

# MR

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## *Morningside Review*

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Morningside  
Review

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## **Editorial Statement**

The *Morningside Review* was originally published in 1962, and it was an annual publication for five years. In 2019, students and faculty, led by Marianna Pizzini and Ally Hecht, reimagined its place within the Morningside community. As a result, the *Morningside Review* is now designed, edited, and published by Dr. David Elder's Editing and Publishing class that runs in the fall every other year. The publication accepts research papers from undergraduate students in all disciplines at Morningside University. Due to the inclusive nature of the publication, a variety of citation styles are featured.

*The Morningside University experience cultivates a passion for lifelong learning and a dedication to ethical leadership and civic responsibility.*

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# Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

## Editor's Introduction

*Sophia Sansone*

Here it is! The 2023 publication of the *Morningside Review*. The edits, the research, the opinions, are all ready to be shared. In this year's publication, the *Morningside Review* team wanted to put our efforts into creating a collection to represent the disciplines of Morningside University. We were able to successfully bring 4 of these 6 disciplines to publication and want to thank those authors for their submissions and sharing their pieces with us. I am beyond thrilled to share the wonderful work of all of our authors, editors, communications and tech team, and advisors.

This edition of the *Morningside Review* was published by a skilled team gathered in a class called Editing and Publishing led by Dr. David Elder. We were told that we would be creating the 2023 volume of the *Morningside Review* and we all burst out with ideas. After settling into our teams, we got started on the process of creating this publication that we can all safely say we are extremely proud of. Morningside's #ExperienceMatters attitude was a constant reminder to my role as Editor in Chief, learning how to succeed through simply doing.

There are many thanks to give out, but I would like to start by thanking our faculty advisor, Dr. David Elder, for his calm guidance and reassuring attitude throughout the process that "you're doing great!" The wisdom from his experience in the publishing world and as a mentor has become a staple in all of our work ethic.

Next I would like to give a special thanks to all of the editors: Sami Giesen, Destinee Martin, Danielle Thompson, Matti Evenson, and Josh Bern. You all have been such great minds to both critique and support these pieces. Your hours of reading (and rereading) are greatly appreciated and crucial to our group's sanity and the success of this publication. Thank you all for your efforts and dedication.

The next thank yous go out to our thorough copy-editors: Lisann Evert, Jordan Kwarcinski, Elaine Morgan, and Shawna Fernau. Your skills of perfectionism are beyond compare and made our publication a great representation of the standard to which Morningside holds their students: excellence. Notes, suggestions, support: these are all things that deserve special appreciation in any publishing process. Thank you for your attentiveness and for sharing your creative minds with our team.

Lastly, I want to thank our communications and tech team: Saline Osborn, Maren Ewertz, Rowen Richards, and Sarah Brown. Your seamless integration of technology and effective communication strategies were a huge contribution to the success of

our publication. Thank you for the posters, the planning, the styling, and so much more, that allowed our 2023 publication of the *Morningside Review* to be successful.

As we hand off the editorial reins, the *Morningside Review* is always able to improve and grow. Take this opportunity to share your academic insights and intellect while you can. I encourage you to keep contributing, challenging, and above all, stay academic.

## **Behind the Speedo: Bisexuality in *Twelfth Night***

*By Camrie Miranda*

Shakespeare was prolific in writing comedies, sonnets, and tragedies. If one thing stands out in several of his plays, it is the contemporary notion of queerness. Similarly, the theme of bisexuality can be seen in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The dramatic comedy follows the character of Viola as she attempts to survive after a shipwreck. She does this by disguising herself as the faithful Cesario, who gets trapped in a love triangle with Olivia and Orsino. When observing the three, one character stands out: Orsino. As the Duke of Illyria, he begins the play trying to win over the heart of the mourning Olivia but ends the play marrying Viola/Cesario. He can obviously be seen falling for both Olivia and Cesario throughout the play, but the sensation of love is emphasized in Paul Rudd's depiction of Orsino. Rudd starred in the 1998 production of *Twelfth Night* at the Lincoln Center Theater where he portrayed a lovestruck Duke with a flirtatious side for his new messenger, Helen Hunt's Cesario. Through the lens of queer theory, Orsino exhibits signs of bisexuality when one examines the way that he interacts with, converses with, and treats the character of Cesario.

The play begins with Orsino surrounded by musicians and other lords inside a room in his palace. He speaks about the food of love and the meaning of love, stating, "If music be the food of love, play on, give me excess of it; that surfeiting, the appetite may sicken, and so die" (I.i.1-3). He exclaims love as an idea that he is starved of as he plays into the farce with the lords and musicians around him. He pushes this romanticization further as he discusses his love for Olivia and how his desires "have pursued me like fierce and cruel hounds" (I.i.21-22). Once he is told about her rejection, he seems to have to readjust himself to remain in this romantic attitude. He exclaims to be "away before me to sweet beds of flow'rs. Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bow'rs" (I.i.39-40). Orsino is stuck in this reality



of romanticized love. At the thought of rejection, he finds himself needing to be surrounded by more flowers and romantic thoughts to keep up this idea of loving Olivia, which already hints at his love for someone else. Outside of the text, we can observe Nicholas Hytner's production and Paul Rudd's depiction of Orsino. He begins laid out on the ground around a pond surrounded by other men (Hytner 1:44). They all lay asleep but awake when he starts monologuing about love. It is important to note that in this opening monologue, Orsino is lost in this romantic facade. Reflecting the literature, Rudd is able to show Orsino's frustration with Olivia, as it takes him out of this idea of loving her. This hints at an idea that he hasn't fallen in love yet, and his attitude and actions change with the entrance of Cesario.

Connecting this glorification of love and Orsino's costuming allows us to observe the Duke's actions. In the Lincoln Center Production, Rudd is first seen in a more scandalous and seductive outfit (Hytner 3:16), fitting into this narrative of the glorification of love. He wears baggy black pants and a purple long sleeve shirt that opens in the center to show off his body. This romanticization is further paired with Orsino's struggle about what love is. Barry Adams explains this idea further in his article, "Orsino and the Spirit of Love: Text, Syntax, and Sense In *Twelfth Night*," writing, "Orsino, I believe, is using the word [fantastical] not to exalt love but to belittle his own imagination, which by a process of undisciplined association has led him from pleasurable romantic reveries to an unexpected confrontation with the harsher realities of love" (58-59). Here, Adams is referencing one of the last confrontations in the play as his words begin to reflect his definition of love. In these lines, Orsino states, "Of what validity and pitch so'er, but falls into abatement and low price even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy that it alone is highly fantastical" (I.i.12-15). This matched with his frustrations later in the scene, showing his views on love. He believes that love is playing tricks on his mind; in reality he doesn't know the meaning of love until the introduction of

Cesario. This belief influences Rudd's depiction of this frustration during these lines (Hynter 4:35-4:47).

Observing this frustration, we can turn to the entrance of Cesario. A character who once was a shipwrecked girl becomes the messenger of the Duke and Orsino's pursuit for love. It is important to note that Valentine, a close attendant to the Duke, points out the fast promotion of Cesario after "he hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger" (I.IV.1). Viola, who has taken the name of Cesario, enters in her disguise during Act 1 Scene 4 where she talks about Orsino's blessings. These praises show that Orsino may have other plans for Cesario, in addition to what Orsino says soon after he enters: "Stand you awhile aloof. Cesario, thou know'st no less but all. I have unclasp'd. To thee the book even of my secret soul" (I.IV.7-9). Here he discusses the idea of unclasping himself. To his men it may seem that he is referencing his love for Olivia, but for Cesario it relates to Orsino's identity. Here he is unclasping the idea of his sexuality and allowing Cesario to understand his true self. Paul Rudd enhances this idea further with his entrance. At the timestamp 19:51, Rudd enters with his shirt fully unclasped and his focus on Cesario. He stands waiting for the next moment of sexual tension, where Cesario must undress him. Hunt's reactions, which include slow actions of taking off his clothes and vivid facial expressions towards his physique, show an obvious attraction towards Orsino. These actions are purposeful due to the costuming of Paul Rudd, dressed in only a Speedo (Hynter 20:30). Once this undressing occurs, the lines 8 and 9 are delivered, showing an unclasping of a sexual tension towards Cesario.

The importance between the differing costume designs and language are vital in this scene. A character who is more formal and, in Hynter's case, is dressed in white seems to be initially opposing these romantic attempts. Viola being dressed as a man leaves an ambiguity unbeknownst to Orsino but known to the audience, as there is an attempt to win over this new

mysterious stranger. Casey Charles writes in his article “Gender Trouble in *Twelfth Night*,” “The gender ambiguity of Viola/Cesario in fact sets the stage for the representation of a plethora of desires: homoerotic attraction between Orsino and Cesario, heterosexual attraction between Orsino and Viola, and lesbian attraction between Viola and Olivia” (132-133). With this open attraction between Orsino and Viola along with Orsino and Cesario, we are able to observe the bisexual identity of the Duke throughout the play. He is attracted to both and makes attempts to seduce both versions of his messenger.

Along with this idea of seduction, the topic of cross-dressing itself is significant to this play. The Shakespeare play never describes Cesario’s outward appearance, but in the Lincoln Production of *Twelfth Night*, Cesario is seen in two outfits: a dress that is worn when shipwrecked and a white suit through the rest of the play. This outfit later matches Sebastian’s outfit but also allows Viola to put on a masculine appearance. The pristine outfit of Hunt’s Viola/Cesario is seen in a pure white suit and a low ponytail (Hytner). This outfit is more masculine. It also fits the aesthetic of Orsino as a character, who is seen in his rich white outfit at the end of the play (Hytner 2:16:18), and emphasizes the idea that Viola is truly a man. Judith Butler, in their article “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,” elaborates on this idea of the expression of gender identity, writing, “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (33). The masculine outfit is able to trick Orsino into thinking that a man stands before him, making certain scenes in the performance significant. In Act 2 Scene 4, we are able to see Cesario and Orsino together discussing Olivia. Orsino calls Cesario a “boy” (II.IV.12) and references him as “speaking masterly” (II.IV.20). These comments show Orsino as being engaged in a conversation with Cesario, and Rudd’s performance enhances that. Not only are the characters sitting around food, but Rudd can also be seen moving around the room. This interaction continues when

Orsino begins to take off Cesario's handkerchief slowly and seductively (Hytner 1:03:48). The two begin to talk about Cesario falling in love with a woman. In both the scene and the production, we are able to note that Cesario describes his "love" as "being of the same complexion" (II.IV.23-24) and "being about his age" (II.IV.25). Clearly describing the Duke, Orsino proceeds to discourage this fictionalized woman as he further explains how women act. The discouragement itself shows that Orsino would rather them be together, and Rudd encourages this as the two remain in an intimate conversation. Rudd even uses a rose to exemplify the symbolism of a woman and her love. Orsino's acts of love and seduction towards Cesario, when paired with the masculine costuming and characteristics, show how Orsino further falls in love with Cesario.

