

Bradbury's Survivance Stories

Grace L. Dillon

“We are one race of many fantastic parts, each needful of the others' survival,  
each wanting to know the other.”

Ray Bradbury

*A Feasting of Thoughts, a Banqueting of Words:*

*Ideas on the Theater of the Future*

“There has been a centuries-long conflict between the wretched of the earth  
and those who ruled and exploited them.

Does anyone imagine that this situation has ended?

Howard Winant

*The New Politics of Race*

When I was a child, I spoke as much Finnish as I could capture from the pacifist-anarchist community where my father, mother, six brothers and sisters and I attended open meetings to debate scripture and the latest news out of *Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue*, and as much Anishinaabemowen as I could gather from my grandfather, an Ojibwe who cooked for the lumberjack camps during timber harvest and who vexed my parents whenever we visited by fishing Eskimo Pies from a glossy white fridge that had a bullet hole straight through its door. But mostly I spoke the lingua franca of the Cold War era; *nin jaganashim*, in other words. This all happened in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (which is not *really* Michigan) and not so long

ago, though the U.P., back then anyway, must have slipped time in an effort to remain quiet and feral, while electric metropolises like Cheyebogan, Peshtigo, Petosky, and others tempted us to cross borders. But we never did. Civilization might as well have been 65 million miles away.

It was a frontier, no different from the beautiful frontier of the mythical American West, except that snow stood in for sand and chimerical whiteness trumped bona fide burnt sienna and brown.—Without technologies like television and cinema, we lived like eighteen-hundred-something homesteaders making a go of it at the end of an alternate Oregon Trail. So we read, sometimes by candle and lantern light, like those pioneers of old; we played at *indians* in the woods, pretending to be like our grandfather and grandmother and *omishomissan gaie okomissan gaie od anike-omishomissan gaie od anike-okomissan*. At a very young age, I mitigated the isolation of my snowy frontier by reading books borrowed from my parents' library and from my grandfather's library, books borrowed from the pacifist-anarchist Finns in the nearest faraway town; I read Aristotle, Plato, and Dante, Dostoevsky, Jane Austen, Milton, C. S. Lewis, E. Rice Burroughs—anything I could get my hands on, all before I was twelve. One day, my grandfather handed me a copy of *Dandelion Wine*.

After that, the Martians came.

Today it is easy to unwrap allegories inside Bradbury stories. Everyone agrees that the Martians are like *indians* and that the Earthmen are like white men manifesting their destinies in a fiction that existed before the age of (post)colonial theory. As I grew older, I began to hear stories of how Mr. Bradbury explicitly explained his plan to refashion the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria in the guise of silver space ships.—I even came across verbatim transcriptions where Bradbury says of the *Chronicles*, “I pointed out the problems of the Indians, and the western expansionists” (qtd. in Wolfe 110).

All can agree that Bradbury's Mars is like the Western American frontier, one possible setting for first contact narratives that juxtapose native and invader, colonized and conqueror, and that this conceit reflects a longstanding tradition in science fiction. "Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (like countless other space-colonization novels) portrays frontiersmen from earth encountering alien civilization clearly modeled on those encountered by Europeans in the 'New World,' " according to David Mogen (159). Gary K. Wolfe concurs, "This focus is not, of course, unique to Bradbury; Bradbury merely provides what may be one of the clearest links between the traditional frontier orientation of much of American literature and the attempts to extend this orientation into new worlds, which is characteristic of a great deal of science fiction" (104-105). Patrick B. Sharp writes, "Bradbury used the frontier landscape to question notions of cultural and racial superiority" (223).

