

Psychopath Aesthetics: The Example of the Cannibal

DOMINIQUE GRACIA

University of Exeter

Abstract. Serious crime is often aestheticized on television through the female (or feminized) body of the victim. Forced to reveal themselves as objects for interrogation, dissection, and examination, these bodies are presented for our consumption. Here, I ask whether such consumed objects can be classed as beautiful in a Kantian sense by turning to a particular case of what I call psychopath aesthetics: those of the notorious fictional cannibal, Hannibal Lecter, in *Hannibal* on NBC (2013–15). *Hannibal's* central anthropophagy compounds the synaesthetic association between beautiful murders and delicious deaths, aesthetics and taste. Whilst the horrific and taboo nature of Hannibal's crimes might seem to preclude any Kantian approach to beauty, I explore how his acting out of his psychopath morality in accordance with a psychopath aesthetics is grounded in Kantian hope and judgments of taste.

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Amongst the many television series focused on murder, the aesthetics of that crime are routinely on display as part of the intended horror of the stories. Those who find such displays of human violence and human violation beautiful are — the narrative goes — psychopaths. Yet, these series are also heavily invested in 'staring at bodies', displaying an aesthetic appreciation of the murdered body at every opportunity and reinforcing the validity of such a psychopath aesthetics.¹ Victims' bodies provide a 'space in which the narrative unfolds'.² They are presented thus for the audience's consumption, the raw products of murder transformed into consumables for which we — like many of the murderers — have an apparently insatiable taste. In this essay, I turn to a particular case of psychopath aesthetics in which consumption and taste are essential literal and metaphorical concerns: NBC's most recent incarnation of Hannibal Lecter, *Hannibal* (2013–15).

The aestheticizing of the murdered body in crime drama often involves presenting the female body as an object for interrogation, dissection, and examination: naked, penetrated, or otherwise forced by the killer to reveal

¹ Charlotte Brunson, 'Structure of Anxiety: Recent British Television Crime Fiction', *Screen*, 39.3 (1998), 223–43 (p. 242).

² Alex Murray, 'Autoptic Film', *Cardozo Law Review*, 31.4 (2010), 1217–31 (p. 1217).

herself to us. Feminist analyses of formative series such as *Prime Suspect* and *Silent Witness* have addressed the feminization of victims and the display of the female or feminized body, including work by Kathleen Gregory Klein, who argues that ‘the victim [...] is, despite biology, always female’, and Sue Thornam, who develops that view in her examination of women as ‘overpresent as bodies/images’ in film and television.³ However, as Tina Weber notes in her detailed analyses of hundreds of episodes of a range of post-millennium American television series, ‘the beautification of deceased females [...] is now [...] outnumbered by the altered male dead’, and in series such as *CSI* or *Six Feet Under* ‘male corpses were predominantly shown’.⁴ *Hannibal* is in this tradition, and creator Bryan Fuller has described how the series seeks to avoid a focus on sexual or sexualized violence, including the constant opening of the female body to the viewer.⁵ Accordingly, I turn here to other approaches to understand the show’s psychopath aesthetics.

Hannibal shares various visual motifs with Fuller’s earlier work that aestheticizes death, such as *Dead Like Me* (2003–04) and *Pushing Daisies* (2007–09), reflecting what *Hannibal* producer Martha de Laurentiis calls Fuller’s ‘impeccable taste’.⁶ However, as Sorcha Ní Fhlainn notes, *Hannibal* turns serial killing ‘into an inventive creative industry’ whereby ‘victims’ bodies are recast as raw materials to be transformed and commodified for our visual pleasure’ and the series’ art direction, design, and make up ‘explicitly commodif[y] innocent flesh into abject works of art’.⁷ It is thus *Hannibal*’s own ‘impeccable taste’ that lends the series its particular character, inviting us to consider its psychopath aesthetics from within its own frame of reference. There is much that could be said about *Hannibal* as spectacular television, ranked joint third in a recent survey about television series that viewers would label ‘beautiful’ and demonstrating the television crime series’ continued place ‘in the forefront of stylistic innovation’.⁸ However, here I scrutinize the series’

