

Facsimiles of Flesh

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ABSTRACT *Ed Gein was a serial killer, grave robber, and body snatcher who made a lampshade from human skin. Now consider the detective who found that lampshade. Let's suppose that he would never want to own it; however, he does find that he wants a synthetic one just like it – a perfect replica. We assume that there is something morally problematic about the detective having such a replica. We then argue that, given as much, we can reach the surprising conclusion that it's morally problematic to consume realistic fake-meat products. After explaining why we might the detective's replica lampshade morally problematic, we clarify the analogy between the replica and fake meat products. Then, we defend it against a number of objections, the most notable one being we can sever any association between fake meat and the real stuff without moral cost. We conclude by pointing out that our argument generalises: if it works, then there is something morally problematic about many fake animal products, including fake leather and fur.*

Consider the case of Edward Theodore Gein – a serial killer, grave robber, and body snatcher – who was caught when investigators found the dead body of Bernice Worden in his woodshed, a 58-year-old woman who had been missing for some time. Worden's decapitated corpse was suspended upside down from the ceiling with ropes tied to her wrists. Her torso was torn open from vagina to sternum. She was 'dressed like a newly bagged deer for skinning.'¹

Worden's mutilated body wasn't the only thing the investigators found on Gein's property. Gein was obsessed with human remains. He kept human heads, bone fragments, and internal organs. Gein also crafted objects from those remains. He made soup bowls from the upper halves of skulls, a belt from nipples, a ceiling light pull from lips. He used human skin to make socks, a wastebasket, and a lampshade.

Suppose that Clouseau is one of the investigators who searched Gein's house and found the human-skin lampshade. Clouseau is outraged and disgusted. However, he can't help but admire the way the lampshade looks, the way the light bleeds through it. Of course, Clouseau doesn't want the lampshade Gein made. He knows that keeping it would be disrespectful to the victim and her family; it would be to benefit from evil; it would be – in some small way – to validate what Gein did. Still, Clouseau wishes he had a lampshade *just like* the one Gein made.

As is common in such cases, the police destroy all of Gein's belongings after the trial, the lampshade included. But Clouseau can't forget it. He decides to make a replica from a synthetic material that closely simulates the feel and peculiar translucence of a middle-aged woman's skin. He puts it in his living room. He basks in its glow.

We're uncomfortable with Clouseau's replica. (We doubt that we're alone.) But is our discomfort evidence of a moral problem?

If there's a consequentialist case against Clouseau's replica, it isn't straightforward. No one was harmed by the production of the replica, and as long as he hides it when guests visit – which, we'll assume, he always does – no one will be troubled by its existence. Likewise, no one will be tempted to make a real one. Of course, you might think that it will slowly tempt *Clouseau*. The lamp might desensitise him to the moral horror of murder; he may even long to follow Gein's example.

We doubt it. As we said, Clouseau was horrified by what Gein did. In this respect, he's like the many people who (a) are horrified by real violence, (b) intentionally expose themselves to representations of violence – think, for example, of your average movie-goer – yet (c) don't become less disturbed by real violence as a result. If violent movies don't lead to violence, then we have no reason to suppose that disturbing lampshades will lead Clouseau down a dark path. For the same reason, we have no reason to suppose that having – or even admiring – the lampshade will cause him to become less sensitive toward the victims of future moral horrors. Again, many people watch violent movies without becoming less concerned for victims of actual violence.²

The (straightforward) Kantian case against Clouseau is no better. Surely we can attribute a universalisable maxim to him – e.g. *have harmless pleasures* – and he doesn't seem to be using Worden – or Worden's family, or Gein, or anyone else – as a mere means. He isn't acting in a way that's incompatible with acknowledging the inherent value of human life (again, he doesn't want a *real* human-skin lampshade), nor is he violating anyone's autonomy.

We might grant that there are *prima facie* duties, as Ross³ maintained. Two such duties might be relevant: reparation, which involves somehow compensating for past wrongs; and self-improvement, which commits you to improving your own virtuousness. But Clouseau didn't wrong Worden – Gein did. So, Clouseau has no duty of reparation to her or anyone else on that basis. (Or, if you can be obliged to make reparations for the wrongs that others perpetrated, that obligation depends on your having benefited in some way from the wrongdoing. However, Clouseau didn't so benefit – unless we insist, in an *ad hoc* fashion, that aesthetic inspiration is a kind of benefit. If we stretch the notion of benefit that far, we should probably condemn Picasso's *Guernica*.⁴) Alternately, we might criticise Clouseau based on a failure to cultivate virtue. But absent independent reasons to think that it isn't virtuous to have the lampshade, this account is incomplete.

