

# REVISIONS

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PHOTO BY KIMBERLYN SWINSON

*ReVisions: Best Student Essays* is a publication designed to celebrate the finest nonfiction work composed by undergraduate students at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. This issue was designed and produced by the students in PRE 3450: Publication Design.

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Nominations to be considered for publication in the Spring 2022 issue will be accepted until December 2021. For further information, contact Dr. Nikki Agee, Dial Humanities Building 239-C, (910) 521-6635, [nikki.agee@uncp.edu](mailto:nikki.agee@uncp.edu).

The cover photo was taken by Kimberlyn Swinson, a sophomore Mass Communication major and member of the *Indianhead* yearbook staff. It shows students having a conversation outside the University Center in March 2021. The patio area outside the UC was a popular place for students to eat and socialize while still observing the University's COVID-19 protocols.

# REVISIONS: BEST STUDENT ESSAYS

Vol. 21

REMEMBERING THOSE WITH NO SHADOWS: A CRITIQUE OF FRANCES HARPER'S <i>SHADOWS UPLIFTED/IOLA LEROY</i> .....	4
Peace Ajjrotutu ENG 2100: African American Literature	
THE ANIMALIZATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND APOCALYPTIC VISION OF FRANZ MARC.....	11
Peggy Blevins REL 2050: Religion, Art, and Culture	
WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY IN BATS.....	16
Rachel Williams BIO 4320: Conservation Biology	



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## REMEMBERING THOSE WITH NO SHADOWS: A CRITIQUE OF FRANCES HARPER'S *SHADOWS UPLIFTED/IOLA LEROY*

By Peace Ajirotutu



Frances E.W. Harper was a revolutionary writer, poet, and abolitionist, but most importantly, she was a black Christian woman, born to free black parents in 1825 in Baltimore, Maryland (“Frances E.W. Harper” 1). Harper’s Christianity, womanhood, and upbringing permeate throughout her writing in both style and content. For a woman of her time, the categories of her life led to her writing some of her most successful works, such as *Forest Leaves*, *Sowing and Reaping*, and *Iola Leroy* or *Shadows Uplifted*. Each of these works, while different in genre, inhabits three key concepts: life as an African American, life as a woman, and life as a Christian. The way Harper presses religious, moralistic opinions

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on both her characters and readers has led to criticism of much of her work, even her most infamous novel *Iola Leroy*, which was one of the first novels published by an African American woman. Criticism towards her works proves that Harper’s overall works are a force to be reckoned with and her words have an everlasting impact on American society, leading to literary articles such as Patricia Schulster’s “Frances Harper’s Religion of Responsibility in *Sowing and Reaping*,” Shawn Salvant’s “Frances Harper and the Blood of Sacrifice,” and Lara Uthman’s blog post “Scribbling Women: Reclaiming The Bible In Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s *Forest Leaves*.”

In agreement with Shawn Salvant’s argument that Harper forces her characters within her novel *Iola Leroy* to “immolate themselves in the name of the cause,” I will argue that Harper forces her infatuation with sacrifice and Christianity onto her characters (Salvant 111). Harper’s obsession with sacrifice is seen in every character’s life within *Iola Leroy*, and by doing this Harper’s novel ostracizes African Americans in her target reader audience. Harper’s idealistic view of martyrdom causes her characters not only to self-destruct, which creates dramatic sacrificial scenes for Harper, but also to turn the historical basis of slavery, freedom, and race relations in the United States into religious propaganda. This use of dramatized language effectively alienates a large portion of her readers—fully African American women who, unlike *Iola Leroy*, could not choose their race. Harper pushes the idea that these characters should just accept the racial restrictions placed on them and sacrifice their entire lives for their blood because it is the right thing to do morally and religiously. In *Iola Leroy*, Harper misses the point she ostensibly seeks to make: that African Americans should embrace their heritage, which she calls shadows, and should sacrifice their livelihoods for the advancement of colored people.

Ultimately, Harper creates an overly religious white narrative that fails to address the reality of her story's period and setting. She does this by narrowing the focus of the character Tom Anderson to preclude the ways that individuals in real life might relate to him; by mirroring herself as Iola; and by contradicting her definition of race through her literary language.

### Frances Harper: Early Life and Religious Views

Frances Harper wrote *Iola Leroy* in the latter half of her life, and the content within the story is very reflective of her upbringing and life experiences. Harper, who was born a free black woman in Baltimore, Maryland, grew up with a strong biblical background and attended Watkins Academy, a school run by her uncle, who was a minister at the Sharp Street Methodist Church (Uthman). Since Harper lost her mother at a young age, she was raised by her aunt and uncle Henrietta and William Watkins, who fostered her education, her love of writing, and her abolitionism (Alexander 1-2). In 1845, she released her first written work, a collection of poems entitled *Forest Leaves*. A deeper look at Harper's introductory material for *Forest Leaves* gives readers an impression of what it was like for born-free African Americans to live in the same country as enslaved African Americans. Johns Hopkins University student Lara Uthman highlights the preface Harper wrote for *Forest Leaves*: "As a body, their [African Americans'] means of education are extremely limited; they are oppressed on every hand; they are confined to performance of the most menial acts; consequently, it is not surprising that their intellectual, moral and social advancement is not more rapid" (Uthman). It is important to pay attention to Harper's language when describing black individuals; she uses the language "they" and "their." Frances Harper was a free woman her entire life. She was a part of a rare group of African Americans who never knew slavery (Uthman). Harper's language within *Forest Leaves* foretells how she inadequately describes and represents African Americans and their heritage in her later work *Iola Leroy*.

### Frances Harper: The Abolitionist

Five years after her publication of *Forest Leaves*, Harper moved to Ohio and became the first African American to teach at Union Seminary, run by abolitionist John Brown (Alexander 2). Through the influence of John Brown, Harper turned her efforts to the anti-slavery movement. Through her writing, she began to write poetry that would be published in many anti-slavery newspapers, and then she began to travel and speak on behalf of the movement (Alexander 2-3). Author Shawn Salvant expands on Brown's influence on Harper, and influence on the plot of *Iola Leroy*, stating that "it would be the life and death of nineteenth-century America's famous martyr, the antislavery crusader John Brown, that would galvanize Harper's representations of martyrdom and shape her reflections on the philosophy of self-denial which she would develop in *Iola Leroy*" (Salvant 95). Salvant argues that Harper is ultimately moved by the sacrifice of John Brown and her interpretations of his life while writing the character Iola for her story. Into the character of Iola, Harper mixes her feelings about John Brown and his sacrifice with her own longing to lead a full life of self-denial and fulfillment by helping others. Christianity is the most influential piece of Harper's life, and biblical characters' sacrificial life stories, such as Jesus' and Moses', foster her obsession with martyrdom and self-denial.