³ Kathleen Gregory Klein, ‘Habeas Corpus: Feminism and Detective Fiction’, in *Feminism in Women’s Detective Fiction*, ed. by Glenwood Irons (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 171–89 (p. 173); Sue Thornam, ‘“A Good Body”: The case of/for feminist media studies’, *European Journal of Culture*, 6.1 (2003), 75–94 (p. 75).

⁴ Tina Weber, *Drop Dead Gorgeous: Representations of Corpses in American TV Shows* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2011), pp. 113, 171. Weber’s findings can be contrasted with those of Elisabeth Bronfen regarding deceased women in art and literature in *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

⁵ Jill Pantozzi, ‘*Hannibal*’s Bryan Fuller Discusses the “Ubiquitous” Use of Sexual Assault on Television’, *The Mary Sue*, <<https://www.themarysue.com/bryan-fuller-discusses-sexual-assault-tv/>> [accessed 17 November 2017].

⁶ Jesse McLean, *The Art and Making of Hannibal: The Television Series* (London: Titan Books, 2015), p. 10.

⁷ Sorcha Ní Fhlainn, ‘Screening the American Gothic: Celluloid Serial Killers in American Popular Culture’, in *American Gothic Culture: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. by Joel Faflak and Jason Haslam (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 187–202 (p. 200).

⁸ Helen Wheatley, *Spectacular Television: Exploring Televisual Pleasure* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), p. 115; Sue Turnbull, ‘Crime as entertainment: The case of the TV crime drama’, *Continuum*, 24.6 (2010), 819–27 (p. 824).

internal philosophical premises regarding beauty in line with Helen Wheatley's argument that many of the most 'beautiful' television series are judged so based on a conjunction of visual data and plot content.⁹

In so doing, I build upon Joel Black's *The Aesthetics of Murder* (1991), which approaches murder 'from an aesthetic-critical, rather than from a "moral-rational", perspective'.¹⁰ I, however, distinguish psychopath aesthetics from both Black's 'aesthetics of murder', which focuses on the 'performance art' of the act itself,¹¹ and what Sonia Baelo Allué calls the 'aesthetics of serial killing', in which crime drama turns murder 'into an aesthetic game' of crime-solving, with 'enjoyment derived from discovering patterns'.¹² *Hannibal's* psychopath aesthetics pertains to the consumption of the products of murder — corpses, skins, organ meat — that have been made tasteful, tasty, or both. This approach is apposite for Thomas Harris's notorious serial killer, as in his literary form Hannibal is given the 'status' of 'a high artist, a murderous aesthete', his crimes 'not permitted on stage in their unmediated present, but only in retrospective tableaux'.¹³ *Hannibal* retains this disinterest in the act of murder itself, or its punishment, with Hannibal's killings rarely featuring on-screen and the pursuit of him by law enforcement granted a very different status to the killers-of-the-week. It is the psychopath aesthetics of the products of murder that is key to the series' treatment of his crimes.

In turning to *Hannibal*, I consider consumption as a potentially aesthetic act and ask whether consumed objects are beautiful. Allué calls finding the acts of serial killers who 'pose' their victims 'artistic' 'one of the pleasures of serial killer literature and cinema'.¹⁴ *Hannibal* allows us this pleasure, as viewers, while also asking us to observe Will Graham's struggles to decide whether or not he does, in 'real life', find the products of murder beautiful in a Kantian sense.

Kantian aesthetics for the psychopath

Immanuel Kant's theory of aesthetics may appear an unusual choice for framing psychopath aesthetics, as Kant intimately relates aesthetics and morality. Yet, critics such as Black and Michelle Brown have demonstrated

⁹ Wheatley argues that many of those series ranked most beautiful in her survey feature 'characters exploring a landscape, searching for clues within that landscape, and often, simultaneously, some sense of existential meaning from it' (*Spectacular Television*, p. 116).

