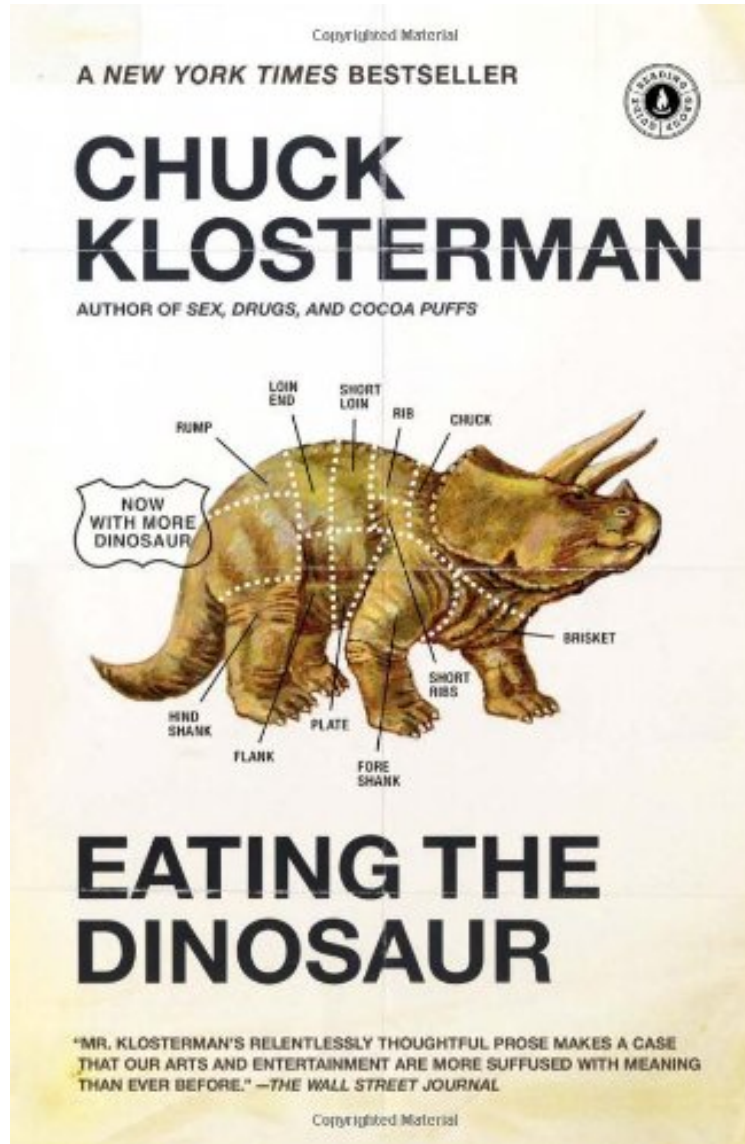


## Eating the Dinosaur

Chuck Klosterman

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#308605 in Books Chuck Klosterman 2010-07-06 2010-07-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.44 x .90 x 5.50l, .59 #File Name: 1416544216304 pages Eating the Dinosaur | File size: 43.Mb

**Chuck Klosterman : Eating the Dinosaur** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eating the Dinosaur:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Not Klosterman's best work By Kat AI am a big fan of Chuck Klosterman and I always eagerly pick up his new books when they come out. My favorites are always his books of essays, so I was excited to read this one. I liked it, but I didn't love it. I felt a little bit like he's running low on commentary and he was really reaching with some of his essays. In some cases, his comparisons or pronouncements

seem to be a bit of a stretch and not as easy to follow as in the past. Part of it may be me - I'm getting a little bit older and less hip and relevant:) It may be that I'm just not connecting to his work in the same way as I used to. However, I went back and reread a few essays from Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and still felt like these were right on! I felt like these early essays were easier to grab on to and find a connection with compared to this new collection. This current book is a bit more abstract and seems less connected than previous work. His pronouncements seemed like they weren't as on target and his comparisons seemed a bit odd. I didn't always follow what he was saying. (Again, part of this might be me!) Overall, it isn't a terrible book, but it moved a bit slower and was harder to grasp than his earlier work. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Captivating and thoughtful By Mihow The book starts with a fun premise I have never considered before, nor have I read others considering it: why do people answer interview questions? Then it meanders through readable topic after readable topic. Even if you can't relate to the subject matter (random 80's could have been superstar, Chris Gaines) the insight is immediate and recognizable. Every essay in this collection makes me want to find out more info on a specific subject. This is my first Klosterman book, only being familiar with his podcasts and writings on Grantland. The best thing that can be said is after finishing, I immediately ordered 5 more of his books (used, sorry Chuck). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Shelly Interesting and good book to read.