Peace's essay is an intellectual and critical tour de force: She refuses an easy interpretation of this late nineteenth century novel of uplift and propriety and womanhood and bends its aesthetic and logic against itself. As she incisively demonstrates, the novel's concern for uplift and justice—both vital and good, to be sure—blind itself against any concern for those whom society precludes from uplift and justice. They become sacrifices, she shows, to the novel's conviction that right religion and good governance can prevail, and they are left unsaved and unprotected. As she concludes, the novel falls victim to whiteness, even as it seeks to celebrate Blackness—reminding us that then as well as now, structures of privilege can distort the dreams of even the most ardent reformers.

—Scott Hicks

### Frances Harper: The Christian

Author Patricia Sehulster highlights Harper's radical views of Christianity by saying that "Harper embraced the same type of Christianity that produced Nat Turner and John Brown. A sort of militant, she cultivated a congregation of several radical Moses figures" (Sehulster 1138). Sehulster can make these assertions about Harper's religious beliefs by calling to readers' attention Frances Harper's "Our Greatest Want" speech given in 1859. In that speech, Harper states:

I like the character Moses. He is the first disunionist we read of in the Jewish Scriptures. The magnificence of the Pharaoh's throne loomed up before his vision, its oriental splendors glittered before his eyes; but he turned from them all and chose rather to suffer with the enslaved, than rejoice with the free. (Sehulster 1138)

Moses, to Harper, was a key figure for her connection to the Bible and Christianity. Moses sacrificed wealth and riches to help the enslaved people of Egypt. Harping on her belief in biblical characters, and her personal experience with abolitionist John Brown, Frances Harper published one of the first novels by an African American woman during Reconstruction and the Jim Crow Era in the United States. *Iola Leroy* was intended to uplift the plights of African Americans and focus on the goodness of black characters, who sacrificed their lives such as Moses did in the Bible.

### Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy*/Shadows Uplifted

The novel *Iola Leroy* begins somewhere in North Carolina with a focus on black, enslaved Christian individuals who plan to run away and fight on the side of the Union Army to get their freedom. The story takes an emancipationist view of the Civil War and highlights the aid that African Americans gave to the war by focusing on their stories. Specifically, it focuses on Robert Johnson and Tom Anderson, who leave the plantation to fight in the Union war (6-19). The slaves create a plan to escape during a slave prayer meeting led by a character named Uncle Daniel, a black slave who seems to mirror that of a typical 1800s black minister, who speaks in heavy Southern dialect. Robert Johnson, a mulatto slave, is the favorite slave of his mistress. She teaches him how to read, and Harper emphasizes that they had a good relationship even though she sold his mother away from him. Later in the story, Harper allows the mistress to be forgiven by Robert, because in retribution for her selling his mother away, Robert is able to run away and fight for his freedom. Harper never allows the mistress to be condemned for her actions; in an effort to portray her characters in the best light morally, she allows many white characters, such as the mistress, to be forgiven (72).

Tom Anderson is also enslaved just like Robert, yet Tom, as a non-mixed-race slave, is portrayed as illiterate and is not treated by the mistress in the same way Robert is. Eventually, both Tom and Robert run away to the Union Army, and Tom, who learns of Iola's existence in a nearby plantation, begs the Union Army to save her from her master. All three characters meet in the Union Army barracks. Robert becomes a well-respected soldier, but Tom is forced to remain a servant in the Army, while Iola becomes a nurse. Early on in the story, Tom is fatally injured in battle after sacrificing himself for his fellow soldiers and spends his final moments with Iola, who he developed feelings for early on. Tom sings biblical hymns until he dies, moving Iola to tears, and creating the catalyst for her character development. Harper wrote this section purely for the enlightenment of the main character Iola. Tom is a dear friend to Iola, and his martyrdom is the reason she decides to lift the shadows of her life (24-30). Harper casts herself within Iola here by using the moment of Tom's death to mirror her experience with John Brown's death and to write Iola in a way that points out all of Harper's favorite parts about herself and how she chooses to live her life humbly and at the expense of others. Salvant sees the lack of character development for Tom and early death as what sets the tone for the amount of self-sacrificial decisions made by other characters throughout the story. Salvant states, "These acts of sacrifice and self-denial are versions of Thomas Anderson's martyrdom, versions of John Brown's martyrdom, and ultimately, versions of Christ's martyrdom" (Salvant 110-111). Eventually, these characters

are faced with a moment that forces them to make a sacrifice. These sacrifices change the way they look at the experiences of African Americans and the way they choose to live their lives.

### **The Villainization of Marie Leroy**

The end of the first section of the story is marked with the end of the Civil War and transitions the story into the Reconstruction era in the South with a focus on Iola's family, including Robert Johnson, who turns out to be her long-lost uncle. This section gives readers a further look into Iola Leroy and her brother Harry; readers learn both were brought up as if they were white and did not know of their black heritage. Sadly, due to a white family members' betrayal, they discover that they are colored, and Iola is sold into slavery (30-48). Iola and Harry are brought up to be white because their mother, Marie Leroy, is a former slave of mixed race, who was given the choice to pass and to marry her former master, Eugene Leroy. Marie ultimately chooses to pass and to bring up her children as white (32-53). Harper uses the story of Marie to place passing in a negative light; the reason her family life ends tragically is that she failed to uplift her shadows and live true to herself. Eventually, Marie's husband dies, and a white cousin of his uses the secret of Marie being partially black to sell Eugene's mixed family into slavery and to split Eugene's fortune between his white family members. Eventually, both Iola and Harry are faced with similar choices as their mother, and they choose to uplift their heritage. Harper attempts to prove that by doing so their lives are fulfilled, in contrast to their mother whose story took a negative turn. The theme within this section and throughout the story is that shadows always follow us. We can hide them for a short period, but we cannot hide them forever. The only way to fully live is by uplifting them. Harper leaves the readers with the impression if they make the wrong decision like Marie, they will not have a good ending, but if they sacrifice themselves and make the morally sound decision to uplift their heritage, they can be both spiritually fulfilled and have positive endings like Iola and Harry.

