
Frank parked the convertible and the boys
entered the midway. The din was over
whelming. People moved in both directions.
Rides—the “Whip,” the “Octopus,” whirled madly.
The people on them screamed shrilly. Barkers
were shouting from side-show platforms. Chet bought
a carton of popcorn, a bag of nuts
and a frothy cloud of cotton candy.

“the new fashion based on the ‘authentic’ and ‘genuine’”

They mounted the porch and knocked at the door.

It was unlocked so they entered. They found

themselves in a small, comfortable room
with a bunk on one side. Chet, venturing

into the kitchen, suddenly called out.

“Whoops! A fellow could go swimming in here!”

Frank and Joe raced in. Their friend was standing
in a large pool of water on the floor.

Otherwise the kitchen was spic and span:
the pots on the walls gleamed; the curtains were
spotless. Everything in its proper place.

Joe could not help chuckling. “Well, there’s a leak
in the plumbing,” Chet complained. “My brand-new
moccasins are soaked. and this water’s cold.”

“That’s because it’s ice water,” Frank declared.

He stooped before an old-fashioned icebox

in one corner. He drew from underneath
a pan so full the water over flowed,

adding to the pool on the floor. Chet grinned.

“An old-time refrigerator. The cake

of ice inside melts.” Joe picked up the pan
and poured the water in the sink. “The bunk’s
unmade, too,” he observed. “It’s strange.”

“the area of sociability and the corresponding satisfactions”

Biff unlimbered his collapsible rod and began casting. Joe tinkered under the hood of the car, checking the oil, while Frank and Chet prepared supper. A man in his mid-thirties, with receding hair, a large nose and small eyes regarded them. His shelving chin gave him the appearance of a sleek beaver. He approached the camp and when Frank came out introduced himself as Edward Mungo. “Pretty efficient layout,” he said. “We like it,” Frank replied. “I’m Frank. The chef is Chet. The guy fishing is Biff. The other one is Joe.” Chet continued his stint at the stove, cutting up onions. Frank said, “Mungo likes the smell of our chow. What do you say?” Chet nodded and the man said, “That’s friendly. I accept with pleasure.”

“the free-and-easy working class meal”

As they were setting up their tent, a young couple from the next camp strolled by. “Hi, my name’s Henry,” said the man. “My wife’s Betty.” Frank introduced the group. “You’re just in time for the cook-off competition,” Henry went on. “It’s really something,” Betty said.

A soup company sponsored the Open Camp Cooking Contest. As the aroma of food drifted over the camp, the boys followed the couple to an arena.

In the center, twenty or more fires blazed and contestants with skillets, pots and pans were nearly finished with masterpieces. A man wearing boots and a ten-gallon spoke over a microphone. “Ladies and gentlemen! We have fifteen judges—men, women, and a little girl. But one of the fellows dropped. We need a volunteer taster. “Here!” Joe cried, and lifted Chet’s arm. “Ah-ha,” The official called out, “that well-fed young man will be perfect.” Joe pushed Chet forward as the meecee went on, “You’ll be one of our desert tasters.” A benign smile crossed Chet’s face. “I’m in luck!” The cook-off smoke that drifted over the area carried the scent of grilled trout, gingered ham and Twirly Birds, a special recipe. “Look at these!” Chet exclaimed. “Caramel peach crunch apple dumplings, and peach turnovers.” “Will the tasters eat sparingly of the sweets,”

the announcer said. "I'm saying this for your own good!" Several men and women joined Chet as they sampled the recipes. "Hm!" Chet mused. He went from dish to dish, taking a man-sized portion each time. His eyes rolled and he smacked his lips. "Come on, Chet!" prodded Joe, as the on-lookers chuckled. "All right," Frank added, "Just one more time, big fellow!" Chet patted his stomach and started down the line again, relishing each mouthful. "Chet's in for trouble," Joe whispered to Frank. "I'd say he's getting green around the gills," Frank remarked. Chet's smile had vanished. "Fellows," he said, "I'm going back to the trailer. How far is it?" "About ten miles," Joe said.

**“depending upon the degree of familiarity
with legitimate culture”**

Joe studied his guidebook. Snowcap was an exclusive ski village, and in summer catered to vacationists at many luxury dude ranches surrounding it.

“This is no place for us,” Biff said. “Too rich.”
Chet: “Who wants this ritzy stuff, anyhow?”

We’re the camp type. Let’s go on.” The road switched back and forth as they climbed even higher.

Finally, it dipped into a valley spreading open like a wide green carpet.

All types of trailers dotted the cozy sites laid out along a stream shaded by willows and cottonwoods. At the entrance clustered rustic shops and facilities.

Joe eyed the old-fashioned grocery store.

“related to clothing as inside to outside, the domestic to the public, being to seeming”

Chet pointed to a laundromat. “Look, you guys,” he said. “I’ve got a couple gamey shirts.”

“Same here,” the others chimed in. The boy uncoupled the trailer tent. Chet gathered up the clothes and took them to the laundromat. Two women sat on folding chairs, watching their laundry tumble. At the end, a girl was bending over a half-filled basket.

Chet approached a machine with its door half open. Paying more attention to the girl than to the clothes in his hand, he stuffed the machine, tossed in detergent and closed the door. Suddenly the girl turned about. Indignation covered her pretty face.

“You can’t do that!” she cried out. “Wh-what do you mean?” Chet asked. “Can’t boys do laundry here?”

“Not in my machine!” Chet looked bewildered.