Today when I juxtapose Bradbury's Mars with stories of what Bradbury might be teaching us about the inevitability of space colonization as the next step in the progress of human civilization, or about the efficacy of space-race when expensive problems need to be fixed right here on home, or about the implications of settler-*indian* (small 'i') frontier contact for the history of democracy in the United States, or about how Martian-settler relations invoke Cold War praxis, or about how nuclear holocaust can achieve ameliorating effects, or about how Martians are actually human dreams...I think about playing *indian* in the U.P. woods, about reading *The Martian Chronicles* to my sisters and brothers late into the night when twenty-foot snowdrifts isolated our farm and we couldn't get to meetings until a thaw, and about my grandfather, and about my father, and about being *indian*, and about those Bradbury stories where distinctions between Earthmen and Martians blur, where Martians, *Nanabozho nâssa ijinagwad*, morph themselves into othered selves, *bejig kéma gaié nabané*, to placate Earthmen,

where Earthmen become Martians, where Martians may have been Earthmen all along—“Dark They Were and Golden Eyed,” for instance, and “The Third Expedition,” “The Martian,” “The Million-Year Picnic.”

Wayne L. Johnson writes, “The Martians’ ability to change their appearance is something of a survival mechanism” (36).

Gerald Vizenor (Anishanaabe) writes, “Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” (*Manifest Manners* vii).

“Survivance” is an aesthetic response to the extirpation and genocide of Indigenous peoples by Euro-Western explorers and empires that began with sixteenth-century foraging in what (to them) constituted a “new world” in the Americas and that continues in what (to them) constitute “third worlds” today. Vizenor explains, “Native American Indians have endured the lies and wicked burdens of discoveries, the puritanical destinies of monotheism, manifest manners, and the simulated realities of dominance, with silence...and the solace of heard stories” (*Manifest Manners* 4). While “survivance” as applied by Vizenor and others focuses on the Native American experience in North America, analogous thinking is pervasive among other modern cultures that have experienced trauma and loss. Survivance resembles the related concepts of “creative masochism” (Tatsumi), “creative defeat” (Shigeto Tsuru), “the mental history of failure and defeat” (Masao Yamaguchi), and “the strategy of being radically fragile” (Seigo Matsuoka) that Japanese intellectuals have used to characterize their nation’s cultural and psychological response to the post-World War II occupation period, when Euro-Western agents of imperialism appropriated and hybridized Japanese culture (Tatsumi 3).

If Bradbury's analogies teach us anything about the historical experience of Indigenous, First Nations, and Native American peoples, they teach survivance.

Survivance. Not survival. At first glance, the term survivance might seem to connote survival, *nin ishkone*—specifically, the survival of Indigenous peoples in the face of colonization, victimization, and attempted dominance first by European and then by American settlers. Ernest Stromberg writes, “While ‘survival’ conjures images of a dark minimalist clinging at the edge of existence, survivance goes beyond mere survival to acknowledge the dynamic and creative nature of Indigenous rhetoric” (1).

Vizenor elevates survivance from the status of a mere label of experience to the level of ontology. Rather than thinking of survivance as a way to describe historical behavior (as in, “the Cherokee who survived the Trail of Tears were settled in Oklahoma”), survivance implies the complex totality of sentient being. Vizenor calls it a “practice” in contrast to “ideology, dissimulation, or a theory” (“Aesthetics” 11). In effect, survivance is a way of life, what many Indigenous scholars refer to as “Indigenous ways of knowing.” Most importantly, survivance establishes Native identity *in the present*, as opposed to viewing Native experience as a relic of the past, consigned to museum exhibits and to the nostalgic longing for a return to the noble, savage identity dissimulated in many seminal and commercially successful science fictional contact narratives in the guise of an alien race: from the Na'vi that inhabit James Cameron's Pandora, for example, back to the red Martians of Helium in Edgar Rice Burrough's Barsoom books.

Viewed through this lens, Bradbury's Martian-*indians* no longer suffer erasure as a “lost civilization” while privileging invading Earthmen (even sad and guilty ones) as conquerors or colonizers.