¹⁰ Joel Black, *The Aesthetics of Murder: A Study in Romantic Literature and Contemporary Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.14. Black also refers briefly to 'paranoiac aesthetics' but does not develop the concept (p. 93).

¹² Sonia Baelo Allué, 'The Aesthetics of Serial Killing: Working Against Ethics in "The Silence of the Lambs" (1988) and "American Psycho" (1991)', *Atlantis*, 24.2 (2002), 7–24 (p. 8). There is an element of gamification in the crime-genre content of *Hannibal* surrounding the various killers-of-the-week, but it rarely pertains to Hannibal's own crimes, and such content decreases over the course of the series.

¹³ Nicholas M. Williams, 'Eating Blake, or an Essay on Taste: The Case of Thomas Harris's "Red Dragon"', *Cultural Critique*, 42 (1999), 137–62 (p. 153).

¹⁴ Allué, 'Aesthetics of Serial Killing', p. 11.

the relevance of Kantian aesthetics to criminal acts, with Black following Thomas De Quincey's nineteenth-century challenge to Kant's 'assum[ption] of a coherent, nonproblematic relation between ethics and aesthetics'.¹⁵ I suggest that Hannibal's own ethics — a sort of psychopath morality — shares certain hallmarks with Kant's and can be related to his psychopath aesthetics — and ultimately to the question of beauty — in a Kantian way.

Kant links taste and morality by suggesting that appreciating natural beauty is the mark of a good soul. Our supposedly disinterested judgment of taste — 'This is beautiful' — connects to our intellectual, 'moral interest' in 'realizing our moral ends' because we take nature's 'beautiful forms' as 'traces or hints of nature's harmony with those ends'; that is to say, a disinterested judgment of taste is followed by an interested 'pleasure in natural beauty's existence'. This is because, as 'rational agents', we 'have certain aims, and, by extension, any indication that nature is amenable to the realization of those aims is significant to us'.¹⁶

Hannibal provides a taste of this sort of psychopath aesthetics — and psychopath morality — in the pilot's killer-of-the-week, a cannibal named Garret Jacob Hobbs.¹⁷ Hobbs's philosophy of murder, we learn, is to 'honor every part' of his victims.¹⁸ Here, 'honor' means 'use', 'like a good hunter would'.¹⁹ As his daughter, Abigail, explains, hair is used to make cushions, bones glue, *et cetera*. Consumption is total, or else it is 'just murder'.²⁰ The adverb implies a moral code wherein murder *is* wrong, but the meaning of the word has been reconfigured to mean a wilful killing that is also wasteful. Hobbs's judgment of taste, then, might deem the corpses of his victims beautiful because there is a harmony between them and his moral code, which figures murder as 'honoring' if the products of murder are effectively used.²¹ *Hannibal* features a range of killers whose psychopath aesthetics share this interest in the natural

¹⁵ Black, *Aesthetics of Murder*, p. 15. See also Michelle Brown, 'The Aesthetics of Crime', in *Philosophy, Crime, and Criminology*, ed. by Bruce A. Arrigo and Christopher R. Williams (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 223–56.

¹⁶ Anne Margaret Baxley, 'The Practical Significance of Taste in Kant's "Critique of Judgment": Love of Natural Beauty as a Mark of Moral Character', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 63.1 (2005), 33–45 (pp. 36–37).

¹⁷ 'Apéritif', *Hannibal*, series 1, episode 1, dir. by David Slade (NBC, 2013).

¹⁸ 'Potage', *Hannibal*, series 1, episode 3, dir. by David Slade (NBC, 2013). Will grasps that Hobbs is 'honoring' his victims in 'Apéritif', but that word is only later put into Hobbs's mouth.