Of course, that's no objection if we can fill in the virtue-ethical details. Perhaps we can. Paul Woodruff⁵ argues that *reverence* is a virtue, which he defines as 'the well-developed capacity to have the feelings of awe, respect, and shame when these are the right feelings to have.' When we expect a mourner not to cheer as the casket is lowered into the grave, we're expecting that person to be reverent. If he were to cheer, we would rightly find him to be disrespectful, shameless, callous – and this even if he were the only one present.⁶ We find the same failure in the person who uses Grandma's embroidery to clean the toilet, even if no one else would want her handiwork; or the person who has no sympathy for Nazism, but just happens to like decorating the inside of her bedroom closet with swastikas.⁷ Likewise, we might say that to have a fake human-skin lampshade is a failure of reverence – a kind of callousness, a thoughtlessness about how human bodies are symbols for the lives we live in them. (Note that

we needn't be virtue ethicists to take this line. The same view is available to virtue consequentialists, or Kantians who construe respect in a sufficiently broad way.)

We now have one principled way to criticise Clouseau. We can think of one more, at least if we're willing to entertain G.E. Moore's axiology. Moore maintained that three things are bad: enjoying or admiring things that are themselves bad, hating the good, and pain.⁸ Clouseau's behaviour doesn't cause pain, and it seems like a stretch to say that it involves hating the good. However, we might be able to make the case that it involves admiring something that's bad. After all, if Clouseau didn't admire Gein's handiwork, which is clearly bad, it's hard to see why Clouseau would have wanted a replica. This suggests that the replica might be a proxy for the real thing, so that enjoying the former is a way of enjoying the latter.

This account provides a different explanation for what's worrisome about the person with swastika-themed decor. Moreover, it's very important for thinking about the ethics of artwork. As Aaron Smuts⁹ argues, if you want to be able to say that it's bad to take pleasure in watching a depiction of child rape, then you're likely to need a view along these lines. (To be clear, we're not talking about taking pleasure in a recording of an actual rape, but rather a depiction of a scenario that, if actual, *would* be rape.) Granted, this view faces important objections, which Smuts himself details. But there are objections to every view, and insofar as we're inclined to affirm our intuitive reactions to these troubling cases, we have reason to search for replies.

In any case, we can take this much away from the preceding discussion. First, it's intuitive that Clouseau's replica is morally problematic. By that we just mean that it's *prima facie*¹⁰ wrong for him to have it, though of course (a) the seeming could be mistaken or (b) even if having it is *pro tanto* wrong, having the replica could be justified by sufficiently weighty considerations. Second, not everyone will agree that it is, in fact, wrong for Clouseau to have the replica: various consequentialists and Kantians, for example, will write off his preferences as peculiar but permissible. Third, if Clouseau's replica is morally problematic, we can explain this in one of two ways: on the one hand, it's a failure of reverence; on the other, it's an instance of enjoying the bad.

Now suppose that Clouseau's replica is indeed morally problematic. Given as much, we can reach a surprising conclusion: it's also morally problematic to consume fake meat products. To be clear, we're not talking about black-bean patties, or tofu, or any other product that, though often used as a meat substitute, doesn't closely imitate flesh. The ones we have in mind are designed to imitate real meat as closely as possible, even to the point of 'bleeding' juice onto the plate.¹¹ Heme, which gives meat both its texture and flavour, can be found in the roots of soybeans and other nitrogen-fixing plants, and Impossible Foods has used this compound to make very convincing hamburgers. Apparently, they taste just like the real thing. The same is true of *in vitro* meat, which is real animal protein, though grown in a lab so that no animal is harmed in its production. At present, *in vitro* meat isn't commercially available, but as costs come down (and the price of the real stuff continues to rise), it's bound to end up in grocery stores.¹²