The actions of Orsino allow the viewer to evaluate his intentions. He is an unmarried duke looking for some sort of love, which he assumes he will get from Olivia. Not only will this allow his own success, but it will also cure his obsession with romance. He initially is seen going after a fellow noble, Olivia, which shows the idea of security of power. He also has a sense of loneliness found through scenes that fuels his romantic fascination. Later in Act 2 Scene 4, Feste the clown enters, singing about death under Orsino's orders. The song talks about dying with no flowers and friends at a funeral, emphasizing the loneliness. In the Lincoln Center Production, we can see Orsino react with his head in his hands and crying (Hytner 1:06:57) during the lines, "Not a friend, not a friend greet my poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown" (II.IV.58-59). The added motion suggests insecurity about dying alone, and this may also be due to his secret life of being in love with both a man and a woman. As mentioned earlier, Barry Adams discusses Orsino's struggle with the meaning of love, as highlighted in this scene. We can tell that the relationship between Cesario and Orsino brings him to a realization of the "harsher realities" of being bisexual. Adams goes on to talk about how this romanticization is "self-defeating" (58), which reflects the character of

Orsino. This reflection on Feste's song and Orsino's loneliness shows how Orsino's glorification of love has affected his livelihood. While he dismisses his men, later in the scene he pulls Cesario aside to emphasize his false love for Olivia. Orsino even goes on to call a woman's love "lacking retention" (II.IV.87-88) as he attempts to keep his grasp on his heterosexual relationship. In the production, this make-believe lust is further debunked by Orsino's actions at the end of the scene, when he embraces Cesario and kisses his head to dismiss him (Hytner 1:11:14). At the beginning of the play, we can tell that he is in love with Olivia, or as Adams would say, in love with the idea of loving Olivia. It is not until later in the play that we can see his true experience of love is with Cesario.

Consequently, all of these interactions and acts of love lead us to the last act of the play. As the characters come together, we are able to finally understand the confusion between Sebastian and the love triangle. Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, survives his shipwreck and is reunited with his sister. Before then, Olivia, Orsino, and Cesario meet as Orsino is faced with heartbreak. Olivia exclaims, "Cesario, you do not keep promise with me," (V.i.77) to which Orsino responds in shock and betrayal. Rudd's Orsino proceeds to pull a sword on Olivia and talk about killing what he loves due to the heartbreak he feels (Hytner 2:20:19). Orsino points his attention to Cesario, talking about an "instrument that screws me [Orsino] for my true place in your favor" (V.i.97), this favor being a forced relationship between the Duke and Olivia instead of his love Cesario. He references a line later stating, "But this is your minion whom I know you [Olivia] love, and whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly" (V.i.99-100), showing he still has a fondness for Cesario. Orsino is heartbroken by this promise between Olivia and Cesario, which in reality is a marriage between Sebastian and Olivia. This is met with a call of love from Cesario in lines 109-112, where he discusses running after the Duke to confess his love, which breaks Olivia's heart. A

few moments later, the marriage of Cesario and Olivia is announced, and Orsino's heart breaks more as he exclaims wanting nothing to do with his messenger.

Rudd gives emotion to these lines as he attempts to storm off stage before being pulled on once more. This gives entrance to Sebastian and the revelation of Cesario's identity. Orsino points out this doubling of Cesario before the twins reunite. This is where Cesario is revealed to be a woman by the name of Viola. Despite this revelation, it is important to note that Orsino still references Viola with the nickname "boy" (V.i.223). Orsino is overcome with relief by this revelation and, knowing that he must not reveal his true identity, goes along with his original idea of marrying a woman. The romanticization had made him more selfish and oblivious, which is pointed out by Richard Henze in his article "*Twelfth Night: Free Disposition on the Sea of Love*," "The Duke, finally reawakened to generosity, asks a 'share in this most happy wrack' and gives himself where he is desired, thus finally allowing free disposition" (Henze, 281). Thanks to the entrance of Sebastian at the end of the play, we are able to note that the Duke begins acting generously and is then given the opportunity to go after what he desires. Cesario's true gender proves to play in the Duke's favor but also shows that he will further suppress his sexuality. To Henze's point, he goes where he is desired, to Viola/Cesario, who he had known as a man proving this attraction to Cesario. As the two twins remain in each other's arms, Orsino approaches them. In the production, with a confident movement, Rudd's Orsino raises his hand and accidentally reaches for Sebastian to tell him "your master quits you," which he corrects when moving to Viola (Hytner 2:33:05). They both wear the same dress as their complexion remains similar. This proves the more masculine features that Cesario possessed remained in Orsino's mind, and he reached for Sebastian subconsciously. Sawyer Kemp mentions the intention of the cross-dressing in his piece "Shakespeare in Transition: Pedagogies of Transgender Justice and Performance." He writes, "Unmaking a man is just as simple—after Sebastian and Cesario/Viola embrace,

Orsino continues to call Cesario ‘Boy,’ and requests to see him ‘in thy woman’s weeds’ (V.i.269) The superman-like gender costume is fully dependent on the presence or absence of masculine clothing—which always fits perfectly and always looks good.” (Kemp, 40). Even though he knows she is a woman, the presence of the gendered costume and expression still entrances Orsino. Rudd’s interpretation of the mistake in this comedy further shows the persuasion of the costume and how the idealization of love has blinded Orsino. He continues to compliment Viola’s complexion and thank her for her help before asking for her hand in marriage. Observing the Lincoln Center production once more, we can point out the costuming, as both couples marry but do not change outfits. Instead, there is a small dance between both couples, a zoom out, and a montage of the characters moving about the stage (Hytner 2:39:52). Orsino is seen embracing Viola, who is still dressed as Cesario. This not only continues to mirror Sebastian as a character, but proves that Orsino still has a fascination for Cesario.

Despite Shakespeare’s attempt at a storyline involving heteronormative relationships, we can observe the actions of Duke Orsino. As a character he is not only in love with the character of Olivia, but he soon falls in love with his servant Cesario, who is later revealed to be Viola. The love of both genders shows that he is lost in the idea of bisexuality as he lives his overromanticized life, a lifestyle that has caused him to distance himself from reality and often act selfishly or oblivious to the world around him. This keeps him from expressing his reality and identity and pushes him towards falling in love with both Olivia and Cesario. The portrayal by Paul Rudd further proves this, as he gives a more seductive and flirtatious performance of the Duke while interacting with his fellow actors. He is especially flirtatious towards the character of Viola/Cesario. When observing a depiction that is true to the script along with the script itself, there is no doubt of a clear relationship between Orsino and Cesario. Each of the Duke’s interactions, conversations, and actions toward his new

messenger proves a queer romantic relationship between the two. This, once again, adds to the themes of bisexuality and queerness in the works of William Shakespeare.



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## Echoes of the Meeker Massacre: United States and Ute Relations

By Ro Paschal

Meeker is a small, quaint town located in the White River Valley in the northwest corner of Colorado. The White River meanders through lush mountain meadows and the surrounding peaks provide breathtaking scenery. For thousands of years the Ute people have called this place home, along with much of the Colorado Plateau.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally the Ute people were nomadic hunter-gatherers, moving throughout the region in small groups known as bands.<sup>2</sup> Bands were independent but bound together through language, trade, intermarriage, military alliances, and religious gatherings.<sup>3</sup> By the mid-1850s, their traditional way of life was abruptly disrupted due to American westward expansion. Land-hungry and driven by the discovery of rich minerals, the United States government passed a series of treaties that slowly shrunk Ute territory, eventually confining them to small reservations.

Indian agents undertook the task of Americanizing the Ute people, forcing them to settle on farms and alter their entire way of life. On May 15, 1878, Nathaniel Meeker accepted the position of Indian Agent for the Northern Utes at the White River Agency.<sup>4</sup> In his book, *The Utes Last Stand*, Al Cook captures Meeker's righteous attitude perfectly when writing, "Meeker was a dreamer of high ideals, force and initiative, with unbending religious precepts; a self-appointed Moses to lead the simple-minded Indians from sin to a joyous new heaven of civilization."<sup>5</sup> A rocky relationship between Meeker and the local tribe ensued over the next two years, eventually culminating in the killing of Nathaniel Meeker and numerous others at the White River Agency in 1879. Following the Meeker incident, the tribe found themselves being forced from their homeland and onto a smaller reservation.

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<sup>1</sup> "History: The Northern Utes," Utah American Indian Digital Archive, last modified 2008, <https://utahindians.org/archives/ute/history.html#:~:text=Anthropologists%20argue%20that%20the%20Utes,northern%20Arizona%20and%20New%20Mexico>.

<sup>2</sup> Brandi Denison, "Dirt Morality During Ute Removal," *Pacific Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 128.

<sup>3</sup> "History: The Northern Utes," Utah American Indian Digital Archive.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson Rockwell, *Sunset Slope* (Denver: Big Mountain Press, 1956), 166.

<sup>5</sup> Al Look, *The Utes Last Stand* (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1972), 49.

Six years after the bloody encounter of the Northern Utes and Nathaniel Meeker, the small town of Meeker was founded. Half a century later, in 1938, the town hosted the inaugural Range Call Days. This event still occurs annually on the fourth of July, offering the town financial and social boosts. The celebration includes dances, parades, and rodeos, and it traditionally ends with The Meeker Massacre Pageant. Acting as the finale of the weekend, the pageant attempts to recreate the history of the land from the arrival of the Spanish to Nathaniel Meeker. The final scene is depicted in the first script as follows: “meanwhile at the Agency, as the flames mount high from the burning buildings, Mr. Meeker and his employees die, martyrs to the White cause. Triumphant, the Ute attackers seize the white women as hostages and melt away into the darkness, leaving only death in charge.”<sup>6</sup>

The pageant paints a vivid image of good vs. bad, white vs. Indian, conqueror vs. conquered. Since the inaugural pageant, the script has undergone numerous revisions and adaptations to changing mindsets and ideals. Apart from one year, 1988, the Utes have not participated in the events of Range Call Days. I argue that the pageant acts as a dam towards creating healthy and productive relations with the Ute Tribe; however, the reinstatement of basic rights to the land and open discussions with the tribe can build a base for healing and coexistence in the future.