¹⁹ McLean, *Art and Making*, p. 118. Culinary consultant, José Andrés, also suggests that the 'gastronomically savvy' Hannibal shares this element of Hobbs's psychopath morality: 'he's so meticulous that I know he wouldn't let one body part go to waste' (McLean, p. 41). Such nose-to-tail cooking carries a positive moral valence, suggestive of Hobbs's view of the conditions under which 'meat is murder'.

²⁰ 'Potage'.

²¹ This redefinition of murder is *ex post facto*, as it relies upon Hobbs's successful consumption of all the products of murder. In the case of Elise Nichols, whose body Hobbs returns to her family home because 'something was wrong with the meat', we can see Hobbs failing to rewrite his murder as honoring, and so seeking to atone for it with the return of her body to her parents and the application of antler velvet, which 'promotes healing', to her fatal wounds ('Apéritif').

beauty of the human form through how various elements like meat or skin tone indicate a harmony with their psychopath morality. As they exist in this series, at least, psychopath aesthetics thus both stretch Kant's insistence on the moral connection with beauty and rely upon it.

Hobbs's psychopath aesthetics of absence both hints at and contrasts with Hannibal's own, which are deployed in the service of seeing. So, for example, his first in-series murder, copying Hobbs, seeks to 'help good Will to see [the killer's] face', and Will says: 'It's like he had to show me a negative so I could see the positive'.²² Similarly, Hannibal's murders as the Chesapeake Ripper serve not only the utilitarian purpose of harvesting meat, but show the world that those people are as rude as 'pigs' and killed in 'sounders' accordingly.²³ Although the products of Hannibal's murders are presented in varied ways, they always align to a moral principle or 'aim', echoing the link that Kant makes between taste and morality. Hannibal actor Mads Mikkelsen describes his character as a 'reverse person' who 'sees beauty where the rest of us are seeing horror', but we might think of him, in terms of his aesthetic philosophy, as akin to a 'reverse Kant'.²⁴

Are such consumed objects beautiful?

This analysis of psychopath aesthetics rests on the question of whether the products of murder, presented for consumption, can be described as beautiful in a Kantian sense. That is to say, do these objects: (1) elicit a subjective yet disinterested enjoyment; (2) invite a belief that everyone should judge the object in the same way; and (3) have a form of purposiveness? And, finally, (4) is the judgment that the object is beautiful necessary? Here, I aim not to provide a proof of the beauty of any particular consumed object, but to show how Kant's moments of beauty might be thought of in the context of psychopath aesthetics.

Before tackling these questions, following Kant, we should ask a prior one: are these objects 'natural'? Created art-objects, such as paintings, cannot provide the necessary 'indications about nature's moral purposiveness', and so our judgments about them cannot qualify as disinterested judgments of taste.²⁵ Yet Mark Seltzer quotes a former FBI profiler as saying: 'If you want to understand the artist, you have to look at the painting', where murderer equals artist and the products of murder equal art.²⁶ This is echoed in Will's catchphrase when describing his intuited understanding of the psychopath's crimes: 'This is my

²² 'Apéritif'.

²³ 'Sorbet', *Hannibal*, series 1, episode 7, dir. by James Foley (NBC, 2013).

²⁴ McLean, *Art and Making*, p. 63.

²⁵ Baxley, 'Practical Significance', p. 40.

²⁶ Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 121.

design'.²⁷ These displayed corpses *do* seem to incorporate 'the artist's intention to please us', which would make our interest 'merely indirect'.²⁸ Trivially, then, the products of murder are produced, 'innocent flesh' turned 'into abject works of art'.

