

peace with their emotional connection that it cannot be expressed through the rudimentary tools of the lexicon; otherwise, silence is proof that the magic is gone and the relationship is over (hence the phrase "We just don't talk anymore"). For those of us who grew up in the media age, the only good silence is the kind described by the hair metal band *Extreme*. "More than words is all I ever needed you to show," explained Gary Cherone on the *Porrigioffiti* album. "Then you wouldn't have to say that you love me, cause I'd already know." This is the difference between art and life: In art, not talking is never an extension of having nothing to say; not talking always means something. And now that art and life have become completely interchangeable, we're forced to live inside the acoustic power choirs of Nuno Bettencourt, even if most of us don't necessarily know who the ~~██████████~~ Nuno Bettencourt is.

When *Harry Met Sally* hit theaters in 1989, I didn't see it until 1997, but it turns out I could have skipped it entirely. The movie itself isn't bad (which is pretty amazing, since it stars Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal), and there are funny parts and sweet parts and smart dialogue, and—all things considered—it's a well-executed example of a certain kind of entertainment.⁵ Yet watching this film in 1997 was like watching the 1978 one-game playoff between the Yankees and the Red Sox on *ESPN Classics*: Though I've never sat through the pitch sequence that leads to Bucky Dent's three-run homer, I know exactly what happened. I feel like I remember it, even though I don't. And—more important—I know what it all means. Knowing about sports means knowing that Bucky Dent is the living, breathing, metaphorical incarnation of the Bo Sox's undying futurity; I didn't have to see that game to understand the fabric of its existence. I didn't need to see *When Harry Met Sally*, either. Within three years of its initial release, classifying any intense friendship as "totally a *Harry-Met-Sally* situation" had a recognizable meaning to ever-

one, regardless of whether or not they'd actually seen the movie. And that meaning remains clear and remarkably consistent: It implies that two platonic acquaintances are refusing to admit that they're deeply in love with each other. *When Harry Met Sally* cemented the plausibility of that notion, and it gave a lot of desperate people hope. It made it realistic to suspect your best friend may be your soul mate, and it made wanting such a scenario comfortably conventional. The problem is that the *Harry-Met-Sally* situation is almost always tragically unbalanced. Most of the time, the two involved parties are not really "best friends." Inevitably, one of the people has been in love with the other from the first day they met, while the other person is either (a) wracked with guilt and pressure, or (b) completely oblivious to the espoused attraction. Every relationship is fundamentally a power struggle, and the individual in power is whoever likes the other person less. But *When Harry Met Sally* gives the powerless, unrequited lover a reason to live. When this person gets drunk and tells his friends that he's in love with a woman who only sees him as a buddy, they will say, "You're wrong. You're perfect for each other. This is just like *When Harry Met Sally*! I'm sure she loves you—she just doesn't realize it yet." Nora Ephron accidentally ruined a lot of lives.

I remember taking a course in college called "Communication and Society," and my professor was obsessed by the belief that fairy tales like "Hansel and Gretel" and "Little Red Riding Hood" were evil. She said they were part of a latent social code that hoped to suppress women and minorities. At the time, I was mildly outraged that my tuition money was supporting this kind of crap; years later, I have come to recall those pseudo-savvy lectures as what I loved about college. But I still think they were probably wasteful, and here's why: Even if those theories are true, they're barely significant. "The Three Little Pigs" is not the story that is ~~██████████~~ people up. Stories like *Say Anything* are ~~██████████~~ people up. We don't need to worry about people unconsciously "absorbing" archaic secret messages when they're six

5. "A certain kind" meaning "bad."

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years old, we need to worry about all the entertaining messages people are consciously accepting when they're twenty-six. They're the ones that get us, because they're the ones we try to turn into life. I mean, Christ: I wish I could believe that bozo in Coldplay when he tells me that stars are yellow. I miss that girl. I wish I was Lloyd Dobler. I don't want anybody to step on a piece of broken glass. I want fake love. But that's all I want, and that's why I can't have it.

I designed the perfect girlfriend one. She was a friend of a friend, and—from the moment I never met her—I decided she was the seamless combination of intellect, wit, and altruistic sincerity (she was also supposedly an English major). My love for this girl was spawned before I ever laid eyes on her; her physical appearance was merely described to me by other people, and I quite suddenly convinced myself that this woman was my soul mate. I'm not sure why I did this; maybe it just seemed like an interesting decision to make in advance. I do this sort of thing quite often (sometimes I buy records and pick which song is my favorite before I actually play them, and I find that I am right almost half the time).