Numerous attempts have been made over the course of the last 30 years to recognize the Ute Tribe in the White River Valley. Meeker’s local historian, Jay Sullivan, initiated much of this.<sup>7</sup> His cowboy exterior hid the inner workings of a forward and progressive thinker. During his time in Meeker, Sullivan headed the construction of countless monuments documenting both sides of history and giving a voice to an absent void.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, these well-intentioned efforts missed the mark at times. For example, at the dedication for the Ute

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Anthon, “Meeker Massacre Pageant to Celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” *Meeker Herald*, June 30, 1988, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Brandi Denison (Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of North Florida), in discussion with the author, November 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Denison, in discussion with the author, November 2021.

Warriors at Milk Creek, Kenny Frost, a Ute medicine man, told Jay that flying the American Flag above the monument was insulting.<sup>9</sup> Frost went on to share the story of what the Ute people had lost and what America had taken from them. These discussions are critical to have and should be held prior to action being taken. Along with these efforts, Sullivan pushed to have Meeker recognized as a National Historic Landmark and the construction of a peace barn. Ultimately, never materializing, these plans indicated that some people in the community desired change, growth, and recognition of the town's turbulent and complex history.

In 2008, two employees for the U.S. Forest Service organized the Smoking River Powwow.<sup>10</sup> The aim of the powwow was to re-establish relations with the Ute Indians and welcome them back to their ancestral lands. Loya Arrum of the Ute Tribe said, "It's time to bring the children here again, and take them around the land. In our history, we were told never to talk about [the Milk Creek Battle and Meeker Incident], because of fear. But it's time to talk about it. The children need to know."<sup>11</sup> Most attitudes towards this first powwow were positive, but within two years the event abruptly stopped. The national recession and departure of the organizers led to the discontinuation of the event. Once again, progress towards healing and understanding was halted.

2012 marked the tribe's return to the White River Valley. The river valley produced the Capitol Christmas Tree.<sup>12</sup> Representatives from the Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico Ute Tribes honored the tree before harvesting and participating in the sacred ceremony in Washington, D.C.<sup>13</sup> This signaled one more step in recognizing the Utes' connection to the

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<sup>9</sup> Jay Sullivan (Meeker local historian), in discussion with Craig Paschal, September 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Jeff Burkhead, "Smoking River Powwow exceeds expectations," *Herald Times*, July 31, 2008, <https://www.theheraldtimes.com/smoking-river-powwow-exceeds-expectations/meeker/>.

<sup>11</sup> Burkhead.

<sup>12</sup> Katelyn Jerman, "Ute Tribe in Rocky Mountain Region Honors 2012 Capitol Christmas Tree," *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, February 21, 2017, <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2012/11/02/ute-tribe-rocky-mountain-region-honors-2012-capitol-christmas-tree>.

<sup>13</sup> Jerman.

White River Valley they had been forcibly removed from over a century earlier. After 80 years, the pageant finally dropped the misleading and false title. In 2016 the “Meeker Massacre Pageant” underwent a name change, now simply called the “Meeker Pageant.” Recent articles suggest the possibility for Ute inclusion in Range Call Days, but one can only hope that it is not for an anniversary as it was in 1988.

Throughout my discussions with tribal members and Ute historians, the conversation tended to circle back to the idea of healing and possible steps forward that can be taken. Pageants, powwows, and other events are insufficient. Intentions are well-meaning, but lasting impacts do not resonate. I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Brandi Denison, Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of North Florida. While discussing steps towards healing, Dr. Denison said, “What I would like to see for Meeker is for leaders to go to the reservation. Learn and ask what they want. That could go longer in terms of establishing a relationship.”<sup>14</sup> Her ongoing studies indicate that a huge measure in healing would be reinstating the hunting and fishing rights of the Northern Ute Tribe in the White River Valley.<sup>15</sup> This requires cooperation with the tribe and the National Forest Service. Reinstatement would mean a reconnection to sacred lands and the ability to practice their traditional way of life.

As Loya Arrum mentioned, the events of the Meeker Incident and the Milk Creek Battle are not discussed by the Ute Tribe. Similar attitudes are upheld by the individuals who now live on the ancestral land. One of the first steps toward recovering from the past must be recognizing, acknowledging, and accepting the history of the area. Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, a leader within the Ute Tribe, agrees and emphasizes the importance of teaching history rather than erasing it, even if it is painful. Whiteskunk shared, “[Our history] is too horrific to teach the truth to our world and children, but you are not above yourself to

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<sup>14</sup> Brandi Denison, in discussion with the author, November 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Brandi Denison, in discussion with the author, November 2021.

reenact the events?”<sup>16</sup> Whiteskunk struggles to grasp the inherent value of the reenactments of the Meeker Pageant. She adds, “No matter how it’s done, the Utes are never the winners.”<sup>17</sup>

Representation also serves as another invaluable action in the healing and reconciliation process. Dr. Denison discussed her current involvement in the organization, Right Relationship. Their mission statement is as follows, “We are Boulder-area residents, friends and allies dedicating efforts and resources to Indigenous peoples and issues. We seek to learn, support, and lead efforts to facilitate and create contemporary opportunities while attending to historical inequities that persist today. We do so within the principles of right relationship with Indigenous peoples, other organizations, and local governments.”<sup>18</sup>

Organizations such as Right Relationship emphasize listening and creating relationships before acting, something to consider regarding tribal relations with local communities.

Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk currently works with the Montezuma Land Conservancy (MLC) as the Cross-Cultural Program’s Manager.<sup>19</sup> She travels extensively throughout the Southwest, like her ancestors, sharing the Ute culture through song, dance, and presentations. Discussing her current life and mission, Whiteskunk said, “I live a very traditional lifestyle and some people look at me confused on what I am saying. And I say I am basically a Ute in constant migration. I might not move according to seasons the way my ancestors did, but I do move according to where I am being called.”<sup>20</sup> Her efforts educate outsiders and emphasize the importance and essence of our relationships with the land. Right Relationship and Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk represent progress in relationships, education, healing, and restoration.

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<sup>16</sup> Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk (MLC Cross-Cultural Programs Manager), in discussion with author, November 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Lopez-Whiteskunk.

<sup>18</sup> “Our Mission,” Right Relationship Boulder, accessed March 24, 2022, <https://rightrelationshipboulder.org/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Meet Our Staff,” Montezuma Land Conservancy, accessed March 24, 2022, <https://montezumaland.org/staff/regina-lopez-whiteskunk/>.

<sup>20</sup> “Regina Lopez Whiteskunk,” Moab Museum, accessed November 18, 2023, <https://moabmuseum.org/profile/regina-lopez-whiteskunk/>.

The ways in which the past is remembered directly influence actions and attitudes in the present. Events such as the “Meeker Massacre Pageant,” now known as the “Meeker Pageant,” perpetuate historical trauma through the disregard for the loss and pain that the Utes experienced. The process of developing healthy relationships is slow and complex but may be our nation’s only hope for renewal and restoration from a bleak and dark history. Proper education, listening to our neighbors, affirming truth, reinstating ancient rights, and equal participation within organizations are starting points for writing a new history with the Ute Tribe.

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## **Analysis of Leading Innovators in the Plant-Based Meat Alternatives Market**

*By Ashley Wilcox*

With a huge uptick in public interest surrounding healthier, more environmentally-friendly products, more and more plant-based meat alternatives have begun to flood the market. While there is a variety of brands offering meat alternatives, there are a limited number of brands offered in the Sioux City area. Three of these brands are Morningstar Farms, Beyond Meat, and Impossible Foods. Primary research will be used to pick a winner in product quality, allowing consumers themselves to grade brands on taste, texture, and similarity to meat products. Secondary research will be used to determine which brand has the most successful marketing strategies. Together these factors will be analyzed to determine which of the three brands is best poised to be the most successful in the meat alternative market. In the end, this research will help new consumers in the market make decisions based on actual product reviews, rather than which brand portrays themselves as the best. One major question this research aims to answer is, “Does product quality accurately reflect marketing claims?”

### **Literature Review**

How a brand markets itself is extremely important to its success. There are many different marketing strategies available, but how a company utilizes those strategies is key. This literature review is intended to analyze the marketing strategies of each of the three companies to determine which has the most successful marketing strategy. The analysis focuses on the differences and similarities in each brand’s backgrounds, marketing strategies, competitive advantages, and how they work with current trends.

#### **Morningstar Farms**

Morningstar Farms is a plant-based meat alternative brand owned by Kellogg. The brand was originally introduced into supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide by

Worthington Foods in 1975 (Shurtleff & Aoyagi, 2004). At the time, Worthington Foods was the largest and most innovative U.S. company making meat analogs and vegetarian entrees. When Worthington Foods introduced Morningstar Farms, the brand was widely advertised and provided millions of Americans with their first experience of soy used in this way. Even though Morningstar Farms represented the first line of modern meat analogs to be sold at supermarkets, the concept was ahead of its time. Despite initial interest and popularity, the Morningstar Farms line released by Worthington Foods did not succeed. Kellogg purchased Worthington Foods in 1999, along with all of their brands. In 2014, Kellogg sold Worthington Farms but kept the Morningstar Farms line of products (Byrd, 2014).

### ***Marketing Strategy***

There are many different strategies within marketing that companies can use to increase and retain sales. Within the marketing strategy section, there will be an analysis of the company's mission statement, marketing growth strategies, strengths, and competitive advantage.

**Company Mission Statement.** One strong strategy is to have a company mission or values statement that reflects the company in a way that appeals to customers. Morningstar Farms does not have their own specific mission or values statement. However, the brand does have a statement on their website's executive summary page that explains why they did so much research on the environmental impact of switching to a plant-based diet. The statement says, "Morningstar Farms wanted to understand the environmental impacts of meatless versus meat-containing meals and to substantiate with primary research our advertising claims supporting our "Good for the Earth" and "Just What the World Ordered™" initiatives" (Morningstar Farms, 2021a). This statement shows customers that their food choices have a real impact on the environment and that Morningstar Farms is committed to making that impact a positive one.