Must we, then, abandon Kant here because our objects are not 'natural'? Not quite. In the first instance, we might distinguish the products of murder from the 'artistic use of natural beauties for our adornments', which Kant discards as 'vanity'.²⁹ This is not the Decadent's wearing of a faded rose. This only gets us a little way forward, however. Instead, I want to employ a reflection by *Hannibal* production designer Patti Podesta about her understanding of Hannibal's psychopath aesthetics, which draws on Gilles Deleuze: 'the sadist needs to obliterate an object that has become a sign for the world or nature, in order to commune with his own re-natured nature', and 'everything around him [sh]ould be produced with this idea of the obliteration of actual nature to have a sort of perfection'.³⁰ If we are investigating a Kantian psychopath aesthetics, then, founded on a psychopath morality, we might turn to a 're-natured nature' when it comes to the question of beauty. Renaturing is a restorative process that, in the context of a psychopath aesthetics, holds nature *per se* as tasteless. Renatured nature is revealed in the products of murder, in the process of presenting those products for consumption. Thus, they come to be 'compatible' with how the psychopath's 'mind works' and 'accord with [their] intellectual needs'.³¹ Then, they can be beautiful.

If we accept the validity of applying the notion of Kantian beauty to the products of murder, then let us consider whether some of the consumed objects are, in fact, beautiful. I explore two examples from Will's perspective: the body of Beverly Katz, which is sliced, preserved, and displayed in a set of transparent vertical sheets; and the human mural of Reflected Man, in which a number of dead bodies, chosen for their precise skin tone, are stitched together to resemble the iris of an eye staring up at the sky.³² The former, I suggest, proves beautiful in a Kantian sense; the latter does not.

Firstly, do these objects elicit a subjective yet disinterested enjoyment? Beverly's body certainly elicits no pleasure because of its existence; it is, after all, the product of an esteemed colleague's death. Yet, there is also something (horribly) pleasing about the sight itself. Will's face is partially obscured by a bite guard and his body restrained during his first encounter of the body, but the flicker of his eyes downwards, taking in the whole of Beverly's body, and the audible quickening of his breathing convey a response that is suggestive

²⁷ First used in 'Apéritif', it forms part of the gamification of crime solving.

²⁸ Baxley, 'Practical Significance', p. 39.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁰ McLean, *Art and Making*, p. 24.

³¹ Baxley, 'Practical Significance', p. 40.

³² 'Mukozuke', *Hannibal*, series 2, episode 5, dir. by Michael Rymer (NBC, 2014); 'Sakizuke', *Hannibal*, series 2, episode 2, dir. by Tim Hunter (NBC, 2014).

of arousal as much as distress. The series is constructed around the theme of Will's so-called empathy disorder, which makes it hard for him to 'make [him]self look' at the products of murder because, in doing so, he comes to share, at least momentarily, the killer's psychopath aesthetics.³³ In this moment, then, we must read not only the grief of a colleague's loss, but also the appreciation for the psychopath aesthetics that have produced the display of Beverly's body for his consumption. The judgment of taste comes unbidden and unwanted to him.

Reflected Man's initial mural elicits an immediate judgment of taste, but from Hannibal: 'I love your work'. Will cannot share this response because he does not witness the mural unadulterated. Instead, Will witnesses the mural only after Hannibal has stitched Reflected Man into it, a modification of Reflected Man's 'design' that is a violation of its renatured naturalness. Will is not immediately struck by the mural as beautiful but by the fact that 'I [Reflected Man] made you', and then that it has been interfered with.³⁴ The mural is an object of analysis, not an object of beauty. It forms part of the 'aesthetics of serial killing', not a psychopath aesthetics.

Leaving aside the mural, then, secondly, does Beverly's body — as a product of murder — invite a belief that everyone should judge it in the same way? This question is a challenging one, as *psychopath* aesthetics must involve a subset of the population. I explore the question of a shared judgment of taste in detail in the following section. Here, suffice it to say that, viewing Beverly's body from an 'aesthetic-critical' rather than 'moral-rational' perspective, it bears a sense of universality. The dissection invites contemplation of the human body in its wonderful generality, a fascinating biological machine, each one alike but unique.