### **The Mark of Tom's Death**

Eventually, both Harry and Iola have a period in their lives where they have to choose whether they will pass as white and hide their mothers' ancestry, or if they will live as colored people and devote their lives to the plight of African Americans, which is seen as the tougher route. Iola's choice is not forced on her when she becomes a slave; there is no inclination that Iola wants to spend the rest of her life as a black woman working for black causes until Tom Anderson's heroic and spiritual death (27). Before Tom's death, Iola may have even intended to pass as white after the war was over, but her experiences with African Americans, whom she saw as martyrs for freedom, changes her view on the world she is living in, and she decides to take the hard route by living as a black woman. Harper mirrors herself within Iola by having Iola be moved by sacrifice to live what she sees as an upright life. The moment Iola chooses not to pass is marked by her refusal of Dr. Gresham, a white war doctor, who falls in love with Iola during their time working together in the Army hospital. Conveniently, Harper places the chapter about Marie and Eugene Leroy's tragedy right before the chapter in which Dr. Gresham confesses to Iola. It creates a moment in which readers are sensitive to both the idea of passing and the idea of marriage between a white man and a mixed-race woman. Readers are forced to understand Iola's rejection of Dr. Gresham as an act of self-redemption. Yet, it is more of an act of self-denial. It is clear to readers that Iola has feelings for Dr. Gresham, but having feelings is not enough for her to pass and to throw away her family heritage. Harper forces Iola to come to terms with this sacrifice she makes, and eventually Iola is uplifted by the fact that she can live fully and does not have to hide and be someone that she is not (53-58).

### **Harry Leroy's Choice**

Harry's choice came directly after he learned about his race. Harry has the decision to either stay in his situation and pass or take the hard path by considering himself as colored. Within the section, Harper gives Harry two

## REMEMBERING THOSE WITH NO SHADOWS

stark choices which hint at how she saw the situation of passing as an easy route, versus living out one's heritage as the hard route. Within the section explaining Harry's choice, Harper writes:

Harry winced when the question was asked. He felt the reality of his situation as he had not done before. It was as if two paths had suddenly opened before him, and he was forced to choose between them. On one side were strength, courage, enterprise, power of achievement, and memories of a wonderful past. On the other side were weakness, ignorance, poverty, and the proud world's social scorn. . . . He was fair enough to pass unchallenged among the fairest in the land, and yet a Christless prejudice had decreed that he should be a social pariah. He sat, thoughtful and undecided, as if a great struggle were going on in his mind. (Harper 61)

Harper poses the two sides as extreme opposites, as well as religiously condemning society. Harper made this choice to dramatize her language of sacrifice. She uses the negative situations that African Americans would have faced during this period as slaves to create a triumphant moment for the formally white Harry Leroy to become the newly profound black Harry. It was as if his internal decision changed him, and he became a new person. Harry then decides to join a colored regiment and fight with the Union Army. This moment mirrors the moment that Moses chose to cast away the Pharaoh and live as a slave. Harry is seen in a similar light when he chooses to fight in the colored regiment instead of the white one. Harper writes, "Here was a man in the flush of his early manhood, to whom could come dreams of promotion from a simple private to a successful general, deliberately turning his back upon every gilded hope and dazzling opportunity, to cast his lot with the despised and hated negro" (61). Harper similarly compares Harry to Moses by allowing him to cast away an easy life for the greater good of his people, and by allowing him to marry well and have a happy ending because he chose to sacrifice an easier life for a tougher one. Eventually, because of their choices, Iola and Harry can reunite with one another, as well as reunite Robert Anderson with Marie Leroy, who turned out to be his long-lost sister. In comparison to their mother, both Harry and Iola make the right choice in the eyes of Harper and benefit from it. Harper makes it clear to readers that it is better to sacrifice oneself than live a life of hiding.

### Use of Harry and Iola as Main Characters Hinders the Overall Message

Harper forces her characters to sacrifice their lives along with this decision to become African American but also conveys that this choice brings them inner peace and higher status because they made the right choice. Harper attempts to push the boundaries by making a story filled with chivalrous characters who are black; yet, the very fact that these characters can pass takes away from their achievements as "African Americans," because Harper continues to focus on the fact that they would have been assumed to be white unless they stated otherwise. These characters throughout the story have to go out of their way to reveal their race; in a moment of jest, Harry recalls a moment when he was in the colored car of a train and "a colored man entered the car," and, "mistaking me for a white man, asked the conductor to have me removed, and I had to insist that I was colored in order to be permitted to remain. It would be ludicrous, if it were not vexatious, to be too white to be black, and too black to be white" (118). Yet, those who cannot hide their race, such as Tom Anderson, are not left with many options. All of the mixed-raced characters who can pass are able to uplift their shadows and benefit from it spiritually and mentally, but Harper leaves out a large group of individuals who are unable to make the same life choices as Harry and Iola: fully black individuals.

### Remembering Those Without Shadows

Frances Harper paints a beautiful story of sacrifice to uplift one's heritage through the eyes of mixed-raced African Americans, whom she uses to prove that black individuals are equal to white individuals and are able to lead decent lives when given the opportunity. Yet, her story never addresses African Americans with no ties to white individuals, and those who never have the ability to choose their race or benefit from white privilege in any way. The majority of readers of *Iola Leroy* in 1892 would have been African Americans with no chance to pass as white, yet Harper completely disregards this group of readers and focuses on those who are able to exercise white privilege.

Harper focuses on the sacrifice of those who choose to unveil their shadows, but she ignores those who cannot hide these shadows. She never discusses the possibility of characters not wanting to sacrifice themselves, and she alienates mixed-raced readers who may have chosen to pass by villainizing Marie Leroy. She fails to portray an accurate story of the majority of her reader base: darker-skinned individuals who would have no shadows to hide. She chose to write a story of a white woman, with black heritage, who was only forced to experience part of what it was like to be black later in her life. Those who truly deserve to be uplifted and remembered in Harper's story are individuals who were racially seen as black in America in the 1800s and treated as such from the moment they were born until the day they died. The message she puts out to readers who cannot relate to Iola is that they should be martyrs like Tom, or be irrelevant to the story in general, like the background slave characters. There is no room for their unpalatable stories in Harper's failed attempt to uplift blacks through the use of religious propaganda. No fully African American characters are shown with economic achievement at the end of the story, unlike her mulatto characters. Those that are fully African American and focused on, like Tom, either die or, like Uncle Daniel, are only held to a high regard for making sacrificial choices which soothe the white figures in the story. There are many instances in which the story becomes white-centered; these instances are why Harper misses the intended message of *Iola Leroy* about the glory of being black and proud.