After a bestselling and acclaimed diversion into fiction, Chuck Klosterman, author of Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs, returns to the form in which he has been spectacularly successful with a collection of essays about our consumption of pop culture and sports. Q: What is this book about? A: Well, that's difficult to say. I haven't read it yet. I've just picked it up and casually glanced at the back cover. There clearly isn't a plot. I've heard there's a lot of stuff about time travel in this book, and quite a bit about violence and Garth Brooks and why Germans don't laugh when they're inside grocery stores. Ralph Nader and Ralph Sampson play significant roles. I think there are several pages about Rear Window and college football and Mad Men and why Rivers Cuomo prefers having sex with Asian women. Supposedly there's a chapter outlining all the things the Unabomber was right about, but perhaps I'm misinformed. Q: Is there a larger theme? A: Oh, something about reality. What is reality, maybe? No, that's not it. Not exactly. I get the sense that most of the core questions dwell on the way media perception constructs a fake reality that ends up becoming more meaningful than whatever actually happened. Also, Lady Gaga. Q: Should I read this book? A: Probably. Do you see a clear relationship between the Branch Davidian disaster and the recording of Nirvana's In Utero? Does Barack Obama make you want to drink Pepsi? Does ABBA remind you of AC/DC? If so, you probably don't need to read this book. You probably wrote this book. But I suspect everybody else will totally love it, except for the ones who totally hate it.

From Publishers Weekly In his new essay collection, author and cultural commentator Klosterman (Chuck Klosterman IV) parallels Kurt Cobain with David Koresh, Weezer with Warner Herzog and Ralph Nader, and posits a future in which Unabomber Ted Kaczynski's manifesto is viewed as "the most prescient work of the 1990s." In short, there is something to excite and/or enrage any reader engaged with popular culture in the last 20 years. One of few cultural essayists to enjoy a wide readership, Klosterman's Lester Bangs-lite approach is frequently engaging, if scattershot; too often, he engages in fleeting pop-culture references that evoke the laziest kind of critical cred-grubbing (a typical throwaway jab at indie band TV on the Radio leaves readers with no idea what criticism, if any, Klosterman is leveling). Klosterman even neglects to engage some of his subjects on their artistic merits, such as Nirvana's final album, In Utero: after making much of the disc's pre-release hype, he all but refuses to discuss his reaction as a listener. Even with the inclusion of an article on football (which he admits will turn off "40 percent" of his readers), Klosterman never ventures outside of his comfort zone; though he thrives on challenging his readers, he fails to challenge himself. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Chuck Klosterman is the New York Times bestselling author of seven previous books, including Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs; Eating the Dinosaur; Killing Yourself to Live; and The Visible Man. His debut book, Fargo Rock City, was the winner of the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award. He has written for GQ, Esquire, Spin, The Washington Post, The Guardian, The Believer, and The Onion A.V. Club. He currently serves as The Ethicist for the New York Times Magazine and writes about sports and popular culture for ESPN. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Something Instead of Nothing 1 For the first twelve years of my adult life, I sustained a professional existence by asking questions to strangers and writing about what they said. "Why did you do it?" I would ask these strangers. It did not matter what it was. "What were you thinking while you did that? Did it satisfy you? What does it mean to be satisfied? Do you consider yourself to be famous? How does it feel to be famous? How did this experience change you? What elements didn't change? What will never change? What drives you? Are you lying to me right now? Why should I care about what you are saying? Is this all a construction? Are you constructed? Who constructed you? What was their purpose? Does God exist? Why or why not? Thank you very much. It was great meeting you in the lobby of this unnecessarily expensive hotel." This has been a tremendous way to earn a living. Who wouldn't enjoy getting paid for being curious? Journalism allows almost anyone to direct questions they would never ask of their own friends at random people; since the ensuing dialogue exists for commercial purposes, both parties