Like Clouseau's replica, fake meat is supposed to resemble the real thing. Indeed, people consume fake meat precisely because it *does* resemble the real thing, and they value those particular gustatory qualities. What's more, as there are excellent moral reasons not to kill and mutilate the bodies of human beings, there are excellent – and entirely familiar – moral reasons not to kill and mutilate the bodies of animals. (We

grant that killing animals for food isn't as bad as killing humans for whatever purpose. But we don't need such a strong claim. It can be a serious wrong to kill an animal even if it's dramatically worse to kill a person.) Finally, as in the case of Clouseau's replica, no morally-important being is harmed by fake meat, and there is no straight-forward Kantian critique to level against it. But if, as we're assuming, these points don't show that Clouseau's replica is morally unproblematic, then they don't show the same about fake meat. In sum:

1. If Clouseau's replica is morally problematic, then the consumption of fake meat products is morally problematic.
2. Clouseau's replica is morally problematic.
3. The consumption of fake meat products is morally problematic.¹³

How bad is it to eat fake meat? Perhaps not very. By contrast, though, consider the view of Ingrid Newkirk's – president of PETA and vegetarian for some forty years. In an essay for *The New York Times*, Newkirk celebrates the fact that, thanks to scientific advances, she will soon be able to enjoy *in vitro* meat 'without any qualms' and with '[her] conscience clear'.¹⁴ She seems to think that there is *nothing* morally worrisome about consuming fake meat. Whatever our assessment of Clouseau and his replica, it won't be *that*, and our argument implies the same of the fake-meat-eater.

But while it's morally problematic to eat fake meat, it's still justifiable for most people. As Newkirk rightly points out, fake meat doesn't require that animal suffer and die, that any delicate ecosystem be ruined, that resistance-building antibiotics be used, and so on. These are excellent reasons to think that fake meat is better than real meat, so we concede that many people are justified in consuming it. To see why, consider a tweak to Clouseau's story. Suppose Clouseau *loves* Gein's lampshade. Indeed, if he can't get a replica, he'll be tempted make a lampshade from real human skin, raising dark questions about how that skin would be sourced. We grant that in such circumstances, Clouseau would have adequate justification for making and using the replica. If the choice is between the substitute and the real thing, then the substitute is clearly preferable. And for many people, that is indeed the choice: they aren't choosing between the fake stuff and vegetables, but between the fake stuff and the real. For them, the fake stuff makes it possible to eat less (or no) animal flesh, which is just to say that if the former weren't available, they'd eat the latter. Given their predilections, these people may – and perhaps should – consume all the fake meat they'd like. *They* shouldn't have qualms about consuming realistic meat substitutes.

However, it's clear that not everyone experiences that temptation. Many vegetarians and vegans, for example, don't eat real meat even when realistic substitutes aren't available. In these cases, the production and consumption of fake meat is gratuitous, and so isn't justified by the prevention of harms.¹⁵ *Contra* Newkirk, then, many vegetarians and vegans should have qualms; their consciences shouldn't be clear.

Some Objections

The easiest way to criticise the argument is to reject the second premise – the claim that Clouseau's replica is morally problematic. (Someone might say, for example, that

our disgust response is leading us astray here.¹⁶) But since we've already registered that premise as an assumption, this objection is misguided. Moreover, we should emphasise that there are plenty of others who have argued for moral principles that would underwrite it. If you have moral concerns about simulated violence in video-games,¹⁷ then you're probably committed to such a principle. Likewise, you're probably committed to such a principle if you think that certain works of art can be morally problematic because of the heinous acts they depict (as claimed, e.g., in certain feminist critiques of pornography¹⁸), or if you think that it would be morally problematic to have sex with a life-like robot that's designed to look like a four-year-old child,¹⁹ or if you are convinced that telling or listening to certain jokes are morally problematic even when they don't harm others.²⁰

Given the second premise, the argument stands or falls on the analogy between the replica and fake meat. How might someone object to the parallel?

First, someone might deny that it's wrong to kill animals for food, and so deny meat that meat is special in the way that human bodies are.

This isn't the place to rehash the arguments against killing animals, which likely wouldn't move the objector anyway. So we concede this much: if it isn't wrong to kill animals for food, then Premise 1 – which posits a link Clouseau's replica and fake meat – is probably false. However, it's worth noticing that even if it's permissible to kill animals for food, our argument remains interesting. Many vegans and vegetarians think that it's wrong to kill animals for that purpose, and they are, of course, the primary consumers of fake meat products. Moreover, we've already pointed out that even if our argument succeeds, it probably doesn't condemn most real-meat-eaters, since fake meat might help them avoid the real stuff. So those most likely to be affected by the argument – namely, vegetarians and vegans – are still on the hook.

