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“HANNIBAL LECTER AND PHILOSOPHY” (Book Review)

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Not long ago, a juicy-looking tome entitled **HANNIBAL LECTER AND PHILOSOPHY: THE HEART OF THE MATTER** landed on my doorstep. Edited by Joseph Westfall, the paperback book holds 268 pages and is part of Open Court Publishing's academic "Popular Culture and Philosophy" series, which delves into music, movies, books, characters, and more within sociological and philosophical contexts.

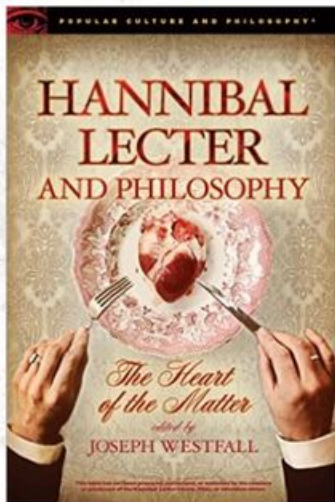
Open Court's series reveals entire worlds not often examined in pop culture in such circumstances, and for an intellectually hungry segment of the masses, these books are quite interesting. **HANNIBAL LECTER AND PHILOSOPHY** is a fruit particularly ripe for picking among a tree such as this, as everyone's favorite cannibal is quite the philosopher himself. The **HANNIBAL** TV series, as lush and prematurely cut short as it was, was a fine wine of aesthetic images and discourse on philosophy. Played with murderously fine panache by Mads Mikkelsen, Hannibal often ruminated with his playthings (particularly doomed FBI profiler Will Graham) on the nature of man and God.

One particularly interesting chapter is also the first; Mandy-Suzanne Wong's "Cosmopolitan Cannibal" is a fun exploration of an imagined meeting between Hannibal and a writer who philosophizes about gourmet food in Copenhagen. As they explore the city, they discuss concepts such as "bare life" (plants and animals used for food) and how they factor into our place in the world.

Another chapter, "What's So Bad About Eating People?" by Benjamin McCraw focuses on the types of people that Hannibal disposes, which of them he chooses to eat, and the kind of people who rise his ire to the point where he simply must banish him from the world. Like Dexter Morgan, Hannibal Lecter has a code. Unlike Dexter, it's not a moral code, but more of a guideline to who's offensively rude—and therefore indirectly begging to be killed. As ordinary humans who want to avoid jail time or other unsavory consequences, fictional killers like Hannibal and Dexter are absolutely delightful to watch. They channel a need for justice (usually) in a world where justice is often stunted.

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Derrick L. Hassert's "The Psychiatrist As Sociopathic God" explores the role of Hannibal as psychiatrist in addition to his work with Will Graham, Mason and Margot Verger, and other patients. Daniel Malloy's "Office Hours Are For Patients" examines ethical codes and restrictions that the profession of psychiatry holds for Lecter as a practicing doctor, as well as for Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier (played with smoldering, yet icy indifference by Gillian Anderson in the show).

"Psychopaths, Outlaws, And Us" by Richard McClelland is a thought-provoking essay on the categories that Lecter has been lumped into—usually incorrectly. McClelland discusses the nuances between psychopaths and sociopaths (also called secondary psychopaths), where empathy makes all the difference, and where Lecter may or may not fit. "A Little Empathy For Hannibal Is A Dangerous Thing" by Tim Jones goes into depth about empaths and empathy as it pertains to Hannibal, Will, murderers, and society at large.

"A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Dinner Party" by the editor Joseph Westfall will make you smile; the chapter explores all the ways that Hannibal (the character) adds humor to the books, films, and show. Sometimes the humor is for the audience, sometimes Lecter mocks other characters in more ruthless ways, but Hannibal the funny cannibal is always interesting.

You get the idea. I'll stop before I list and describe every single chapter in the book, but there's a lot of meat here, and while some cuts are dry, others are far more tender. It really depends on your palate. HANNIBAL LECTER AND PHILOSOPHY is a true multicourse meal—one worth savoring. The book is [available at Amazon](#) and wherever books are sold. You can learn more about Open Court Publishing and other titles available [here](#).

Sharing is caring!