### Uncle Daniel and the White-Christian Narrative

Uncle Daniel is a character who is trapped in Harper's religious narrative, and his sacrifice further perpetuates Harper's Christian narrative through her use of white-centered plot lines. In the beginning of the story with characters Robert and Tom, Uncle Daniel is given the opportunity to run away and fight for freedom, but he chooses not to in order to keep a promise he made to Master Robert. This is an example of her attempt to make a character such as Uncle Daniel palatable Christian for readers. At this moment, Harper writes, "I'se mighty glad you hab a chance for your freedom; but, ez I tole yer, I promised Marse Robert I would stay, an' I mus' be as good as my word" (15). To allow Uncle Daniel to be seen as morally pure, she forces him to sacrifice his freedom for those who have kept him in shackles. Although he does choose to stay for a few other reasons than just Master Robert, it is important to remember that his wife was sold away by the very person he chooses to mention as his first reason for not running away to freedom. Uncle Daniel is already shown as a fervent Christian early on in the story, as he leads the hidden prayer meeting all the slaves attend, and to keep aligned with Harper's view of Christianity, she makes him sacrifice his personal freedom to soothe the white characters in the story.

### Harper's Wording About African Americans Further Cultivates a White Narrative

Harper allows her mixed-raced characters to perpetuate this white-based narrative as well. At one point within the novel, Robert Johnson speaks with a captain in the Union Army about Tom Anderson and says the words, "He is just as black as black can be. He has been bought and sold like a beast, and yet there is not a braver man in all the company. I know him well" (22). The intent of this section was for Harper to show how Robert views Tom as brave. Instead, it creates a counter effect that reinforces stereotypes of black individuals at that time and especially black men who were slaves. Statements from a half-white Robert about a fully black Tom Anderson like, "He is just as black as can be" create the idea that Robert is different from Tom, and divides characters such as Iola and Harry from the fully black individuals within the story. Harper tries to make the point within this story that those who are black are equal to their white counterparts, which is why Harry and Iola must uplift their heritage and prove to people that race changes nothing. Yet, the language throughout the story came from white or partially white individuals, while the fully black individuals had no chance to also prove that they were more than just self-sacrificing servants.

### Harper Fails her Target Audience: Fully Black Individuals

Not only does Harper push a white narrative, but also she fails her target audience by keeping the fully black characters as illiterate servants with no character development or chance at economic prosperity like the mulatto characters were allowed. Harper paints a picture of these enslaved individuals as those who were content with their situation yet pondered on freedom as if it were only a slightly better situation than the one they were in. This hinders the point Harper is trying to make by uplifting African Americans; instead, she accidentally creates an entirely white and unrealistic perspective for her readers. Her failure to write a story that accurately represents enslaved black individuals is partially based on the fact that she was a free black woman who was only able to look at enslaved individuals from the outside. Yet, as a literary scholar, who attempted to recreate stories that were not her own, she failed her readers in both her choice of character and plot.

### A Lack of Historical Accuracy, In Lieu of A Religious Focus

In conclusion, while *Iola Leroy* has many historically important parts, it also falls short in many ways. It forces righteous personalities on characters, who must sacrifice themselves like Jesus. Harper's explanation of race and what it was really like being an enslaved African American, in general, is also problematic. She sent a bad message to African Americans who were not mixed-race, and those who were but chose not to live like Iola, which hinders her story and makes it more fictional than historical fiction. Every African American's life situation in the time this story was set was different, but life was harsher on some than it was on others. Iola and Harry had the privileges to make the "choice" to be colored, but it is important to remember that Iola and Harry would have had a different experience than most African Americans at the time. Thus, the novel lacks accurate representation of African Americans at the time, and it creates an unrealistic plot for both Harper's readers and herself. ↻

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## THE ANIMALIZATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND APOCALYPTIC VISION OF FRANZ MARC

By Peggy Blevins

Claudia Martin emphasizes the intimate relationship between religion and art; independently, each helps man create meaning and purpose for existence beyond mere survival, yet when combined, they elevate one another to a “visual expression of spirituality” that can be “understood by all humanity” (Martin). Many artists throughout history have incorporated this principle into their attempts to challenge the accepted styles of art of their own time periods, and as a result they founded new movements that changed the way that people view and connect with the spiritual realm. Franz Marc was one such artist whose experiments with color and abstraction helped to launch the Expressionist movement. The Expressionists prized bold color and distorted forms to communicate the artist’s own emotional reaction to the world. Marc’s paintings, throughout his career, incorporate his color symbolism and frequent use of animals as subjects, and they portray the evolution of his spiritual beliefs from what he referred to as the “animalization of art” to an apocalyptic world view that welcomed World War I as a necessary instrument to cleanse humanity of its evils (Wolf 227). While Marc’s style and apocalyptic vision led groups that favored more conventional art styles to label his work as degenerate, later artists like Jackson Pollock were inspired by Marc’s experiments with innovative abstraction and messages of spiritual revival. Marc’s body of work showed that art is not bound to the existing religious and cultural values of society; art can instead reflect artists’ feelings about existing societal norms and promote alternate ideas intended to bring about change.



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Marc’s views on spirituality were influenced by his family, peers, and the events of the time in which he lived. Marc was born in Munich, Germany in 1880, and his family consisted of painters who had strong interests in theology and philosophy. They were greatly concerned with the ideologies and responsibilities of Christianity. Their influence led Marc to begin studying theology at the university, but he ultimately transitioned to the study of philosophy. After finishing school, Marc briefly served in the military before he began to study painting.