Second, someone might insist there is a disanalogy due to Clouseau's connection to the case. Clouseau saw Gein's handiwork first-hand, and so there's something particularly disturbing about his ability to quarantine that memory from his appreciation for the replica. But vegetarians have no similar connection to meat production.

The flaw is that our response to Clouseau doesn't depend on his connection to the case. Our assessment of Clouseau's replica wouldn't change even if he'd only seen videos of Gein's human-skin lampshade. It's the information that matters, not how it's gathered, and vegetarians tend to know a great deal about meat production. They've seen videos of what takes place in slaughterhouses, or read detailed descriptions concerning how animals are raised in CAFOs. (That's usually why they're vegetarians.) On the face it, if it's disturbing that Clouseau can quarantine his knowledge of Gein's activities from his appreciation for the replica, then it should be disturbing that vegetarians can quarantine their knowledge of slaughter and dismemberment from their appreciation for fake meat.

Third, someone might argue that whatever might be wrong with Clouseau's replica, we shouldn't expect it to apply to animals. We should assume instead that this is a distinctly human wrong, one that only applies in our symbolic world.

This isn't yet an argument – it's just a possibility. And the trouble with it is that we don't see any reason to think that the scope of symbolic wrongs is somehow limited. If something matters, then symbols of it matter – e.g. nations and their flags, schools and their mascots, loved ones and the keepsakes they've left us, people and their bodies. Since animals matter, we would expect that symbols of animals would matter.

They might not, but absent an argument for that conclusion, we have no burden to show otherwise.

Fourth, someone might not try to articulate a morally relevant difference between the two cases, instead insisting that we ought to take common reactions to them as evidence that there is such a difference. That people would be horrified by Clouseau's lampshade is evidence that there is something wrong about what Clouseau did, and that no one is horrified by fake meat is evidence that there is nothing wrong about producing or consuming it. It may be difficult to articulate *why* the one is wrong and the other isn't, but that's a familiar situation, and we're justified in maintaining that there is a difference in the interim.

The problem with this objection is that it's so easy to explain why we aren't horrified by fake meat, and this in a way that doesn't count against there being something morally problematic with it. Most people are callous toward animals, and most people are accustomed to seeing animal flesh on plates. Between callousness and custom, we're largely insensitive to the moral significance of fake meat, and so we aren't bothered by the thought of it. So, our failure to react is no evidence of moral innocuousness. Indeed, our failure to react is precisely what we'd expect given our unjust socialisation. We've been trained to so deeply discount the value of animals that most of us can ignore the horrors of factory farms. Why think we'd be attentive to symbolic wrongs?

A final objection grants that there's an analogy between Clouseau's replica and fake meat, but denies that there has to be. Associations are *plastic* – they can be reshaped, weakened, or even broken. However, while there would be a moral cost to breaking the association between Clouseau's replica and Gein's handiwork, there *wouldn't* be a moral cost to breaking the association between fake meat and the real stuff. We could just exchange the phrase 'fake meat' for 'veggie protein patties', and we'd be in the clear. So, our argument doesn't count against producing or consuming fake meat. Instead, it's an argument for disassociating fake meat from real animal products.

It isn't clear why there would be a cost in one case and not in the other. But let's ignore this. Still, there are three problems with this objection.

First, it isn't clear that the association between fake meat and the real stuff can be broken so easily. Fake meat by any other name will still be *designed* to imitate meat, since that's what people want to consume. We can call it whatever we'd like, but insofar as it's a successful imitation, it will continue to look and taste just like the flesh of animals, and it's hard to believe that people wouldn't make the connection.

Second, we wouldn't grant Clouseau a free pass if he found some euphemism for his fake human-skin lampshade. Insofar as the lampshade *looks like it's made of skin*, re-description is morally irrelevant.