accept an acceleration of intimacy. People give emotional responses, but those emotions are projections. The result (when things go well) is a dynamic, adversarial, semi-real conversation. I am at ease with this. If given a choice between interviewing someone or talking to them "for real," I prefer the former; I don't like having the social limitations of tact imposed upon my day-to-day interactions and I don't enjoy talking to most people more than once or twice in my lifetime. 2 For the past five years, I've spent more time being interviewed than conducting interviews with other people. I am not complaining about this, nor am I proud of it -- it's just the way things worked out, mostly by chance. But the experience has been confusing. Though I always understand why people ask me the same collection of questions, I never know why I answer them. Frankly, I don't know why anyone answers anything. The obvious explanation is that the interviewee is hoping to promote a product or a concept (or the "concept of themselves," which is its own kind of product), but that's reductive and often untrue; once a media entity makes the decision to conduct and produce an interview with a particular somebody, the piece is going to exist regardless of how the subject responds to the queries. The interviewee can say anything, even if those sentiments contradict reality. They can deliver nothing but clichés, but the story will still run. On three occasions I've consciously (and blatantly) attempted to say boring things during an interview in the hope of killing the eventual article. It only worked once. But this type of behavior is rare. Most of the time, I pretend to be interesting. I try to frame my response in the context in which the question was asked, and I try to say things I haven't said before. But I have no clue as to why I do this (or why anyone else does, either). During the summer of 2008, I was interviewed by a Norwegian magazine writer named Erik Moller Solheim. He was good at his job. He knew a lot of trivia about Finland's military history. We ate fried pork knees and drank Ur-Krostitzer beer. But in the middle of our playful conversation, I was suddenly paralyzed by an unspoken riddle I could not answer: Why was I responding to this man's questions? My books are not translated into Norwegian. If the journalist sent me a copy of his finished article, I could not read a word of it. I don't even know what the publication's name (Dagens Naeringsliv) is supposed to mean. I will likely never go to Norway, and even if I did, the fact that I was interviewed for this publication would have no impact on my time there. No one would care. The fjords would be underwhelmed. As such, I considered the possible motives for my actions: 1. I felt I had something important to say. Except I did not. No element of our interaction felt important to me. If anything, I felt unqualified to talk about the things the reporter was asking me. I don't have that much of an opinion about why certain Black Metal bands burn down churches. 2. It's my job. Except that it wasn't. I wasn't promoting anything. In fact, the interaction could have been detrimental to my career, were I to have inadvertently said something insulting about the king of Norway. Technically, there was more downside than upside. 3. I have an unconscious, unresolved craving for attention. Except that this feels inaccurate. It was probably true twenty years ago, but those desires have waned. Besides, who gives a fuck about being famous in a country I'll never visit? Why would that feel good to anyone? How would I even know it was happening? 4. I had nothing better to do. This is accurate, but not satisfactory. 5. I'm a nice person. Unlikely. 6. When asked a direct question, it's human nature to respond. This, I suppose, is the most likely explanation. It's the crux of Frost/Nixon. But if this is true, why is it true? What is the psychological directive that makes an unanswered question discomfiting? Why do people talk? 3 Why do people talk? Why do people answer the questions you ask them? Is there a unifying force that prompts people to respond? Errol Morris: Probably not, except possibly that people feel this need to give an account of themselves. And not just to other people, but to themselves. Just yesterday, I was being interviewed by a reporter from the New York Observer, and we were talking about whether or not people have privileged access to their own minds. Privileged access? EM: My mind resides somewhere inside of myself. That being the case, one would assume I have privileged access to it. In theory, I should be able to ask myself questions and get different answers than I would from other people, such as you. But I'm not sure we truly have privileged access to our own minds. I don't think we have any idea who we are. I think we're engaged in a constant battle to figure out who we are. I sometimes think of interviews as some oddball human relationship that's taking place in a laboratory setting. I often feel like a primatologist. Do you feel like you know the people that you interview? Because I feel as though I never do. It seems like a totally fake relationship. EM: I don't feel like I know myself, let alone the people I interview. I might actually know the people I interview better than I know myself. A friend of mine once said that you can never trust a person who doesn't talk much, because how else do you know what they're thinking? Just by the act of being willing to talk about oneself, the person is revealing something about who they are. But what is the talker's motive? Why did you decide to talk to the New York Observer? Why are you talking to me right now? EM: Well, okay. Let's use the example of Robert McNamara. Why does McNamara feel the need to talk to me -- or to anyone -- at this point in his life? Because there's a very strong human desire to do so. It might be to get approval from someone, even if that person is just me. It might even be to get a sense of condemnation from people. Maybe it's just programmed into us as people. McNamara also had this weird "approach-avoidance" thing: He agreed to do the interview because he assumed I was part of the promotion of his [then new] book. I called him around the same time his book was coming out, and he thought it was just part of that whole deal. When he realized it was not, he became apprehensive and said he didn't think he was going to do it. But then he did, and it went on for well over a year. In fact, I continued to interview him for a long time after that movie was finished, just because I found it very interesting. But why did McNamara keep talking? EM: He said he enjoyed talking to me. That was his explanation. 2A

While working for newspapers during the 1990s, I imagined that being interviewed by other reporters would be fun. I assumed answering questions would be easier than asking them. This proved completely untrue. The process of being interviewed is much more stressful than the process of interrogating someone. If you make a mistake while you're interviewing someone else, there is no penalty (beyond the fact that it will be harder to write a complete story). But if you make a mistake while being interviewed -- if you admit something you'd prefer to keep secret, or if you flippantly answer a legitimately serious question, or if you thoughtlessly disparage a peer you barely know, or if you answer the phone while on drugs -- that mistake will inevitably become the focus of whatever is written. As a reporter, you live for those anecdotal mistakes. Mistakes are where you find hidden truths. But as a person, anecdotal mistakes define the experience of being misunderstood; anecdotal mistakes are used to make metaphors that explain the motives of a person who is sort of like you, but not really. 4 "The people who come on This American Life have often never heard of our show, or have never even heard of NPR, so they have no idea what the conversation is going to be. It's very abstract. And we're on the frontier of doing journalism that's so personal, no normal journalist would even consider it. That's part of it. It's hard to resist whenever someone really wants to listen to you. That's a very rare thing in most of our lives. I'm a pretty talky person who deals with lots of sensitive people every single day, but if someone really listens to me and cares about what I say for ten minutes in the course of a day -- that's a lot. Some days that doesn't happen at all." [These are the words of Ira Glass, host of This American Life, the tent-pole program for most National Public Radio stations. It was later turned into a television show for Showtime. Glass has an immediately recogniza...