According to Klaus Carl, Marc met fellow artist Wassily Kandinsky in 1910, and their friendship was based on a shared view that art was necessary for the salvation of Western culture (64). This view was influenced by the religious skepticism of the time period that led to the growing belief that life was meaningless; Karl Marx’s theory of alienation of the worker also resonated with the artists. Charles Cramer and Kim Grant discuss Marc and Kandinsky’s founding of the Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) artists’ group in 1911 in the hope of countering the spiritual harm that they believed science, technology, and industrialization

were inflicting upon society, and Kandinsky said about the group's intent, "We aim to show by means of the variety of forms represented how the inner wishes of the artist are embodied" (Cramer and Grant). The Blue Rider group believed that the simplicity of color and abstraction helped to connect man back to the spiritual realm that had been forgotten, and these views were largely the basis of what would become the German Expressionist movement. The Expressionists of the Blue Rider group viewed society's loss of spirituality as a problem that could only be resolved by the complete destruction and recreation of the world, and Marc's early association with the Blue Rider group allowed him to fine-tune his own spiritual philosophy. According to Marion Wolf, Marc viewed modern society as overly materialistic and conflict-ridden, and to counter the illness that he saw in humanity, Marc began to develop a pantheistic view that God was immanent in the unity of the cosmos, which he sought to express in his work (226).

Marc's early painting studies followed natural realism, but as he and the Blue Rider members advanced their religious ideals and philosophies, Marc developed two signature attributes that reflected his ideas of spirituality in his painting: 1) his preference for animals as subjects, and 2) his use of bold, primary colors. Marc's affinity for animals was due to what he referred to as the "animalization of art" (Wolf 227). John Moffit shares one of Marc's later letters to his wife from the battle front of World War I, in which he explained this philosophy: "Those un-spiritual, impious people who surrounded me (especially the males) never inspired my true feelings, while the animals -- with their untouched, innocent sense of life -- allowed all that was good in me to respond" (124). In other words, Marc saw animals as the purest and most honest representation of God in all things. He further sought to enhance his spiritual expression in his paintings with the symbolism of color, which he also developed during his time in the Blue Rider group. Moffit shares another quote from Marc's well-known letter to friend and fellow Blue Rider member August Macke, in which he described his theory: "Blue is the male principle, severe and spiritual. Yellow is the female principle, gentle, cheerful and sensual. Red is matter, brutal and heavy, the color that has always to struggle with, and then to succumb to, the other two!" (112). Marc's fascination with the spiritual qualities of animals and ideas about the use of color to express meaning helped guide the creation of his art.

*The Yellow Cow* (1911) (*Figure 1*) is one of Marc's first paintings in which he experi-



*Figure 1.*

mented with his color theory, and this work also reflects his early pantheistic beliefs. In this painting, a bright yellow cow leaps across the canvas. JC Harris suggests that not only does the color yellow translate to cheerfulness in Marc's color symbolism, but the way that the cow appears to frolic can be described as joyful because it is one with its true state of being. The yellow tones also carry into the landscape around the cow's head, uniting the animal with the world around it (809). Marc's notion that blue represents the spiritual realm is reflected in the cow's blue spot and the blue mountains in the background, both of which convey the presence of God within and around the animal. Harris also notes that the placement of both the cow and the mountains above the red earth below the cow's feet show Marc's idea that joy and spirituality rise above and overcome the physical realm of matter and materialism (809). As this painting was completed shortly after Marc's second marriage to Maria Franck,

An ongoing assignment in this course was to discuss artworks through Western cultural history. Peggy always contributed insightful comments for the class. This is a very well-crafted essay. One of its aspects concerns human-animal relationships, an important topic today in the field of Religion and Culture. While I had knowledge of Franz Marc's expressionist art, I appreciated learning about Marc's apocalypticism (a word meaning "concerning the end of a/the world") and his welcoming of WWI as bringing about an apocalypse--and the irony of his dying in that war.

—David Nikkel

it is thought to be an unspoken tribute to his new bride. At this point in Marc's life and career, the spiritual message of his paintings promoted his belief in the interconnectedness of all things.

It wasn't long before the tone of Marc's works began to change. Industrialization had allowed nations to mass produce weapons and increase their military strength, and the threat of war exposed the long-standing tensions and



tenuous peace between many European nations. An uneasiness about the state of the world appears in Marc's painting *The Tiger* (1912) (Figure 2). In this work, Marc depicts a hunter disturbed from its rest. Frederick Levine remarks that the block-like shapes and sharp angles add to the tension of the animal's position; its gaze is affixed in the distance as though it sees its prey and is waiting to attack (130). Unlike the use of yellow in *The Yellow Cow*, the tiger's yellow tone no longer represents contentment; it appears to signify the sensuality of power. The surrounding violets, greens, reds, and oranges also give clues to the underlying meaning of the work. Moffit returns to Marc's description of his color symbolism:

Figure 2.

. . . if you mix blue - so serious, so spiritual - with red, you then intensify the red to the point of unbearable sadness . . . . If you mix red and yellow to obtain orange, you endow the passive and female yellow with a 'turbulent,' symbolic power . . . . Now, if you mix blue and yellow to obtain green, you awaken red - matter: the 'earth' - to life; but here, as a painter, I always feel a difference: With green you never quite bring the brutality and materiality of red to rest, as was the case with the previous color-tones (just recall how, for example, red and green are used in the industrial arts!). Green always requires the aid of blue (heaven) and yellow (the sun) in order to reduce matter to silence. (112)

According to Marc's color choices, this painting communicates sadness, turbulence, and an inability to control the brutality of man. The small blue area that touches the tiger shows that Marc had not completely abandoned his pantheistic ideology; heaven was still seen as a part of the animal and its environment. However, the harsh shapes and remaining vivid colors show Marc's rising worry that his interconnected world was in danger.

At first glance, *The Tower of the Blue Horses* (1913) (Figure 3) appears to show Marc's return to happier subject matter; however, this painting shows Marc's beginning transition to the popular Blue Rider apocalyptic view of the world. The predominant yellow and blue tones may give a false perception of cheerful spirituality, especially since horses were Marc's favorite animals to paint. K.



Figure 3.