Kellogg, the parent company of Morningstar Farms, has a vision statement that reflects the brand's overall commitment to making things *better*. Kellogg's statement says, "At Kellogg Company (NYSE: K), our vision is a good and just world where people are not just fed but fulfilled. We are creating better days and a place at the table for everyone through our trusted food brands" (Kelloggs, 2022a). This statement creates a positive image of a better world and better food that encourages consumers to choose Kellogg over other brands.

**Marketing Growth Strategies.** According to Fusaro (2020), Kellogg Co. plans on spending \$43 million to expand the Morningstar Farms plant in Zanesville, Ohio. The current plan is to expand the facility by 40,000-50,000 sq. ft. and add 40 full time jobs to its current workforce of 303 employees. This plan reflects, in part, market penetration, by increasing production and therefore creating the opportunity to sell more of their current product to existing customers.

In addition, Kellogg has released Incogmeato, a plant-based meat substitute under Morningstar Farms (Food Processing, 2020). Incogmeato is a new line of next-generation vegan, plant-based protein that looks, cooks, and tastes just like meat (Kelloggs, 2022b). This plan falls under the category of product development, since the company is creating a new product to sell in the present market.

Morningstar Farms has also removed eggs from their products, transitioning their products from vegetarian to vegan (Forbes, 2019). This strategy appeals to consumers looking for entirely plant-based and vegan options, falling under the category of market development by attracting new customers to products that have been altered to include a wider variety of consumers.

**Key Strengths.** An important part of developing marketing strategies is to recognize the company's existing strengths. Three strengths of Morningstar Farms are realistic products, environmental awareness, and exposure/accessibility.

***Realistic Products.*** One of the main reasons for hesitation when consumers switch to plant-based meat products is taste (Forbes, 2021). As Mel Cash, the head of global marketing for Kellogg Co.'s plant-based division, stated in 2019, "With every product, we'll assess whether we can deliver on the taste and texture. If we feel like we can't get there with renovation, it could look more like innovation" (Forgrieve, 2019, para. 14). This shows the company's commitment to better, more realistic plant-based meat alternatives, and puts them at the top when it comes to what consumers want (a plant-based alternative so good, you can't tell the difference). Morningstar Farms has showcased this with their Incogmeato line, specifically their new Chick'n Tenders product that promises to "tear" like real chicken meat (Forbes, 2021). Unlike most plant-based chicken nuggets that are typically blended or "fit and formed," Morningstar Farms has created a chicken product that closely resembles real meat chicken nuggets. The resemblance doesn't just stop at taste, but continues in texture and how the tenders tear. Therefore, consumers are more likely to choose this Morningstar Farms product over other plant-based brands that don't closely resemble real chicken meat.

***Environmental Awareness.*** A main focus of Morningstar Farms is to reduce negative impacts on the environment by the meat-containing food industry. The company commissioned an independent consulting firm to conduct a study called "A Comparative Life Cycle Assessment of Plant-Based Foods and Meat Foods (LCA)" to help understand the impacts on the earth of eating a meatless/veggie meal versus a meat-containing meal, as well as the impacts of eating a Morningstar Farms veggie product instead of the equivalent amount of a meat product (Morningstar Farms, 2021a). The study allowed Morningstar Farms to assess the impact of carbon footprints, greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and land use. By funding the LCA and providing the results of the study in an easily accessible part of their website, Morningstar Farms appeals to those who are switching to plant-based meals for the environmental benefit.

**Exposure and Accessibility.** With the release of the Incogmeato line, Morningstar Farms was able to roll out their product to thousands of locations (Webber, 2021). The company partnered with Sodexo, a foodservice brand that is popularly used in hospitals, prisons, and all levels of schools (among other entities), to serve their vegan beef burgers. This partnership pushes Morningstar Farms products into over 3,000 hospitals and schools, with the opportunity of expansion as they gain success and traction. Consumers are exposed to and able to access Morningstar Farms products at their place of employment or study, meaning they are more likely to choose Morningstar Farms when they go out to buy products on their own.

**Competitive Advantage.** As Mel Cash stated in the same interview, “We’re making sure we’re delivering on what customers want and what we believe is right. It’s less about having a competitive advantage and more about being able to satisfy as many people as possible who want to eat plant-based” (Forgrieve, 2019, para. 18). This statement is in relation to the company’s transition from vegetarian to vegan products.

However, the company has a competitive advantage when it comes to how long they have been on the market as a plant-based company. Morningstar Farms has been around since 1975, compared to competitors that started their plant-based journeys in the 2000s. The company was one of the first companies in the plant-based meat alternatives market, giving Morningstar Farms a lengthy plant-based history filled with knowledge and a leg up on competitors who are just starting out. The brand is also the only one out of the three in this analysis to have a parent company, giving them access to more resources than those just starting out on their own.

### **Impossible Foods**

Impossible Foods is a plant-based meat alternative brand founded in 2011 by former Stanford biochemist and professor, Patrick Brown, and his research team in Northern

California (Hoshaw, 2016). When Brown was at Stanford, he studied climate change and the collapse of biodiversity related to animal agriculture. After taking a sabbatical to think over the issue, he realized that the only way to approach it was not academically. Brown decided to create a plant-based version that performed the same way as animal meat in every way, focusing on taste and nutritional profile (Fromm, 2021).

### ***Marketing Strategy***

**Company Mission Statement.** Impossible Foods' mission statement reads, "Our mission is to restore biodiversity and reduce the impact of climate change by transforming the global food system" (Impossible Foods, 2022a). This mission statement reflects a concern for the earth's climate and natural resources. The company then goes on to say that they complete this mission by "making delicious, nutritious, affordable and sustainable meat, fish, and dairy from plants" (Impossible Foods, 2022a). Working with their mission statement, Impossible Foods also has a goal to eliminate animal agriculture by 2035, "turn back the clock" on climate change, and restore biodiversity (Fromm, 2021). Essentially, Brown wants to convince meat lovers to switch to a plant-based lifestyle by creating realistic products.

**Marketing Growth Strategies.** Impossible Foods has utilized market development, bringing existing products into new markets. The company began a European expansion this year, releasing their chicken nuggets and sausage patties in the U.K. This release included over 300 restaurants and chicken shops, as well as supermarkets. According to Impossible, their plant-based nuggets are preferred two-to-one compared to real chicken nuggets. This European expansion is the first time the company has launched outside of North America (Vegconomist, 2022).

Impossible Foods just launched its new single-serve frozen entrees, Impossible Bowls. This line consists of eight different plant-based meals, including Sweet & Sour Impossible Pork, Teriyaki Impossible Chicken, Chili Mac with Impossible Pork, Barbeque

Impossible Pork, Spaghetti & Impossible Meatballs, Pasta Bolognese with Impossible Beef & Pork, Burrito Bowl with Impossible Beef, and Spicy Enchilada Bowl with Impossible Chicken. Peter Guinness, CEO of Impossible Foods, said about the new release, “Convenience and accessibility are a huge part of this, and we’re excited to give people even more ways to try and buy Impossible products. This is a major milestone that we’re proud of and hope will push the category forward in a meaningful way. It’s never been easier to try a delicious plant-based meal in minutes” (Business Wire, 2022, para. 11). This new product reflects product development, bringing a new product to the existing plant-based market.

In March, Kroger, the largest supermarket chain in the U.S., announced a partnership with Impossible Foods for its private label plant-based protein business. Though details were not released, this partnership will put Impossible Foods in front of thousands of more consumers than before, representing market penetration. Robert Moskow, food retail and food analyst at Credit Suisse, a global investment banking company, voiced concern for Impossible Foods’ competitors after this announcement: “We view this test as a threat to Beyond Meat, because it demonstrates the willingness of a big competitor to ‘margin down’ into co-branded private label products in order to maximize the reach of its products” (Nunes, 2022, para. 7).

**Key Strengths.** An important part of developing marketing strategies is to recognize the company’s existing strengths. Three strengths of Impossible Foods are realistic products, environmental awareness, and exposure/accessibility.

**Realistic Products.** Impossible Foods has created a plant-based burger that closely resembles real meat in taste, looks, texture, and even smell. The company, under biochemist Brown, has done extensive research to make sure their products are as realistic as possible. Real meat was analyzed at a molecular level to determine what makes a burger taste, smell,



and cook the way it does. The result is a plant-based burger that is squishy while raw, then firms up and browns on the grill.

Additionally, researchers used coconut oil to replicate fat, which oozes when the burgers are cooked. They also used potato protein to provide a firm exterior when the meat is seared. More impressive is the research that went into the burgers' smell. Researchers put cooked meat into a chromatography mass spectrometry machine, which allowed them to separate and identify the individual components of the meat smell in order to replicate it (Hoshaw, 2016). The plant-based burgers also "bleed" due to soy leghemoglobin, which adds a meaty flavor (IDTechX, 2021).

***Environmental Awareness.*** Impossible Foods' main concern is the impact of the meat industry on our environment, specifically climate change and the use of natural resources. According to Brown, "The demand for meat is going through the roof, and the world is not going to be able to satisfy that using animals -- there's just not enough space, not enough water" (Hoshaw, 2016, para. 4). To address this issue, the company has focused on creating plant-based meat alternatives that are better for the environment. One example is their burgers, which the company says are less resource-intensive, healthier, and will eventually be cheaper to produce than real meat (Hoshaw, 2016). Impossible Foods also offers resources on their website to inform consumers of their impact on the environment when choosing a plant-based vs. real meat product.

***Exposure and Accessibility.*** Impossible Foods products can be found in approximately 25,000 grocery stores and 40,000 restaurants (CNBC, 2022). Major restaurants that offer Impossible products include Burger King, White Castle, Qdoba, Little Caesars, Red Robin, and Starbucks (Twardziak, 2022). The brand is available in several countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Macau, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom (Impossible Foods, n.d.). Consumers'

ability to find Impossible Foods products almost anywhere, whether they're buying groceries or going out to dinner, makes Impossible an easy choice for those who wouldn't go out of their way to try a plant-based product.

