

CLEAN MEAT AND DIRTY DOLLARS: SUBSTITUTION AND INDETERMINACY IN TECHNOCRATIC SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



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Abstract: The past few years have been big for meat substitutes. The Impossible Whopper is now available at Burger King, Beyond Meat has found its way into grocery stores, and recent technological advancements look increasingly likely to enable the production of synthetic ‘cultured’ meat burgers in the lab. The hope and promise of these technologies is that they will serve as inexpensive substitute proteins that replace meats made by the much more problematic animal agriculture industry. In this paper, we flip the problem of meat on its head: asking not what is wrong with meat, so much as how consumer indifference and producer strategy might influence the uptake of clean meat in the economic market. Rather than approaching the problem in terms of substitution value, which appears to be the prevailing interpretive framework for making sense of many environmental problems, meat included, we approach the problem of substitution from the standpoint of reasons-for and reasons-against. Doing so, we suggest, exposes problems with “causal indeterminacy” that in turn implicate our thinking both about moral responsibility and the broader nature of technocratic solutions to environmental problems.

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Zoom: <https://emich.zoom.us/j/89999187676>