Martin suggests that the placement of the horses on top of one another does signify the unity of the animals with the cosmos (348), so Marc is still holding on to a pantheistic view of the world in this work. The Art Story points out that a closer inspection of the piece draws attention to the crescent moon on the chest of the foremost horse. The crescent was a popular Expressionist symbol for the apocalypse, and the combination of this symbol with four distinct horses has led some historians to suggest that this painting represents the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The red outline and transparent character of the third horse's head may also suggest that the current state of the world was starting to overpower and erase Marc's idea that heaven exists

in all things. The use of the blue horses may then symbolize Marc's beginning adoption of the Blue Rider Expressionist's hope for the apocalypse and the resulting world renewal it was believed to bring ("Franz Marc Artworks & Famous Paintings").



Figure 4.

Marc's sense of doom intensified as it appeared Europe would be going to war, and his painting *The Fate of the Animals* (1913) (Figure 4) shows a marked shift away from his principle of the "animalization of art." Moffit shares the next part of Marc's 1915 letter to his wife where he explains his subsequent break with that idea: "Very early in life, I found man to be ugly; animals appeared more beautiful, more pure, but then I discovered in them too so much that was repulsive and ugly. . . . I have suddenly become

## THE ANIMALIZATION OF SPIRITUALITY AND APOCALYPTIC VISION OF FRANZ MARC

fully conscious of the ugliness of nature, of its *impurity*” (124). Marc no longer recognized an inherent spiritual force within animals; instead, he began to see them as part of the corrupt world of humanity that required salvation. Rather than fear the pending war, Marc looked forward to it as a means to cleanse the world of its materialistic and spiritual corruption and bring about a utopia. *The Fate of the Animals* shows this firm apocalyptic view through its depiction of the destruction of the world. Levine points out that the red flames enter the painting from the upper left corner and spread across the canvas, consuming the forest while the animals attempt to flee in terror, and the center of the canvas displays a solitary blue deer, which may be surrendering to death (270-271). This section of the painting could represent Marc’s hope for the death of the corrupt ideals of European spirituality. Immediately to the right of the sacrificial deer is a large tree trunk, which Levine posits is taken from the Nordic myth of a great tree that transcends time and space and acts as “as both a symbol of the vastness of the universe and as a projection of the concept of immortality” (275). The tree shelters the animals on the right of the canvas from harm, alluding to the fact that they will survive the event to start a new, pure world. The evident themes of destruction and renewal in this piece show that Marc’s prior pantheistic view had shifted to an entirely apocalyptic vision that would continue in his remaining works.



Figure 5.

Marc’s final painting, *Fighting Forms* (1914) (Figure 5), shows his complete abandonment of distinct animal subjects and his readiness for the final apocalyptic events that he believed World War I would bring. Two giant abstract forms, one intensely red, one mostly black with hints of blue, seem to be engaged in battle on the canvas. Green tones surround and awaken the red form, while violet tones of profound sadness surround the blue-black form.

Moffit and Levine view Marc’s final painting as the epic struggle between the material and spiritual (120). The red form overpowers the black form, pushing it to the side of the painting where it begins to shrink and wither. The traces of blue give clues to the fact that the black form is indeed Marc’s expression of spirituality, possessing only remnants of its former vibrant blue color as it slowly dies at the hands of man’s nihilism and greed. While this piece may suggest that Marc is portraying a painful surrender of his spiritual beliefs, Moffit shares the words of one of Marc’s final letters from the battlefield: “I do not really envision death as *destruction* . . . it is absolute deliverance. There is only the blessing and salvation: *death*, the destruction of form. With that the soul becomes free” (124). Marc viewed the war as the ultimate liberation of man’s spirituality.

Marc’s belief and wish to hasten the coming apocalypse led to his enlistment to help fight during World War I. He was killed at the Battle of Verdun on March 4, 1916, but his surviving letters to his wife and friends leave us with a direct understanding of his profound philosophy of the spiritual connections to the world around him. He mourned the loss of religion and spirituality that he saw as the direct result of industrialization, and he saw his art as the means to channel his feelings about the world and the change that he wished to see. He hoped that in using art as the tool to share the message of the interconnectedness of all living things in the universe, he would help bring a nihilistic Europe back to its faith in God. And when he realized that his efforts would not trigger the next spiritual awakening, he embraced the idea of an apocalyptic end in order to create a new beginning. While World War I did not bring the apocalypse that Marc anticipated would redeem the world and recreate a deep connection between humanity and God, he did accomplish his goal of using art to challenge the societal belief that modernization required the abandonment of the divine. In doing so, Marc left a legacy for the next generations of modern artists who embraced his ideals of spirituality and color in their own work.🌀

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## Figures

**Figure 1.** Franz Marc. *The Yellow Cow*. 1911. Oil on canvas. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

**Figure 2.** Franz Marc. *The Tiger*. 1912. Oil on canvas. Lenbachhaus Museum, Munich.

**Figure 3.** Franz Marc. *The Tower of the Blue Horses*. 1913. Oil on canvas. Location unknown.

**Figure 4.** Franz Marc. *The Fate of the Animals*. 1913. Oil on canvas. Franz Marc Museum, Kochel, Germany.

**Figure 5.** Franz Marc. *Fighting Forms*. 1914. Oil on canvas. Bavarian State Painting Collections, Munich.

# WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY IN BATS

By Rachel Williams



## I. Introduction

In North America, an estimated six million bats have already been killed by an infectious disease called white-nose syndrome (WNS), which is caused by *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Alves et al., 2014). An earlier name for WNS is *Geomyces destructans* (Reynolds & Barton, 2014). North America's first known case of this disease was in the winter of 2007 in New York. Since then, it has quickly spread through most of the United States and eastern Canada (Lankau & Rogall, 2016). In four years, *P. destructans* made its way from a cave in New York to four separate North Carolina counties, and the state's first mortality, recorded in 2011, was in Transylvania County (U.S.

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Fish and Wildlife Service, 2013). Now, some areas in the western part of the state are showing population declines up to ninety-five percent (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2013). Of the forty-five species of bats across North America, it is suspected that twenty-five species will be affected by white-nose syndrome in some way and that five of these species may even become Critically Endangered, or worse, over the next coming years (Alves et al., 2014). There are not a lot of available remedies to mitigate the impacts of WNS. However, Hoyt et al. (2019) have been testing how well a probiotic bacterium might work to combat the deleterious effects of *P. destructans*. The U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center has also been working towards a potential vaccine for WNS (Hopkins & Soileau, 2018). WNS has the potential to eradicate several bat species across North America, and even though there is not a perfect solution to the problem, action needs to be taken soon to prevent irreversible effects.