Thirdly, do these objects have a form of purposiveness? Again, a comparison is helpful. The human mural has two very explicit forms of purposiveness in its final presentation: revealing to Will Hannibal's continuing criminality, and undermining Reflected Man's atheistic angst. 'There is no God', he declares as Hannibal stitches him into the mural, only for Hannibal to quip back: 'Certainly not with that attitude'. Hannibal gives the muralist a religious lesson: 'your eye will now see God reflected back. It will see you'. On the other hand, Beverly's body, as Will acknowledges, is unable to point the way to her killer.³⁵ It is not evidence. Nor is it a lesson to Beverly herself, who was presumably unaware of how her body might finally be presented. Any possible message to Will is so deeply coded that it is never revealed. And yet, its appearance *feels* meaningful beyond its tragic nature. A 'why' is intimated but not revealed. As viewers, we understand Beverly's body as having a form of purposiveness that is accessible

³³ 'Coquilles', *Hannibal*, series 1, episode 5, dir. by Guillermo Navarro (NBC, 2013).

³⁴ 'Sakizuke'.

³⁵ In his imagining of the killer's thoughts and behavior, he notes, 'I will leave no usable evidence' ('Mukozuke').

to the other characters, if not to us. The discovery of Reflected Man's kidney within Beverly's sliced body demonstrates as much.

Finally, is the judgment that Beverly's body is beautiful necessary? Does Will feel a sense of obligation in making the judgment that her body, presented for his visual consumption in this way, is beautiful? These questions we may safely answer in the affirmative. His initial response to the body is a felt one, and one that — in a way that horrifies him — he feels is a 'necessary' response to it. He must force himself, with the memory of Beverly as living, to consider the body as 'evidence' that he might attempt to 'read'.

By way of example, then, we can see how Kantian beauty might be applied meaningfully to the products of murder. But, aside from being an interesting exercise, what more might this application of Kantian beauty to *Hannibal's* psychopath aesthetics tell us about the series? To answer this question, we must turn in greater detail to the second moment — and, by connection, the fourth moment — and examine the question of Kantian hope.

What may I hope?

Hannibal's efforts to demonstrate the beautiful in the products of murder are allied with his developing an answer to this fundamental Kantian question: what may I hope? Kant positions hope as an attitude by which reason can address questions such as the existence of God, which cannot be answered by experience. Hope involves desire and an open mind: we desire a thing *and* consider that it might be possible, rather than wishing (mere desire) or expecting (belief that a thing *will* happen).³⁶ Deryck Beyleveld and Paul Ziche suggest that 'the prototypical object of hope' in Kant's work is 'future happiness', which is 'earned by acting morally' in a Kantian framework.³⁷

There is a further element to hope beyond happiness, however, which makes it relevant to our discussion of psychopath aesthetics. As Andrew Chignell notes, Kant's philosophy of hope addresses 'the progress of the species and the future of rationality as a whole'.³⁸ There is a commitment, in Kant's philosophy, to the development of taste and morality in others because 'we have a natural propensity (*Hang*) to society' and so have an 'interest in the universal communicability of our evaluations and feelings'.³⁹ Hannibal's future happiness entails answering in the affirmative questions about whether other people can share his psychopath morality and aesthetics, or, more simply, whether he can have a friend. To have such a friend, he must develop their taste to mirror

³⁶ This follows the definition of Kantian hope provided in Deryck Beyleveld and Paul Ziche, 'Towards a Kantian Phenomenology of Hope', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 18.5 (2015), 927–42 (pp. 928, 935).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 932, 934.

³⁸ Andrew Chignell, 'How do researchers study hope?', *Cornell Research* <<https://research.cornell.edu/news-features/how-do-researchers-study-hope>> [accessed 17 November 2017] (para. 6).