**Competitive Advantage.** A major competitive advantage of Impossible Foods is the depth of research and scientific thought that went into the development of their plant-based meat products. From the start, Brown hired mostly biochemists, many of which were in his professional circle at Stanford. All of these scientists took a reductionist approach to replicating the flavor of meat, Brown stating, "We were approaching [meat] the same way you might approach figuring out the entire system for replicating genes. Basically, start looking at what are all the possible components that could be players ... and then deconstruct and reconstitute the biochemical system" (Oldach, 2019, para. 7). Laura Kilman, a senior flavor scientist at Impossible Foods, agrees, stating one of the things that sets Impossible Foods apart is that "...we really took the time to research meat on the molecular level and understand all the actual reactions that are happening and what the products are that are being created" (Oldach, 2019, para. 21).

### **Beyond Meat**

Beyond Meat is a plant-based meat alternative brand founded by Nathan Brown in 2009 with a goal of aiding the fight against climate change by providing meat alternatives to consumers. Brown originally looked at three different options: lab-grown meat, in vitro meat, and plant protein-based meat. He settled on plant proteins, feeling it would be more satisfactory for consumers. After working with two professors at the University of Missouri on their research using plant proteins to replicate meat musculature, Brown was able to license the technology and develop Beyond Meat (Bronner, 2018).

## ***Marketing Strategy***

**Company Mission Statement.** Beyond Meat’s mission statement focuses on the positive effects of plant-based meat alternatives in all aspects. Their statement says, “By shifting from animal to plant-based meat, we can positively affect the environment, the climate and even ourselves. After all, the positive choices we make every day - no matter how small - can have a great impact on our world” (Beyond Meat, 2022b).

**Marketing Growth Strategies.** Beyond Meat announced plans for a new state-of-the-art R&D center in Shanghai, China as part of its global expansion strategy. This will be the company’s first dedicated R&D center outside of the United States, utilizing increased capabilities in science, technology, and culinary arts to develop high-quality plant-based meat products for consumers in the Asia-Pacific region. The new center falls into the category of market development by introducing Beyond Meat’s plant-based meat products to Chinese consumers in the foreign market (Beyond Meat, 2021).

The company also opened its first co-manufacturing facility in the Netherlands. This facility is the first outside of Missouri, USA to handle Beyond Meat’s approach to texturizing plant proteins. The addition of the new facility allows for end-to-end manufacturing capabilities in Europe, increasing sales to existing customers. Brown commented on the facility opening: “This latest investment in production capacity reflects our continued commitment to serving global markets. Our new facility in Enschede will not only bring production closer to the consumer, representing an investment in the markets and communities we serve, but is expected to allow us to leverage local supply chains” (Beyond Meat, 2020, para. 6).

Outside of new R&D and manufacturing facilities, Beyond Meat has also entered into a new joint venture with PepsiCo. The joint venture is named Planet Partnership and focuses on combining Beyond Meat’s leading technology in plant-based protein with PepsiCo’s

world-class commercial capabilities. Planet Partnership released Beyond Meat Jerky this year, the first of Beyond Meat's products to be shelf stable. The release of this new product falls into the category of product development, bringing a new type of plant-based meat to consumers (PepsiCo & Beyond Meat, 2022).

**Key Strengths.** An important part of developing marketing strategies is to recognize the company's existing strengths. Three strengths of Beyond Meat are realistic products, environmental awareness, and exposure/accessibility.

**Realistic Products.** When developing plant-based meat products, Beyond Meat puts a lot of emphasis on texture. Brown said, "When we look at how to recreate animal protein it's to focus on the texture. Because you can flavor animal protein and meat in so many different ways, but if you don't have the texture right you have no canvas to work with" (Chiang, 2014, para. 4). For example, to create its Beyond Burger, the company uses a food extrusion machine that utilizes heat and pressure to force plant protein into a fibrous, meat-like texture that resembles muscle fibers. Beyond Meat also uses beet juice to replicate blood and coconut oil and cocoa butter to create marbling (IDTechX, 2021).

**Environmental Awareness.** Beyond Meat was founded to aid the fight against climate change, so environmental awareness is an important aspect of the brand image. The company's website features a page dedicated to its environmental impact. This page includes a Life Cycle Analysis describing the impact of Beyond products compared to regular meat, a list of reasons why eating Beyond is better for the planet, and why the company made meat from plants (Beyond Meat, 2022a). In addition to their website, the company has begun to introduce lighter, more sustainable packaging, which features fully recyclable trays and 30% less material overall by reducing paper and plastic use (Beyond Meat, 2020).

**Exposure and Accessibility.** Accessibility is important according to Deanna Jurgens, chief growth officer at Beyond Meat, who says, "Our goal is to make plant-based meat

available to consumers, wherever they shop” (Refrigerated & Frozen Foods, 2022). This is part of the reason why the brand expanded distribution into Rite Aid stores nationwide this year. Jurgens states that expanding Beyond Meat’s presence across retail channels, including drugstores, is a natural next step to bringing nutritious and sustainable plant-based protein to communities across the country (Refrigerated & Frozen Foods, 2022).

On top of expanding into new retailers, the brand recently released its new Beyond Meat Jerky, which Dan Moisan, CEO of Planet Partnership, states, “The nationwide launch of Beyond Meat Jerky will make plant-based meat accessible to millions of households. It tastes great, it's a good source of protein, and it's convenient to eat whether you're on the go, at the office or out on adventures” (PepsiCo & Beyond Meat, 2022, para. 4). These increases in accessibility mean consumers can more easily access Beyond Meat products.

**Competitive Advantage.** Beyond Meat managed to secure several high-profile partnerships with restaurants and food delivery services early on in the plant-based meat alternative “boom.” Some of these partnerships include McDonalds, KFC, Subway, Famous Daves, Hardees, Carl's Jr., TGI Fridays, Denny’s, Dunkin’ Donuts, Del Taco, A&W, and Blue Apron. Securing a partnership with these big names put Beyond Meat out in front of main-stream, non-vegetarian consumers before other plant-based brands, leading consumers to think of Beyond Meat first (Reinicke, 2019).

## **Marketing Environment**

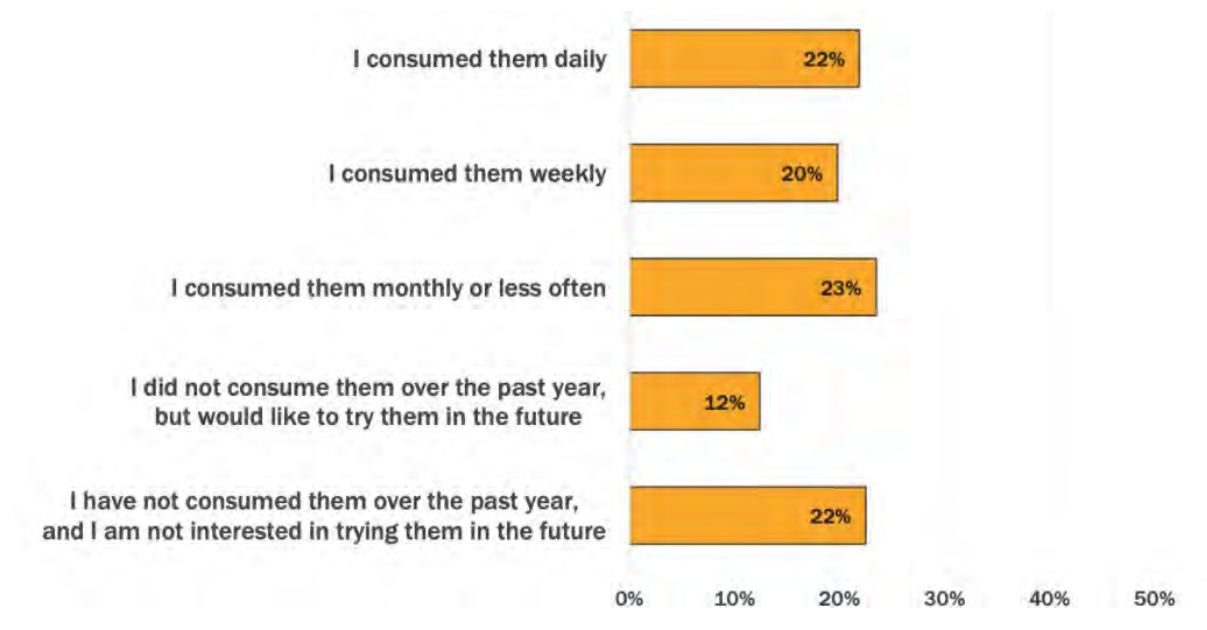
### **Increase in Consumption/Interest**

The first trend affecting these brands is the increase in U.S. consumption of and interest in plant-based meat alternatives. This is definitely an opportunity for plant-based meat alternative brands. More mainstream consumers, especially millennials and Generation Z, are eating more plant-forward foods for many reasons, including taste, health, sustainability, and more choice on menus (John, 2019, para. 7). According to research by

Food Insight, presented in Figure 1, 22% of respondents said they consumed plant-based meat alternatives daily, 20% said they consumed them weekly, and 23% said they consumed them monthly or less often (Informational Food Information Council, 2021, p. 7). Of those who said they did not consume them at all, 12% said they would likely try them in the future. That leaves only 22% of respondents who do not eat or are not interested in plant-based meat alternatives.