## II. White-Nose Syndrome (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*)

Finding its origins deep within a cave in Europe, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, a fungus, is the cause of what we know as white-nose syndrome (Alves et al., 2014). Even though *P. destructans* can be found across almost all of Europe, there is no significant data on the fungus in Europe. This is because it has not caused the same mass mortality that it is currently causing across North America (Zukal et al., 2014). One theory behind this is that the bats of Europe have coevolved with the fungus, and evolution has given the bats a resistance to the fungus (Wibbelt et al., 2010). This is, of course, just a theory and lacks hard evidence. This lack of information, however, means that as we study WNS in North America, we do not have a baseline of information to compare our results with.

How this fungus made its way to North America is unknown and highly speculative; however, *P. destructans* is now documented across Europe, Asia, and North America (Blehert

& Lankau, 2017). Since its North American discovery in 2007, WNS has spread from New York to five Canadian provinces and thirty-two states including North Carolina (Hopkins & Soileau, 2018). WNS was discovered in four counties in North Carolina in 2011, and it is now confirmed in seven different counties across the state (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2013). Of North Carolina's seventeen species of bats, eight have tested positive for WNS in other areas across North America, but only four species have been identified with fungal spores in North Carolina, and these bats are the big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), and the tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife, 2013). Knowing that other species have been infected with WNS across North America, it is important to continue to monitor all species, even though they have not yet tested positive in North Carolina.

Researchers mark an area as “suspect” for WNS if the fungus is visible on a bat found in the area (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2013). An area is not declared infected until *P. destructans* has been positively identified under a microscope. When a bat or an area suitable for hibernation has been identified as infected by WNS, that area is considered contaminated indefinitely. This is because of the vitality of the fungus. This is important to monitor because many management plans for WNS have different protocols for areas that are unaffected, suspected, and infected.

The cold-loving fungus *P. destructans* typically infects and kills bats during winter cave hibernation or just thereafter (Reynolds & Barton, 2014). The fungus grows on the hairless skin found on bats' wings, noses, and ears (Alves et al., 2014). The fungus brings bats from torpor, a state that reduces metabolic rate, heart rate, and energy demands, to normothermia, resuming normal metabolic rate, heart rate, and energy demands, during hibernation, which forces the bats to use more energy to maintain hibernation (Alves et al., 2014; Wojciechowski et al., 2007). If bats do survive hibernation, they typically wake early and cannot find the energy sources needed to replenish themselves from hibernation.

### III. The Importance of Bats

On an average night during the bats' active season, it is estimated that a single bat eats four-to-eight grams of pest insects (Boyles et al., 2011). Knowing that an estimated six million bats in North America have already been victims of white-nose syndrome (WNS), of these pest insects we can extrapolate that between 3,960 and 7,920 metric tons are no longer being eaten across areas affected by WNS (Alves et al., 2014; Boyles et al., 2011). This could mean grave things for not only North Carolina, where the agricultural industry is estimated at eighty-seven billion dollars annually, but also other agricultural regions across North America (Shank & Johnson, 2019). Take the crop corn, for example, grown in over one hundred fifty million hectares across the globe. It is proven that bats not only consume pest insects that would feed on and destroy this crop but also reduce the amount of fungal growth and mycotoxin associated with those pest insects (Maine & Boyles, 2015). This service, evaluated only for corn crops, could relate to one billion dollars in savings for corn farmers across the globe. Bats serve many roles in their ecosystems, and these important and irrecoverable ecological services that bats provide the world will be lost with the loss of the species. For farmers, the loss of bats could directly relate to a huge increase in spending on harmful pesticides or worse, the loss of some species of crops altogether.

Rachel has done a remarkable job of summarizing one of the most tragic chapters in the history of North American biodiversity—white-nose syndrome, which is decimating bat populations across the continent. Drawing heavily from the scientific literature, she reviews the rampant spread of this disease, caused by an invasive fungus, from its earliest point of entry in New York to numerous states, including North Carolina. Bats are often portrayed negatively by the popular media, but Rachel explains the critical roles bats play in natural ecosystems and to agriculture. Her knowledge of white-nose syndrome stems in part from her work with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, which is monitoring bat populations in response to this fungal disease.

—Lisa Kelly

## WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON BIODIVERSITY IN BATS

Bats not only help farmers and their crops by eating pest insects, but also are extremely important pollinators of wild plants. Bats serve as seed dispersers and pollinators for many species of columnar cacti, keystone species in the deserts of the American Southwest (Ducummon, 2000). Columnar cacti provide a plethora of resources to a barren desert, from food and water to shelter for many different types of animals. One could argue that all life in the desert would be devastated by the loss of these extremely important plants and their pollinators. Bats are also known to pollinate almost sixty species of the agave plant, from which is made Mexican tequila, which is a growing multimillion-dollar worldwide industry. Bats are so strongly associated with the agave plant that it is thought that one cannot survive without the other. Propagation of the agave plant has been measured to decline to 1/3000 of normal in the absence of the bats that pollinate it.

Generating more than four trillion dollars annually, the tourism industry globally employs more people than any other industry in the world (Pennisi et al., 2004). Many endangered or threatened species across the globe can contribute to ecotourism, and with some key marketing, bats could someday be among them. Ecotourism is easily the fastest-growing sector of the tourism industry, defined as a form of tourism where humans recreationally engage with wildlife, whether directly or indirectly, and the wildlife is not removed or negatively affected by that engagement. Ecotourism is intended to support conservation efforts while participants passively observe wildlife. This is the case in places like Austin, Texas, where Mexican free-tailed bats roost, approximately 1.5 million bats in total, under the Congress Avenue Bridge (Bat Conservation International, 2020). This urban colony of bats is thought to be the world's largest colony. With this many bats in an urban setting, it is no wonder they can draw a crowd of almost 100,000 people annually. People come from all over to watch these bats take flight, and they bring an estimated ten million dollars in tourism revenue with them. Many of the old mine shafts across North America could be set up as similar ecotourism efforts to watch the bats take flight each night. For places around the globe like Austin, Texas, the loss of bats could mean a deficit in the growing tourism economy. Therefore, we must do all we can to defend bats against WNS.