³⁹ Baxley, 'Practical Significance', p. 35.

his own. As a ‘reverse Kant’, Hannibal holds that a cultivated sensitivity to aesthetics prepares the mind for moral cognition, but the aesthetics and morality are those of the psychopath.

At the beginning of the series, Hannibal appears to have abandoned friendship. As his therapist, Bedelia Du Maurier, notes, he wears a ‘person suit’ and exists in social spaces ‘beyond the veil’.⁴⁰ In this regard, Hannibal is typical of the popular fictional serial killer, whom ‘we glorify [...] as a defender of private space’ and who ‘derives’ ‘autonomy’ ‘from silence, exile, and cunning’.⁴¹ Hannibal resists the friendly approaches of patient Franklyn Froideveaux and fellow serial killer Tobias Budge.⁴² Doing so, and his discussion of them and Will with Bedelia, ‘help[s him] to better understand what [he] want[s] in a friendship’: someone who is ‘worthy’ of it; as Bedelia implies, someone who ‘see[s him]’, ‘or ha[s] the ability to see [him]’ ‘beyond the veil’.⁴³ Will, with his empathic link to psychopaths, after killing Hobbs, shows a spark of ‘something that eventually can go down the same path as Hannibal’, as Mikkelsen suggests; or, as Hugh Dancy puts it, they share ‘a specific and elevated mentality’.⁴⁴ As Dancy admits, Will is ‘not just drawn to crime because he can solve it’ — the aesthetic that Allué identifies in serial killing — but ‘because it holds a very real allure for him’ as someone who can help Hannibal satisfy the second moment of beauty by being the other who can share his judgments of taste.⁴⁵

This sharing is vividly dramatized in a moment that questions *both* their senses of (gustatory) taste: when Will *possibly* tricks Hannibal when he offers ‘long pig’ — implicitly Freddie Lounds — to cook for dinner. We are invited to (half-) believe that Will has killed her;⁴⁶ yet we are also supposed to (half-) suspect Will of dissembling. The meat may not be Freddie, or even human at all. We have to question either Hannibal’s taste — ‘this meat isn’t pork’ — or Will’s, for savouring the ‘long pig’ he has invited Hannibal to serve.⁴⁷ Do they share a judgment of taste, or is Hannibal’s fallible after all? Hannibal’s hope of a friend thus remains part of the series’ ‘subjective future’, never finally determined.⁴⁸

Scrutinizing Kantian beauty, then, even when detached from Kantian ethics and attached to a psychopath aesthetics and a psychopath morality, helps us to link the thematic issues of *Hannibal* with the demands that its art direction makes on the discerning consumer. The pleasure of observing Hannibal’s psychopath aesthetics as a viewer who is safe from any physical danger is

⁴⁰ ‘Fromage’, *Hannibal*, series 1, episode 8, dir. by Tim Hunter (NBC, 2013).

⁴¹ Steffen Hantke, “‘The Kingdom of the Unimaginable’: The Construction of Social Space and the Fantasy of Privacy in Serial Killer Narratives”, *Film/Literature Quarterly*, 26.3 (1998), 178–95 (p. 188).

⁴² ‘Sorbet’.

⁴³ ‘Fromage’.

⁴⁴ McLean, *Art and Making*, pp. 112, 118.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁴⁶ Freddie returns in ‘Mizumono’, *Hannibal*, series 2, episode 13, dir. by David Slade (NBC, 2014).

⁴⁷ ‘Naka-choko’, *Hannibal*, series 2, episode 10, dir. by Vincenzo Natali (NBC, 2014).

⁴⁸ Beyleveld and Ziche, ‘Kantian Phenomenology of Hope’, p. 935.

not the easy pleasure of the viewer of a typical serial killer; rather, it is the dangerous pleasure of having Hannibal's psychopath aesthetics working upon us, threatening to teach us the lessons of his psychopath morality, even whilst we watch Will's struggle against the communicability of Hannibal's views.