Consider the Bitterings in “Dark They Were and Golden Eyed” (1949), anthologized in *A Medicine for Melancholy*. An Earth family arrives on Mars as part of a colonial expedition, learns later that the Earth has been ravaged by nuclear war (“No more rockets to Mars, ever!”), and processes their now utter isolation in differing ways until mother, children, and, finally (reluctantly), father ultimately “go native,” transforming into the Martian race whose cultural memory dwells in the abandoned indigenous marble villas, in the canal waters, and in the surrounding hills, *manito* haunting alien human imaginations.

Dialogue bald-facedly makes the allegorical connection plain for readers who otherwise might miss it:

Colonial days all over again,” [Harry Bittering] declared. “Why, in another year there'll be a million Earthmen on Mars. Big cities, everything! They said we'd fail. Said the Martians would resent our invasion. But did we find any Martians! Not a living soul! Oh, we found their empty cities, but no one in them. Right?

(Bradbury, *Medicine*, 95)

Elsewhere Harry underscores the association between his invasion of Mars and nineteenth-century Manifest Destiny on Earth by lamenting his failure to follow best practice in settler etiquette:

[T]he Earthmen had felt a silent guilt at putting new names to these ancient hills and valleys....The American settlers had shown wisdom, using old Indian prairie

names: Wisconsin, Minnesota, Idaho, Ohio, Utah, Milwaukee, Waukegan, Osseo.  
The old names, the old meanings. (Bradbury 97, 98)

Harry's vacillation between exuberant colonial pride and what can best be described as white guilt is largely overlooked by commentators. In *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training*, Judith Katz writes, "Feelings at the unconscious level include fears and fantasies related to racism. These fears and fantasies are a result of personal experience, as well as stereotypes and myths about Third World people with which they have been indoctrinated" (94).

This characterization certainly applies to Harry, who is overcome with trepidation at the Bittering's initial arrival on Mars ("At any moment the Martian air might draw his soul from him, as marrow comes from a white bone"(94)) and thereafter simply frets (*Alone, thought Bittering. Only a thousand of us here. No way back. No way. No way; Bittering wandered into the garden to stand alone in his fear; The fear was never gone. It lay with Mr. Bittering and Mrs. Bittering, a third unbidden partner at every midnight talk, at every dawn awakening* (95)).

Harry's paranoia reaches extremes as he fantasizes the familiar adventure trope of cannibals hiding in the native landscape: "What would happen to him, the others? This was the moment Mars had waited for. Now it would eat them" (97). And "Because the cannibal flourishes in a climate of frozen isolation, confronting the monster in ourselves and in our culture begins to break down the experience of separation," writes Deborah Root, "Imagining other people as deadened objects becomes less appealing, if we can bear to look in the mirror" (205).

*'Here you are, Harry.'* Sam handed him a pocket mirror. *'Take a look at yourself.'*

*Mr. Bittering hesitated, and then raised the mirror to his face.*

*There were little, very dim flecks of new gold captured in the blue of his eyes.*

*'Now look what you've done,' said Sam, a moment later. 'You've broken my mirror.'* (Bradbury 100)

Underscoring the racialization of Earthling- into-Martian transformation, Harry measures his wife's prolonged transformation in terms of darkening skin color: "Dark she was, and golden, burnt almost black by the sun." Throughout his existence as an Earthman settler, Harry is beset by feelings of helplessness, isolation, and fear (*Staring at the mountains wildly he thought: Are you up there? All the dead ones, you Martians? Well, here we are, alone, cut off! Come down, move us out! We're helpless!; Mr. Bittering felt very alone in his garden under the Martian sun, bent here, planting Earth flowers in a wild soil; Mr. Bittering put his hand to his head. He thought of the rocket, himself working alone, himself alone even among his family, so alone; The fear would not be stopped. It had his throat and heart. It dripped in a wetness of the arm and the temple and the trembling palm* (98)).