**Figure 1**

*Consumption of Plant-Based Meat Alternatives*



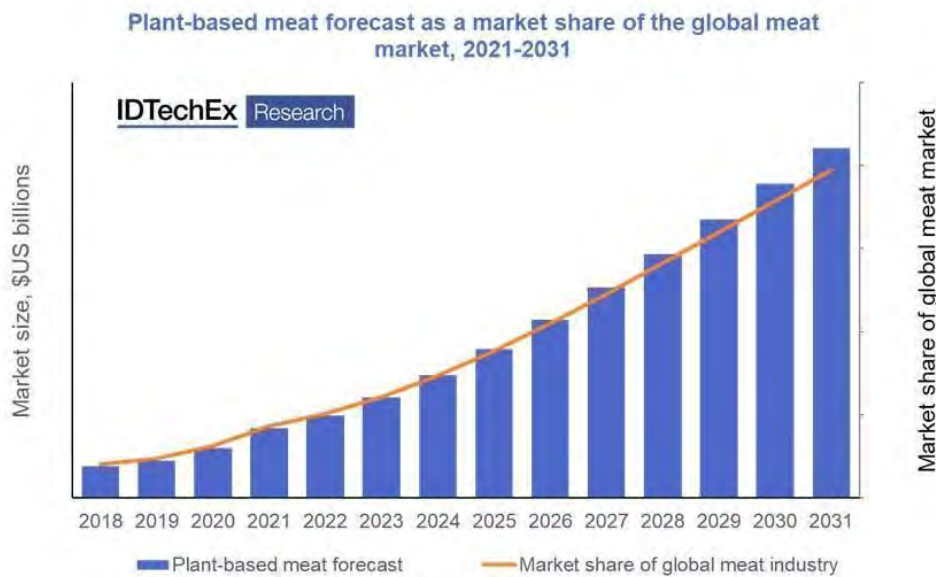
*Note.* Participants were asked the question, “Thinking about the types of food products you’ve consumed over the past year, which of the following is true about your consumption of plant-based meat alternatives?”

As demonstrated in Figure 1, it is obvious that a large percentage of the population has at least some interest in plant-based meat alternatives. Additionally, the volume of meat substitutes consumed in the United States has risen by 500% since 2013 and is estimated to multiply to 4 times that by 2026 (Statista Consumer Market Outlook, 2021). As seen in

Figure 2, plant-based meat is forecasted to capture an increasingly large share of the global meat market over the next ten years (IDTechX, 2022).

**Figure 2**

*Plant-Based Meat Market Share Forecast*



***Morningstar Farms***

To work with this trend, Morningstar Farms has committed to cutting out eggs and making all of their products 100% plant-based, opening up more options for vegan consumers. Their goal is to enhance the accessibility of great-tasting plant-based options for anyone and everyone. This aligns with an objective of their parent company, Kellogg, to “drive significant impact in plant-based eating by increasing the availability and awareness of plant-based foods and ensuring that consumers have plant-based alternatives across more foods and occasions” (World Business Council For Sustainable Development, 2020). Melissa Cash, head of global marketing, strategy, and innovation for plant-based protein and natural brands at Kellogg, said about their new vegan burger, “the role of a burger is that often it’s kind of your gateway into eating plant based. So if we provide something that’s super indulgent and delicious, but you also know it’s 100% plant based and you can feel good about

it” (Byington, 2019, para. 8). By providing consumers with a “gateway” into plant-based foods, Morningstar Farms makes it easier for people to see plant-based meat alternatives in a positive light. Cash describes this as “delivering products that make it even easier to get from intention to action,” which the brand takes very seriously (Byington, 2019, para. 11). In addition, Morningstar Farms has a leg up on competitors because they are easy to find and readily available on a large scale at easily accessible stores such as Walmart.

### ***Impossible Foods***

Impossible Foods has released several new products this year to keep up with the increase in consumer interest in plant-based meat alternatives. Some of these new products include Impossible Chicken Patties, Impossible Sausage Patties, Impossible Wild Nuggies, Impossible Sausage Links, and most recently, Impossible Bowls (Business Wire, 2022). See an example of the new Impossible Bowls in Figure 3. Additionally, Impossible Foods plans to release a plant-based filet mignon product as soon as Brown believes the product can compete with real steak “head to head” (Xu, 2022). By releasing new types of frozen food products, Impossible Foods is able to reach a wider customer base and appeal to a much larger audience. Consumers are much more likely to eat plant-based if they have the option to do so with all of their favorite kinds of meat products. The company doesn’t seem to be slowing down anytime soon, with Brown stating, “Anything you can imagine we might be working on, we’re working on” (Xu, 2022, para. 11).



**Figure 3**

*Impossible Foods' New Impossible Bowls*



**Beyond Meat**

To work with this trend, Beyond Meat has entered into a joint venture with PepsiCo, creating Planet Partnership. The partnership's goal is to provide convenient and accessible plant-based snacks and drinks (Lucas, 2022). This partnership is beneficial for both parties, since Beyond Meat can leverage PepsiCo's production and marketing experience and widespread distribution, while PepsiCo can utilize Beyond Meat's plant protein technology to deepen its investment in plant-based categories and work towards its sustainability and health goals (Buxton, 2022; Lucas, 2022). The first product Planet Partnership released was Beyond Meat Jerky, seen in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Beyond Meat's New Jerky*



## **Use of Popular Individuals/Groups**

The second trend affecting these brands is the use of celebrities or popular individuals/groups to promote products, typically through social media and collaboration. It is an opportunity for brands to gain more exposure and reach groups outside of their typical consumer base. It has been shown that celebrity endorsement builds credibility and can expose a brand to new markets (Hashaw, 2019). This is because of the celebrity effect—the ability of famous people to influence others. Celebrity endorsements and branding can also significantly increase sales. Looking specifically at dietary choices, a survey found that one in three adults make dietary choices based on what they see on social media. A Harvard review published in 2015 also found that celebrities can help draw attention to an issue and that celebrities can help link the impacts of climate change to consumption habits (Barrabi, 2022).

### ***Morningstar Farms***

Helping the company utilize this trend, Morningstar Farms is the first-ever official plant-based protein of the NFL franchise. San Francisco 49ers games at Levi's Stadium will offer a new menu of “next-generation plant-based protein that looks, cooks, and tastes just like the real thing” (Kellogg Company, 2021, para. 2). See an example of the new Incogmeato burgers being offered at Levi's Stadium in Figure 5. On top of bringing plant-based protein to the Levi's Stadium, the brand is also using the partnership to continue their commitment to making plant-based protein more accessible to everyone as well as giving back to the community. For every goal the 49ers score, the brands will donate 30,000 Incogmeato Chick'n Tenders, up to one million tenders, to Feeding America food banks in the Bay Area (Kellogg Company, 2021, para. 3).

**Figure 5**

*Incogmeato Burger at Levi's Stadium*



***Impossible Foods***

Adding to the trend of using popular individuals/groups, Impossible Foods was the official food partner in June of the event Overheated, a six-day, climate-action event hosted by musical artist Billie Eilish, environmental non-profit Reverb, and plant-based food initiative Support + Feed. London's O2 arena replaced all animal products with plant-based Impossible Foods products and replaced all dairy milk with plant-based alternatives (Starostinetskaya, 2022). The event was intended to highlight the consequences of animal agriculture and promote plant-based living. Impossible Foods helped advocate for sustainable meat products to aid in the fight against climate change (Rabb, 2022). CEO Peter McGuinness said about the event: "I'm thrilled to be bringing our food to our friends and fans at Overheated and to support the next generation of changemakers shaping the future of our planet" (Starostinetskaya, 2022, para. 4). The event certainly helped the company get in front of thousands of consumers, including the 23,000 in attendance as well as any who joined the livestream of the event on Eilish's YouTube channel, which has 45.7 million subscribers

(Jemima, 2022). Eilish was named PETA’s 2021 Person of the Year award for her dedication to sustainability in every industry (Rabb, 2022). Additionally, other high-profile celebrities were involved in the event, including musicians Sigrid, Finneas, and Ellie Goulding, who, with Eilish, have a combined 121 million Instagram followers (Jemima, 2022). Figure 6 shows a picture of Billie Eilish and others at the event.

**Figure 6**

*Billie Eilish at Overheated*



***Beyond Meat***

To work with this trend, Beyond Meat has made influencer and reality television star, Kim Kardashian, “Chief Taste Consultant” for the brand. Kardashian, who has over 300 million followers on Instagram alone, should bring massive awareness of the brand to everyday consumers. Outside of chief taste consultant, the star will also share details about her favorite Beyond Meat items and personalized plant-based recipes. Kardashian said, “I am really inspired by Beyond Meat’s mission and love that they are not only making plant-based eating delicious and accessible, but are doing so in a way that benefits both people and the

planet” (Barrabi, 2022, para. 4). Kardashian’s Instagram post announcing the new role can be found in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Kim Kardashian’s Instagram Post*



### **Consumer Awareness - Climate Change**

The third trend affecting these brands is an increase in consumer awareness of the connection between the meat industry and global warming/negative environmental effects. The number of news stories mentioning beef and climate change has increased almost 800% since the early 2000s (Lusk, 2019, para. 1). This is no surprise, considering the fact that the agriculture industry is now the number one contributor to an increase in rates of methane and CO<sub>2</sub> (The University of British Columbia, n.d., para. 2). These are greenhouse gases, which accelerate the increase in global temperatures, leading to global warming. The majority of greenhouse gas production results from waste products of livestock, most of which is methane. Methane is much more destructive than CO<sub>2</sub>; to put the whole situation into



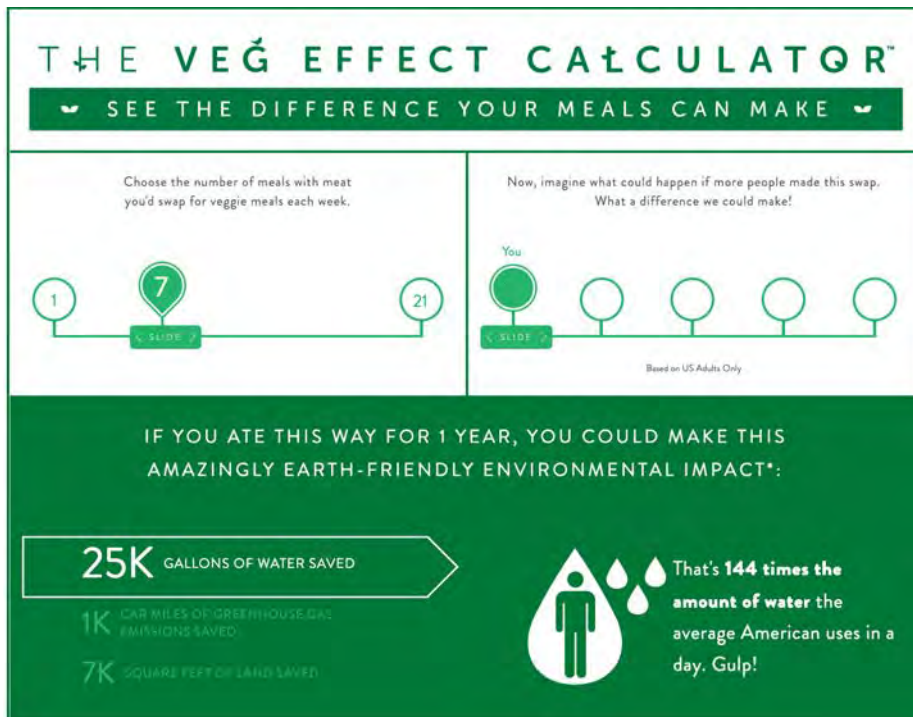
perspective, agriculture is an even bigger contributor to greenhouse gas emissions than the auto/transportation industry. This trend is an opportunity for plant-based meat alternative brands as consumers become more concerned with the negative impacts of meat consumption on the environment.