“Half of my laundry was in that machine,”

she told him, rather sharply. Chet blushed. “Gee, I didn’t see it!” He was embarrassed

and sat down on the bench, looking glum. “Oh, there’s no harm done,” the girl said. Encouraged,

Chet brightened and told her about his chums.

“the dispositions which underlie the production of opinions are chiefly revealed in the manner of expressing them”

Chet busied himself at the stove, while Frank Joe and Biff went to get sweaters. “Listen,”

Chet said as he served the others, “why not ride down to the shore for a holiday instead of going west?” “Good eggs,” Frank said. “I’ve got part of a shell here,” Biff complained with a wink. “No extra charge,” Chet replied.

“in which freedom is asserted, between the representation and the thing represented”

Descending in a series of hairpin turns, the car approached a small bridge across a deep chasm. An overfull river churned below. A sign read: CAPACITY

5 TONS. “Guess we’ll have to swim over,” joked Frank. The plump boy snorted indignantly.

Halfway across a splintering sound warned that the planks were giving way. “We’re going through!” Chet yelled. As Frank heard it, a thought flashed through his mind: “Go fast! It’s our only chance!”

He pushed the pedal to the floor. The car seemed to shudder and sink. Then at the last second the spinning tires caught hold. They lurched forward and were on the other side. “Whew!” exclaimed Frank. “What did I say, Chet? We should have let you cross by yourself.” But Chet was too thankful for their escape to retort

“the affinity between the potentialities objectively inscribed in practices and dispositions”

A gentle put-putting sound up river cut short the conversation. Squinting, Joe made out a motorboat. “Probably Chet and his new friend. I’ll run to the dock.”

In response to Joe’s signal, the putting swelled to a roar. The boat shot toward the dock, throwing up a white spray on either side. A lean, handsome young man, skin deeply tanned and blonde hair bleached nearly white, nimbly leaped to the shore. Meanwhile, Chet began passing supplies to Joe. “Meet Jim Weston,” said Chet. The boys shook hands. Then each took an armful of packages and walked toward the cabin. While they were unpacking the week’s supplies, Frank and Joe sized up Chet’s new chum. Weston appeared to be about twenty-two. They liked his firm handshake, and his open gaze.

“the concordance between a socially classified person and the socially classified things or persons which ‘suit’ him is represented by all acts of co-option in fellow feeling, friendship or love”

“Careful!” Chet cried out to Joe. “Those are eggs! and be sure you refrigerate the meat!”

“Okay, okay, old lady,” retorted

Joe. Grafton chuckled. Weston looked startled

by the unshaven, poorly dressed cowboy at the other end of the porch. Grafton

got up and courteously extended

his hand. “How do you do?” The strong grip and

rich, full voice puzzled Weston all the more.

After a late, quick lunch, the five of them

discussed their next move. It was concluded

they would leave the next morning. Chet spoke up

on the subject nearest to his heart. “Say,

it’s getting toward supper time. I bought

good provisions . . .” Joe winked at the others.

“Don’t mind us, Chet. Start cooking any time.”

A gloomy look settled on their chum’s face.

“Just when I had hoped for a decent meal.

You know I can’t cook. Eating is what I’m

good at.” Grafton exploded with laughter.

“I’m not much on eating, but I can cook.”

Grafton soon proved he knew food well. He gave

each person a task, and within the hour

a tasty spaghetti supper was on.

“Know something?” Frank asked his brother in an undertone as the five friends took a stroll.

“This is doing Grafton a lot of good.

I think he’s enjoying himself. Maybe

we can convince him the world’s not so bad.”

**“you tell (yourself) the truth but in such a way
that you don’t tell it”**

Morning sunshine had already flooded
the little clearing before any sign
of activity was seen. Frank and Joe
were still sleeping soundly. From the kitchen
came the clink and rattle of dishes
and the unmistakable aroma
of pancakes and sausages. Clang! Clang! Chet
appeared in the doorway pounding a pan
with a big wooden spoon. “Breakfast, gang! Up
and at ‘em!” On the floor, two sleeping bags
stirred. Two heads popped into view. “Oh-h-h—
my aching head,” Joe moaned. “Ain’t nobody
here but us pancakes,” the stout boy replied
cheerfully re-entering the kitchen.
“And if you don’t get a move on there won’t
be any of us pancakes left for long!”
Chet’s threat was enough for the boys. After
their exertions of the night before they
wasted no time getting to the table.

“the collective trajectory governs... the perception of the position occupied”

“Hang on!” Joe shouted as he hugged the hill side. “If we meet another car on the turns, we’re done!” Frantically he squeezed the bulb of the horn: “Ska-goog—ah! Ska-goog—ah!” blared the old-fashioned horn as the cumbersome vehicle plunged wildly downhill. Joe took the turns like a race driver, crowding to the inside as he went into them. He knew that any sudden twist of the wheel could cause the high automobile to turn over. At last they were down off the hill shooting forward over the level ground. “Boy!” Joe exclaimed, “I wish this bus had a speedometer! We’re practically flying!” Never mind, his brother answered, relieved. “After that you’re qualified for the race at Indianapolis!” “We’d better come to a gas station soon,” Joe called back. “Yes. To get these brakes checked.” “Brakes. Who needs brakes? What we need now is gasoline.” “Empty!” Frank exclaimed. The boys scanned the road ahead. Though they could see for miles, there was no sign in any direction. At that moment the engine coughed and sputtered. The whole car bucked as the motor stopped, started again, then quit. “There goes the last drop,” Joe announced, shifting to neutral. “We’ll coast while we can.”

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