Third, it isn't obvious that there wouldn't be any cost to breaking the association between fake meat and real meat. Humans don't allow all their beliefs to interact, nor do they allow all their beliefs to interact with all their sentiments. We have the ability to quarantine aspects of our mental lives, and we often exercise that ability. However, some virtues – such as reverence – require *not* quarantining certain aspects of our mental lives from the rest. If the virtue-ethical account that we discussed earlier is correct, that's part of what goes wrong in Clouseau's case: he quarantines his knowledge of Gein's activities from his appreciation for the lampshade. However, any reason we give as to why Clouseau *shouldn't* quarantine will probably apply to vegetarians and

fake meat. We ought to respect human life, but we also ought to respect animal life; we ought to maintain associations that reduce the chance of human harm, but we also ought to maintain associations that reduce the chance of animal harm. Of course, in both cases someone might insist that we can accomplish these animal-related goals *without* the association between fake meat and the real stuff. But in both cases, it's about as plausible to maintain that we can also accomplish the *human*-related goals without the relevant association. Hence, we might expect that a moral exemplar (someone who is virtuous, refrains from enjoying the bad, etc.) would make an effort to keep both associations intact unless there is a good reason (such as reduction or prevention of harms) to break it. But for vegetarians and vegans who aren't tempted to consume real meat, there don't appear to be such reasons. So, their consumption of fake meat looks to be morally impermissible.

Conclusion

We've argued that if Clouseau's replica human-skin lampshade is morally problematic, then so is the consumption of fake meat products. We assume that Clouseau's replica is morally problematic, and we've suggested two ways of explaining this. On the one hand, we could see Clouseau's relationship to his replica as enjoyment of bad by proxy; on the other, we could see his behaviour as a failure to have the appropriate reverence for the bodies of Gein's victims.

Both of these explanations transfer smoothly to the fake meat case. Real meat is an evil. The consumer of fake meat, therefore, could be seen as someone who enjoys bad by proxy. It is also clear that the consumption of fake meat could be seen as a failure to be reverent towards the suffering and deaths of billions of animals who are used to make real meat, whose qualities are closely imitated by fake meat. We submit that a person who is duly reverent toward – and troubled by – the horrors of animal agriculture wouldn't consume an imitation of its products, assuming that they won't be tempted to eat real meat without a surrogate.

Some will interpret our argument as a *reductio*, and it's always possible to give up the negative assessment of Clouseau. If you grant that premise, however, it isn't easy to see how to avoid the argument's conclusion. And perhaps it will be welcome to some who are deeply concerned for animals. Vegans sometimes regret that animal products have so shaped – and still shape – our gustatory ideals and culinary practices. There is an ethical dimension to this regret: it would be morally better, the thought goes, if vegan food weren't just plant-based, but plant-inspired. In a sense, we've offered an argument that underwrites this idea.

Moreover, the argument can be extended pretty straightforwardly to fake leather and imitation fur. As far as we can tell, there aren't any important differences between them. So if the argument about fake meat works, then realistic fake leather and fur are also morally problematic. To be fashionable or cosy, many vegans are willing to spend considerable amounts of money on dress shoes that look just like polished leather and winter jackets with imitation fur linings. In light of the above, perhaps they shouldn't.

Of course, many people purchase and use these products justifiably. If the choice is between supporting harm and not, then the latter is obviously preferable. But not everyone is in that situation – ourselves included.²¹