### ***Morningstar Farms***

Morningstar Farms is using this trend to their advantage in many ways. For example, the brand has a “Veg Effect Calculator” on their website that allows consumers to compare plant based and meat-based foods and see the difference their meals can make (Morningstar Farms, 2021a). An example of this calculator is shown in Figure 8. In this example, the calculator shows the environmental effects of one person swapping out one meal a day for a veggie meal. The calculator can also be adjusted to show the effect of swapping anywhere from 1-21 meals, from an individual person to the entire United States.

**Figure 8**

*The Veg Effect Calculator*



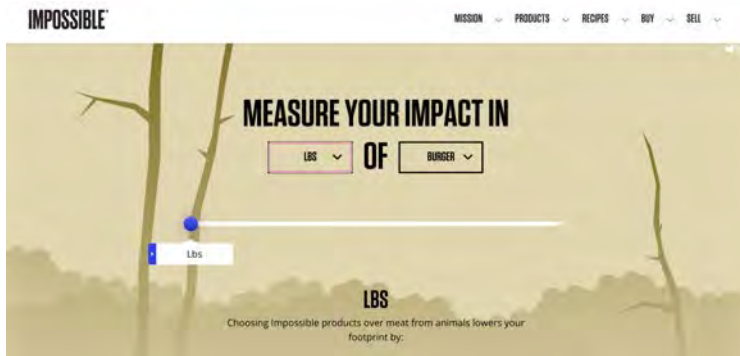
Morningstar Farms also has a webpage dedicated to their study called “A Comparative Life Cycle Assessment of Plant-Based Foods and Meat Foods” (referred to as LCA). This study was conducted by an independent consulting firm to help understand the environmental impacts on the earth of eating a meatless/veggie meal versus a meat-containing meal and eating a MorningStar Farms veggie product instead of the equivalent amount of a meat product. In addition, the brand states that they want to encourage “more plant-based deliciousness and less water-wasting, carbon-emitting, land-gobbling animal protein consumption” (2021b, para. 4).

### ***Impossible Foods***

Impossible Foods uses this trend in many ways, highlighting their mission statement and main goal to eliminate the negative impacts of the meat industry on the planet. Part of this is trying to help consumers understand the power that they have in everyday choices around food. The company has found, through consumer data, that 72% of the people buying Impossible products are buying them in place of the animal version. Jessica Appelgren, VP of Communications at Impossible Burgers, says they call this understanding of consumer power “the plate to planet connection.” The company has an impact calculator on their website that allows consumers to visualize the impact that their choice has on the environment, including greenhouse gases, water, and land usage (Fromm, 2021). This calculator details how choosing a plant-based alternative lowers your footprint with respect to GHG and carbon dioxide emissions as well as land and water use. Consumers can see the effect of beef, chicken, pork, or sausage in measurements of pounds, bricks, patties, or kilograms. The background changes as the slider is used, going from barren to full of life (Impossible Foods, 2022b). An example can be found in Figures 9 and 10.

**Figure 9**

*Impact Calculator at 0 lbs*



**Figure 10**

*Impossible Calculator at Maximum lbs*



The bottom of this webpage includes a section dedicated to two science-based life cycle assessments (LCAs) Impossible Foods had conducted to understand the calculation of environmental resource reductions in the section above. Additionally, there are resources linked to help consumers understand the environmental impact of meat production (Impossible Foods, 2022b).

Impossible Foods also launched a campaign called “birds in the trees.” It’s a conversation guide for teenagers to have with their parents about climate change, helping them answer parents’ questions about the issue and create informed consumers (Fromm, 2021).



## ***Beyond Meat***

Since a major goal of Beyond Meat is to aid in the fight against climate change, the company uses this trend to its advantage in many ways. First, there is a link on their website under the “Our Impact” page to a peer-reviewed Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) conducted by the University of Michigan to compare the environmental impact of the original Beyond Burger to a ¼ lb. U.S. beef burger. Underneath this link is a scrolling list of statistics regarding the impact discovered in the LCA. Reference Figure 11. Next comes a video that explains why eating a Beyond Burger is better for the planet, and then a section titled, “Why make meat from plants?” This section includes reasons such as: fight climate change, preserve natural resources, help animals live better lives, and help humans eat healthier.

**Figure 11**

### *Beyond Meat’s Impact Page*



## **Primary Research**

One of the biggest deterrents to consumers who are looking to switch to a plant-based lifestyle is the unknown. Business models and savvy marketing strategies will not be sufficient for long term growth if the product is not consumer accepted. Not knowing which brand to choose out of the large variety now offered, all claiming to be the best, can also lead to unnecessary stress or spending money on products that don't measure up to expectations. Therefore, the goal of this research was to determine which of the three main meat alternative brands in the Sioux City area has the overall best quality products based upon a blind taste

test. Each brand was judged based on the three categories most commonly used by meat alternatives to evaluate quality—overall taste, texture, and similarity to real meat.

## **Research Design**

Each brand was assigned a different color to avoid any bias that may come from the human instinct to order objects when labeled a certain way (ex: 1,2,3 or a,b,c). Brands were tested on two different product categories: “ground beef” patties and breaded “chicken.” To avoid overwhelming participants and cross-contamination, the “chicken” and “beef” products were tested on different days. To simulate the recommended cooking method (oven) and provide fresh samples, products were cooked in an airfryer at the taste test site. To avoid any accidental revealing of which brand is which, products were transferred to a clear storage bag labeled with the respective brand color before being transported to the taste test site. Product samples were cut to the same size, using separate utensils and separate air fryers to avoid cross contamination. All samples were cooked according to the package directions and served promptly without any seasonings, sauces, or otherwise extra flavoring that would alter results. Once cooked, samples were served in individual sample cups as sets of three on a paper plate (one sample of each brand, each cup labeled with the appropriate color using colored dot stickers). Taste testing took place in a common area with medium to high flow foot traffic on campus (Lincoln Center lobby) on November 14 and 15th from 11-11:45 am in order to maximize the number of student participants when the test samples were hot and fresh (right before/after class). Participants were instructed not to discuss their ratings in the test location and to remain quiet when tasting each sample. Participants were given a QR code linked to a Google form survey for ease and convenience. Participants filled out the survey on their cellphones immediately after tasting each product. Participants were asked to rate each brand on a five-point scale from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied on

three factors: taste, texture, and similarity to real meat. In addition, participant gender was recorded. Forty responses were collected for both the beef and chicken alternative products.

One limitation of the primary research is the location. Research was held in Sioux City, IA with Morningside University students and staff. Iowans have a “beef culture,” raising cows for beef production; many Iowans even purchase entire cows from nearby farming friends or neighbors. In this sense, the opinion on plant-based meat alternatives in this area is negatively biased. There is a concern that some results may be skewed due to preexisting ideas about plant-based meat alternatives. However, this could be seen as a positive for brands depending on the outcome of the research study. If the brand receives positive ratings, one could argue that their product is so good, even beef-loving Iowans approve. A second limitation was the setting. Participants were not given any process to cleanse their palate between samples and some students may have tasted samples that were not hot out of the oven.

## **Findings**

All data collected was analyzed using a mean system. Participant responses were assigned points as follows: extremely dissatisfied = 1 point, dissatisfied = 2 points, neutral = 3 points, satisfied = 4 points, and extremely satisfied = 5 points. Points were totaled for each brand’s score in each category of taste, texture, and similarity to real meat and then divided by the total number of responses to get a mean score.

### ***Beef***

Where the highest possible mean score was 5, brands scored in each category as follows in Figure 12:

**Figure 12**

*Mean Brand Scores in Beef*

	Taste	Texture	Similarity
Beyond Meat	2.575	2.475	2.55
Morningstar Farms	3.25	3.125	2.625
Impossible Foods	3.1	3.179	3

As seen in Figure 12 above, none of the brands were rated highly overall on any of the tested characteristics with a mean of three representing the neutral point. However, of the brands tested, Morningstar Farms was first in taste, followed by Impossible Foods, then Beyond Meat. In both texture and similarity to real meat, Impossible Foods was rated the highest, followed by Morningstar Farms, and lastly, Beyond Meat. Overall, males seemed to be more satisfied with plant-based beef products than females, but not by much.

**Chicken**

Where the highest possible mean score was 5, brands scored in each category as follows in Figure 13:

**Figure 13**

*Mean Brands Scores in Chicken*

	Taste	Texture	Similarity
Beyond Meat	3.125	3.125	2.85
Morningstar Farms	3.25	3.6	3.077
Impossible Foods	4.275	4.325	4.15

As seen in Figure 13 above, the chicken analogous products overall rated higher than the beef alternatives. Impossible Foods led in every category (taste, texture, and similarity to real meat), followed by Morningstar Farms, and then Beyond Meat in last. Overall, males seemed to be more satisfied with plant-based chicken products than females.

### **Analysis**

As shown in the aggregated primary research results, consumers were generally more satisfied with the chicken alternative products, having an overall positive view of all three brands. On the other hand, consumers rated all three brands as neutral for the ground beef alternative, meaning none of the plant-based products satisfied consumers in any category.

Based on survey results, the majority of consumers view Impossible Foods as having the highest quality out of the three brands in taste, texture, and similarity to real meat. Morningstar Farms follows, with Beyond Meat in last for every category.