### IV. Management Strategies for White-Nose Syndrome

There is a national response team called “White-Nose Syndrome Response Team” composed of more than a hundred federal and state agencies, along with researchers and biologists from across the country (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2019). The WNS Response Team is a public group whose aim is to prevent irreversible damage to bat populations from WNS. Together, they have created a “National White-Nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol” and “Canadian National White-Nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol.” These documents provide the most up-to-date scientific recommendations to decrease the human-assisted spread and transmission of WNS. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ([NCWRC], 2016) adopted the “White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance and Response Plan for North Carolina” in April of 2016. This document provides standards to minimize the spread of *P. destructans* by humans; enhances surveillance and monitoring; provides procedures to follow for the management of caves and mines; standardizes response to WNS; and provides outreach information.

Minimizing the human-assisted spread of *P. destructans* is only part of the battle. Researchers are also trying to understand how the fungus is transmitted between bats. If these data could be gathered efficiently, it would be beneficial to the infected and vulnerable bat populations. It is particularly important to determine where the fungus will spread next and how quickly it will continue to spread. These trends would allow professionals to predict and stop the spread of white-nose syndrome before uninfected colonies are exposed. We know that *P. destructans*' preferable growth range is between 12.5°C and 15.8°C and that it is unable to grow or at temperatures that exceed 20°C (Forsythe et al., 2018). These conditions for growth are typically better met in caves located at higher latitudes. This is because caves in higher latitudes do not have a high variance of temperatures throughout the year and typically sustain cooler temperatures for a longer period when compared to southern caves. However, especially

in the southern caves, these large ranges of temperature swings could influence the direction of adaptation of *P. destructans* in the future.

Along with minimizing the spread of the fungus, Hoyt et al. (2019) have been testing how well a probiotic bacterium might work to combat the mortality of *P. destructans*. This field trial saw a 46.2% survival rate in bats treated with the probiotic bacterium *Pseudomonas fluorescens* and saw only an 8.5% survival rate in the control group. This probiotic still has several downsides concerning efficacy, specifically relating to bacterial endurance and proliferation after the treatment is administered. Changing the treatment frequency, altering the dosage, or adding the probiotic to a solution to form biofilms could increase how well the treatment works, but it is unknown if these solutions have harmful side effects. The U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center has also been working towards a potential vaccine for WNS, like the vaccine used to prevent sylvatic plague in prairie dogs (Hopkins & Soileau, 2018).

Wilcox and Willis (2016) have also tested the use of temperature-controlled roosting habitats, specifically for little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*), as a potential management strategy against *P. destructans*. These heated bat houses would help bats conserve energy even if the fungus disrupts their torpor during hibernation. This conservation in energy would come in the form of reducing thermoregulatory costs while the bat is hibernating. Controlling the temperature in the roosting sites for bats, in this case for the little brown bats, removes the need for bats to regulate their body temperatures. Their research even suggests that bats infected with WNS would willingly choose to roost in a temperature-controlled bat house over a standard bat house. Knowing this, creating enhanced roosting habitats for bats could work as a positive management strategy against WNS. Wilcox and Willis (2016) also suggest that these temperature-controlled roosting habitats could also be an integral part of restoring bat populations. For female bats, these heated microclimates could help mitigate the energy demands of thermoregulation during periods of gestation and lactation. For male bats, these temperature-controlled bat houses could help increase rates of spermatogenesis. If temperature-controlled roosting sites could be set up and maintained, it could not only help bats survive WNS but could also aid in rebuilding bat populations across North America.

## V. Enhancing the Public's Appreciation of Bats

Even though bats are credited with bringing in over ten million dollars to the economy of Austin, Texas, more can be done in the way of ecotourism to change how the public views bats (Bat Conservation International, 2020). Typically, bats are portrayed negatively in the public eye (Hoffmaster et al., 2016). Bats are often associated with diseases and vampire lore, which results in fearful reactions despite all their positive contributions to ecosystems across the globe. This fear can lead to apathy toward protecting this vital species, or in extreme cases, some may wish for the complete eradication of the species. However, through education, people can become more appreciative of bats and bat conservation. Typically, people who attend educational programs about bats come out with increasingly positive attitudes towards bats. This positive attitude can lead people to do more in their communities and even their backyards to help protect bats, such as planting wildflower gardens and building and placing bat houses in areas where bats may roost.

## VI. The Future for Bats

WNS is quickly spreading and wreaking havoc in cave hibernation bat populations across North America. In only nine years, this fungus has spread from coast to coast across North America and has sent bat populations plummeting, some showing declines between 72-95% (Alves et al., 2014). With the help of organizations like the "White-Nose Syndrome Response Team," we have already started reducing the human-assisted spread of the fungus through policy and protocols (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2019). With more research on how the fungus spreads between bat individuals and bat populations, there is a chance that we can help slow the natural spread of *P.*

*destructans*. Humans can also help preserve the diversity of our bat populations by creating and maintaining suitable roosting habitats. Evidence suggests that if we could create and produce temperature-controlled roosting areas for the bats, the mortality rate in infected individuals would be much lower (Wilcox & Willis, 2016). Finally, we can help our bats build immunity to the fungus. Researchers believe that the bats of Europe coevolved with the fungus, allowing them generations to create their natural immunity to *P. destructans* while the bats of North America do not have the time to create this immunity (Wibbelt et al., 2010). So, with the help of breakthroughs like *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, a probiotic bacterium, we may be able to give bats a leg up in the race against extinction (Hoyt et al., 2019). Bats and their diverse population are vital to the ecosystem, so learning more about the fungus and finding a cure could benefit the agricultural community and the human population. This research will, of course, take time and resources, and hopefully the North Carolina bat populations can persist until a cure or treatment has been found.

By far, the best hope for bats in the battle against WNS is a combined effort of many of these management strategies. If we could create large scale temperature-controlled roosting habitats for bats in areas that are easily accessible by the public, then we could mitigate the cost of the habitat by the income of area tourism and promote powerful and positive educational opportunities. Also, with a controlled habitat, it would be easy to administer a vaccine or probiotic bacterium to all the bats roosting inside the habitat. These habitats could even be built by farmers, who depend on bats to consume pest insects or to pollinate the agave plant. These temperature-controlled habitats could play a huge role in recovering from the devastation of WNS. No one answer is the correct one; for bats to be able to see the light at the end of this *P. destructans* tunnel, we will have to take a quick and multifaceted approach to mitigate the national population declines. 🦇🦇

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