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NOTES

- 1 John Douglas & Mark Olshaker, *Obsession* (New York: A Lisa Drew Book, 1998), p. 294.
- 2 The relationship between exposure to violent media (movies, cartoons, video games, etc.) and aggressive or otherwise antisocial disposition is disputed. Some, such as Grossman & Degaetano, argue that there is a causal link between violent-media exposure and aggression. However, even the literature reviews and meta-analyses which *do* defend a link – e.g. Dill & Dill – often do so with caution and admit that the relevant literature is riddled with serious methodological issues. Moreover, recent literature reviews and meta-analyses – e.g. Rutter & Bryce and Markey, French & Markey – show that most studies fail to establish a statistically significant relation with a non-trivial effect size, let alone establishing a causal link. We consider this to be sufficient grounds for dismissing the claim that Clouseau’s relationship to the replica will dispose him to imitate Gein or otherwise become more violent. For details, see Dave Grossman & Gloria Degaetano, *Stop Teaching our Kids to Kill* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1999); Karen E. Dill & Jody C. Dill, ‘Video game violence: A review of the empirical literature’, *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 3,4 (1998): 407–428; Jason Rutter & Jo Bryce, *Understanding Digital Games* (London: Sage Publications, 2006); and Patrick Markey, Juliana French & Charlotte Markey, ‘Violent movies and severe acts of violence: Sensationalism versus science’, *Human Communication Research* 41,2 (2014): 155–173.
- 3 W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930).
- 4 Granted, Ross thought that his list of duties was incomplete. Might there be much more specific duties? Say, a duty not to make or possess imitations of human body parts? Perhaps. But if that duty is taken as an overriding moral consideration, it would prohibit the anatomist’s replicas used for medical instruction. If, however, the duty is taken as a *prima facie* moral consideration which might be overruled by other concerns (such as scientific and pedagogic reasons), then Clouseau’s behaviour isn’t necessarily wrong. We would need a further argument to show that this duty can’t be overridden by the goodness of aesthetic pleasure.
- 5 Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 8.
- 6 Assume that the deceased isn’t a Hitler-esque figure.
- 7 We aren’t suggesting that these actions are morally equivalent. Our suggestion is merely that these actions involve the same sort of moral problem, even if one is much more seriously wrong than the other.
- 8 G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (New York: Dover, 2004), pp. 207–214.
- 9 Aaron Smuts, ‘How not to defend response moralism’, *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 49,4 (2015): 19–38.
- 10 You could also run the argument where ‘morally problematic’ means ‘*pro tanto* wrong’. The difference shouldn’t affect much.
- 11 <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2014/10/07/taste-test-a-veggie-burger-that-looks-and-cooks-like-meat/>
- 12 Someone might object to calling in vitro meat, ‘fake meat’. As far as we can see, nothing hangs on this terminological dispute, so those with this worry can read ‘fake meat’ as shorthand for ‘realistic meat-substitute products and in vitro meat’. Also, someone might think that there are different reasons to be concerned about in vitro meat – e.g. how the animal cells are initially procured, or whether in vitro meat might lead to the production of human meat in labs. However, Schaefer and Savulescu respond convincingly to these concerns. They do not, however, anticipate the argument we develop here. For details, see Owen Schaefer & Julian Savulescu, ‘The ethics of producing in vitro meat’, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 31,2 (2014): 188–202.
- 13 Ours is an argument from analogy – not from some way of codifying reverence or Moore’s axiology – because we want to remain neutral between theories of what’s problematic in both cases.
- 14 Ingrid Newkirk, ‘I’m about to eat meat for the first time in 40 years’, *The New York Times* 20 April (2012).

- 15 We aren't suggesting that preventing harm is the only consideration that could justify eating fake meat products, but it's the obvious one.
- 16 For a limited defence of our disgust response, see Bob Fischer, 'Disgust as heuristic', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, forthcoming; for a more radical defence, see Dan Demetriou, 'There is some fetish in your ethics', *Journal of Philosophical Research* 38 (2013): 377–404.
- 17 Stephanie Patridge, 'The incorrigible social meaning of video game imagery', *Ethics and Information Technology* 13,4 (2011): 303–312; Stephanie Patridge 'Pornography, ethics and video games', *Ethics and Information Technology* 15,1 (2013): 25–34; Morgan Luck, 'The gamer's dilemma', *Ethics and Information Technology* 11,1 (2009): 31–36; Morgan Luck & Nathan Ellerby, 'Has Bartel resolved the gamer's dilemma?', 15,3 (2013): 29–33.
- 18 Rae Langton, 'Speech acts and unspeakable acts', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 22,4 (1993): 293–330.
- 19 John Danaher, 'Robotic rape and robotic child sexual abuse: Should they be criminalized?' *Criminal Law and Philosophy* (2014): 1–25.
- 20 Stephanie Patridge & Andrew Jordan, 'Against the moralistic fallacy: In defence of modest moralism about humor', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 15,1 (2012): 84–95.
- 21 There is at least one other criticism you might make of fake meat (and fake leather, etc., with a few modifications). Insofar as those who consume it support the idea that certain textures and tastes are desirable, they fail to undermine our interest in using the flesh of animals for gustatory pleasure. Gratuitous consumption of fake meat is tantamount to admitting that animal bodies taste good, which is the meat-eater's main justification for harming animals. In this way, consumption of fake meat fails to undermine one reason to engage in animal exploitation. However, we leave the exploration of this criticism for another time.