### **Conclusion**

All three brands have strong marketing strategies, with strengths in realistic products, environmental awareness, and exposure/accessibility. All three utilize the marketing growth strategies of product development, market development, market penetration, as well as trends in the plant-based meat alternative market such as increase in consumption/interest, the use of popular individuals/groups, and the increase in consumer awareness of climate change. The main difference between the three brands is in their competitive advantages. Morningstar Farms is the oldest company out of the three, having been around since 1975. Impossible Foods has the most in-depth, detailed research on their products. Finally, Beyond Meat has a vast majority of high-profile partnerships and celebrity endorsements. However, the true test of success lies within the consumers' opinion. The dedication and attention to research has proved successful for Impossible Foods, scoring the highest on taste, texture, and similarity to real meat. Although Beyond Meat is often seen as the closest competitor to Impossible Foods,

Morningstar Farms was actually rated higher in quality than Beyond Meat. That left Beyond Meat last, who may want to focus more on product quality than high-profile partnerships and publicity. There's no point in having successful marketing strategies when the products don't live up to the hype. In a quickly changing world, it's necessary to stay on top of marketing trends and continue to present consumers with what they want, which is high quality products. However, a lot of brands portray themselves as better than they are, so it's up to the consumers to find out which brand is really as good as it seems. According to this research, Impossible Foods is the most successful plant-based meat alternative brand out of the main three found in Sioux City, IA, both in marketing and in product quality.

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# **The Negative Contribution of Evangelical Christianity to Self-Stigma Surrounding Depression**

*By Elaine Morgan*

## **Abstract**

This literature review aims to investigate the scientific literature surrounding evangelical Christianity's attitudes towards mental health and mental illness, particularly depression, and how such public stigma may give rise to self-stigma in other evangelical Christians. Evangelical Christian communities are often perceived as having negative or stigmatizing attitudes toward mentally distressed individuals, particularly other Christians, and toward seeking help for mental illness. It is common in Christian communities, and particularly in evangelical Christian communities, to over-spiritualize, to attribute shame and guilt, or to outright dismiss mental illness and its symptoms. Such negative attitudes and beliefs are considered public stigma, which contributes to many evangelical Christians feeling the adverse effects of self-stigma. While evangelical Christianity is often perceived as having a stigmatic relationship with mentally distressed individuals, the scientific literature also points to the ways in which this relationship is improving, and some of the literature highlights the ways in which evangelical Christianity can continue to strengthen this relationship.

*Keywords:* evangelical Christianity, mental illness, self-stigma

## **The Negative Contribution of Evangelical Christianity to Self-Stigma Surrounding Depression**

From stigmatization to over-spiritualization to outright dismissal of mental illness, the evangelical Christian community has, at times, had a fairly negative track record with understanding and supportive attitudes toward mentally distressed people, in particular those with depression or depressive symptoms. These negative attitudes or stigmatizing beliefs about mental illness, specifically depression, can lead to self-stigma (Corrigan & Rao, 2012). It is important to understand the ways in which the evangelical community contributes to self-stigma surrounding depression and the damage it causes because self-stigma can harm a person's relationships and day-to-day living. Evangelical Christian communities, through belief and practice, may contribute to the harm of self-stigma surrounding depression in the similarly-minded congregation members sitting in their pews.

Evangelicalism is a branch of Christianity that has quickly expanded, its population growing faster than many other religions today, with over eight hundred million constituents in the year 2020 (Lloyd & Waller, 2020). The National Association of Evangelicals (2015) made a public statement about Evangelicalism's four creedal beliefs, attempting to define their tenets specifically for research purposes. These four beliefs emphasize the Bible's authority, the importance of sharing one's belief in salvation through Jesus Christ, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ equated to salvation from sin, and the only ways to collect this salvation: belief and repentance. Evangelical Christianity has recently been the target of politicization and criticism, in part due to these beliefs and how the evangelical community chooses to act on them; additionally, its perceived relationship with mental health is often less than stellar.

Lloyd et al. (2021) use their results from an online study in the UK, in which all participants were self-identifying evangelical Christians, to cite certain evangelical Christian beliefs as the contributors to negative perceptions of mental illness, which may lead to self-stigma. By using multiple surveys investigating different beliefs, researchers found that the highest predictors of stigma toward mental health or seeking help for mental distress in the evangelical Christian church were fundamentalist beliefs, which demand a literal interpretation of the Bible, and beliefs that mental illness is caused by immoral or "un-Christian" living. Also, often the participants' responses would

suggest spiritual interventions or miraculous healings over psychologically-based treatments, which were often completely overlooked. Although the study ignores certain demographic factors and the variable of previous mental health experience, it still offers insight into how beliefs can influence evangelical Christian attitudes toward mental illness.

More specifically related to depression and depressive symptoms, UK researchers completed two similar studies to understand evangelical Christian perceptions, using a qualitative “story completion” design, in which participants are given a starting sentence (a “stem”) and are asked to tell a story about what may happen (Lloyd & Panagopoulos, 2022). In the first study, participants were asked to write about “Summer,” a Christian girl who self-harms, and how her church would react. Although many stories written by participants had Christians who showed compassion and support for Summer, more often the overarching theme was spiritual causes and solutions: demonic influence, lack or inadequacy of spiritual activity on Summer’s part, and even exorcism. Shame and guilt are major subjects as well, indicating in some way that the church may see her, at least the part of her that self-harms, as consistently morally incorrect. In this first set of stories, the over-spiritualization of Summer’s self-harm rarely led to a happy conclusion.

In the second story completion study by Lloyd et al. (2022), participants wrote about “Tom,” who visits a church after suffering depressive symptoms. Over half the stories in this study highlighted the idea that Tom could not be religiously adequate, revealing a belief that Christian belief and depression cannot coexist. A major emphasis was placed on spiritual “healing” or freedom from mental illness, which is not often the case for those who struggle with mental illnesses such as depression. Although he was originally welcomed and supported, once the church community saw that Tom's depression was not just "going away," they saw him in more of a negative light or almost directly dismissed him in about a third of the stories. While these story completion studies are small and are not based on actual lived experiences, but rather perceptions of how a church community *could* react to depressive symptoms, perception is still a basis of imagination (Lloyd & Panagopoulos, 2022). Thus, the qualitative data gained from these stories does, indeed, measure perceptions that



evangelical Christians have of how their community may respond to depression or depressive symptoms: often through the over-spiritualization or dismissal of the symptoms.

Stressing complete healing, over-spiritualization, and the shame associated with mental illnesses such as depression can contribute to public stigma in evangelical Christian communities. Such public stigma arising from these prejudiced or stigmatizing attitudes can generate self-stigma in other Christians. Self-stigma comes in four stages: becoming aware of public stigma, agreeing with the ideas portrayed by public stigma, applying the negative beliefs to oneself, and experiencing the harmful effects of public stigma (Corrigan & Rao, 2012). The last stage, where a person experiences the harmful effects, often gives rise to the “why try” effect, in which the person affected believes that the stereotypes about them are true, and as such, they are incapable of certain endeavors or that their future life goals are unattainable. The effects of self-stigma surrounding depression can cut deeply and painfully, and public stereotypes and prejudices, such as ones that may be held by some evangelical Christian communities, may be at the root.

The relationship between self-stigma and evangelical Christians is a limited area of study, given its more specialized focus; however, the literature does exist. McGuire and Pace (2018) first studied the difference between self-stigma in Christians, particularly self-identified evangelical individuals, and self-stigma in the general population. They found a statistically significant relationship between evangelical Christians and resistance to seeking mental health help. Thus, evangelical Christians seemed to have higher levels of self-stigma. However, this study did not attempt to find reasons for this connection, and it was flawed in the sense that Christians were able to self-identify as evangelical because evangelicalism is a highly politicized and repellent term and people may not want to identify with it. In an effort to improve the construct validity, for their second study, the researchers used the National Association of Evangelicals’ definition of evangelicalism to distinguish evangelical Christians from other Christians, finding that many who did not identify themselves as “evangelical” still held all four creedal beliefs. Therefore, the construct validity improved in the second study, where they were able to accurately determine who was and was not evangelical. According to the second study, there was not a significant difference in self-stigma between evangelical and non-evangelical Christians, but researchers did find a major connection

between self-stigma and Christianity was the religious actions and practices these Christians participated in (Pace & McGuire, 2020). Namely, when a participant reported attending more worship services or Bible studies, their self-stigma score was higher. The highest levels of self-stigma were found in Christians with private prayer life. This connection could be due to the activities themselves, or due to more fundamentalist communities, who already have a worse track record with mental health stigma, requiring more involvement in such practices.

Clearly, Pace and McGuire (2020) are more apt to place responsibility on religious actions over religious beliefs as the cause of poor attitudes or perceptions of mental illness in evangelical Christian communities, as well as self-stigma in evangelical Christians. However, in the aforementioned study with researchers Lloyd et al. (2021), the article mentions beliefs having more of an effect on perceptions and stigma. Perhaps the big question, then, is this: are the ideologies of evangelical Christianity or the religious practices providing fuel for the negative contribution to self-stigma surrounding depression? It seems from the literature that a case can be made for both, and whether belief or action affects someone more may depend on any given individual. Yet, the literature also points to the idea that the negative perceptions in evangelical Christian communities can be rectified by incorporating new perspectives on mental health into their belief system and giving new meaning to religious actions, and therefore, the adverse effects may be limited.

Several more recent articles depict improving relationships between Christianity and mental health, including evangelicalism. In a more recent survey, researchers found that sixty-four percent of churches supported mental health treatment and real psychological support, and over fifty percent of survey respondents felt the attitudes toward mental health were positive in their church (Lloyd & Waller, 2020). These statistics indicate a positive step forward toward reducing both public stigma and self-stigma in Christian communities; however, at least twenty-three percent of Christians still feel their church's attitudes toward mental health are overtly negative. Evangelical Christian communities, as well as other groups of Christians, would benefit greatly from empowering other Christians through peer support, providing information about and access to psychological or psychiatric resources, and becoming aware of the idea that mental illness is neither a flaw nor a spiritual deficit (Corrigan &

Rao, 2012). In fact, positive help-seeking attitudes have been correlated with stronger religious support from church leaders and congregations (Lloyd et al., 2021).

Evangelical Christian communities, through belief and practice, may contribute to the harm of self-stigma surrounding depression in the similarly-minded congregation members sitting in their pews. However, the future is bright for the relationship between Christian communities and their relationship with mental health. Evangelical communities have the power and ability to bring about change in their perceptions toward mental health, particularly depression, through seeing it as less of a spiritual inadequacy or something to be over-spiritualized, but rather seeing it as a way to practice support of their friends and fellow church members who are dealing with mental distress.

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