Since I had never spoken to this woman (her name was Annette) and had only an anecdotal understanding of what she looked like, my best avenue for cementing our future passion was to send her a letter, which is what I did. And since David Letterman was very popular at the time (and since I am not cre-

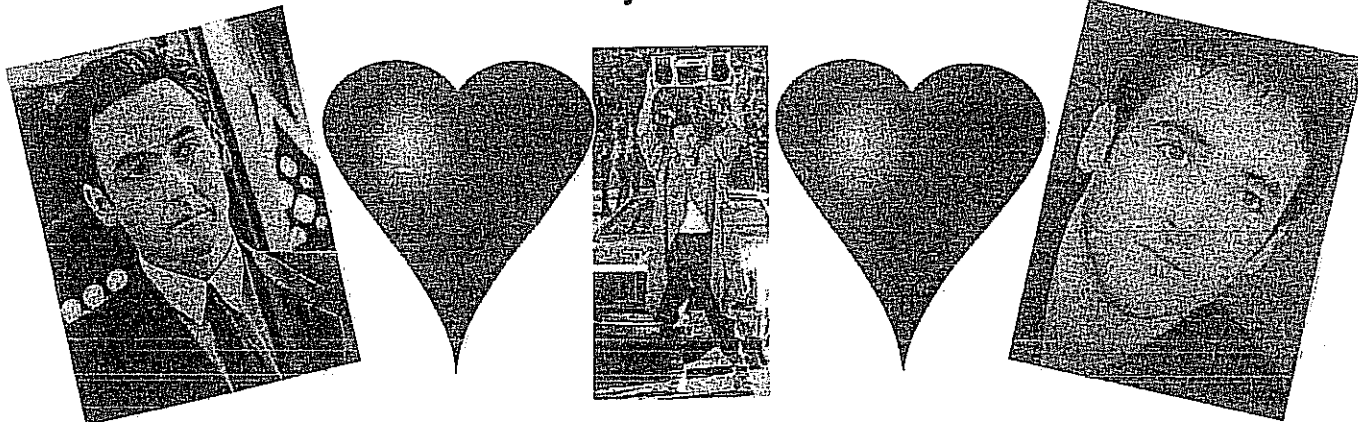
ative, and since I was nineteen), I sent her a comically agile Top 10 List, which I titled "The Top 10 Reasons Annette Should Fall in Love with Chuck Klosterman." My assumption was that we would share our first kiss forty-eight to seventy-two hours after she received this missive, particularly because of the cleverness of reason number 4, which was as follows:

4) I am almost a carnivore.

Unfortunately, Annette wasn't my soul mate. She also was not an English major, a fact that became abundantly clear when our mutual friend told me he talked to her on the telephone and asked her about my letter, to which she replied, "Why would I possibly want to date someone who eats other humans?" And the thing that broke my heart wasn't that she didn't know the definition of the word *carnivore*; I could live with that. What killed me was that she thought I had claimed to be "almost a cannibal," and that didn't work, either.

ENG4U1 Dissecting a Persuasive Essay:

"This is Emo" by Chuck Klosterman



1. In your own words, what is Chuck Klosterman's **thesis**?
2. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with Klosterman's thesis? Why or why not? Connect your explanation to your own experience, personal observations, and prior knowledge while still referring to the essay (do not get off topic).
3. What is the **tone** of this essay? How does the tone of the essay impact Klosterman's thesis/arguments? How does Klosterman's tone affect his **credibility** as an author? Explain in thorough detail.
4. Identify three **PRO** arguments that Klosterman uses to support his thesis, and comment on the effectiveness of each.
5. Identify one **CON** argument that Klosterman presents in his essay, and comment on its effectiveness.
6. Identify two **internal strategies** that Klosterman uses in his essay, and comment on the effectiveness of each.
7. Identify two **rhetorical devices**, and comment on the purpose and effectiveness of each.
8. In his essay, Klosterman uses a significant amount of **allusions** in order to clarify his arguments and support his thesis. In your opinion, are all Klosterman's chosen allusions effective? Choose one allusion that you consider particularly effective (why?), and choose one that you feel detracts from the thesis (why?). Does Klosterman use too many allusions in his essay? Why or why not?
9. Consider Aristotle's rhetorical triangle in relation to this essay. Does Klosterman present a balanced argument? Is Chuck Klosterman persuasive in this piece? Why or why not?