The adversary he so fears is the prospect of change, a term that is introduced at least a dozen times in the story.—Earth seeds planted in the soil of the family's alien garden undergo genetic alteration (*Do you see? They're different. They've changed! They're not peach blossoms any more!* (98)) Renewing the theme of cannibalistic consumption, whereby the eater is altered by the spirit of the thing he eats (*Now [Mars] would eat them*), Harry fears the metamorphosed carrots, radishes, and peaches that grow in garden (*"We must get away," said Bittering. "We'll eat this stuff and then we'll change—who knows to what. I can't let it happen"* (99)). In short, Harry Bittering is obsessed with the fear of change:

In the Earthmen's settlement, the Bittering house shook with a feeling of change. .

..



If I lie here long enough, he thought, the water will work and eat away my flesh until the bones show like coral. Just my skeleton left. And then the water can build on that skeleton—green things, deep-water things, red things, yellow things. Change. Change. Slow, deep, silent change. (Bradbury 101, 103)

Bradbury imaginatively constructs racial unity as a metamorphosis of a white American into the unknown Other that he fantasized and unconsciously feared. Perhaps the Other that Harry has in mind never existed, really: “But did we find any Martians! Not a living soul!” Notably, Harry is the only settler among the one-thousand, including his wife and children, who fears changing the way he sees people.—His son eagerly wants to change his human name from “Tim” to the Martian language, “Linnl.” His wife remains nonchalant about her and the children’s altered bodies; memory of her former self seems to have vanished:

“Cora, how long have your eyes been yellow?”

She was bewildered. “Always, I guess.”

“They didn't change from brown in the last three months?”

She bit her lips. “No. Why do you ask?”

“Never mind.”

They sat there.

“The children's eyes,” he said. “They're yellow, too.”

“Sometimes growing children's eyes change colour.” (103)

Mrs. Bittering's assertion that changing eye color indicates *growth* suggests that Harry has much catching up to do if he wants to retain his Martian family. The prominent emphasis on change begs the question of what, precisely, is changing, or, put differently, of how we are able to measure it. The change from Earthling into Martian fundamentally is an exercise in racial formation, expressed in terms of skin color and other genetically modified physical characteristics.

As the thousand individual colonists adapt, *Kitchimokomamens*, *Kitchimokomanikwens*, *Kitchimokomanikwe*, all including Harry's family reveal an easygoing demeanor that deserves some attention. Racially stereotyped language punctuates descriptions of their new state of being—*Kitchimokoman*, fearing the imagined Martian menace early in the story, Harry asserts a set of middle-class American values as safeguard against hostile natives: “We're clean, decent people” (96). As the Earth settlers transform more completely into Martians, their behavior is described in terms of laziness and indifference: “Men stood in the open door and talked and joked without raising their voices—Once in a while they gave him a hand on lifting something. But mostly they just idled and watched him with their yellowing eyes” (101). Harry focuses good old American ingenuity on building a rocket that can take everyone back to Earth, yet he receives only the “reluctant help of three indifferent men” (101). These idle comrades advise *mañana*, urging him to forget worry and work until Autumn: “Their voices were *lazy* in the heat.” Even décor reflects the lure of indolence: “‘I've some ideas on furniture for the villa,’ he said, after a time. ‘Big, *lazy* furniture’ ” (106).

The story essentially narrates Harry's anxiety about *losing* his anxiety about completing the rocket that could preserve the former Earthling identity and sustain the othering of Mars as *not home* and of Martian racialization as *other than*. The Bitterling's final break with Earth and

white identity is illustrated in microcosm when Harry leaves the settlement cottage for the marble ruins of the Martian villas: “Looking at the small white cottage for a long moment, he was filled with a desire to rush to it, touch it, say goodbye to it, for he felt as if he were going away on a long journey, leaving something to which he could never quite return, never understand again.” The long journey begins with nostalgic longing for a former state of being, literally a skin that he is shedding, *gichi-mookomaan*, as the cottage, *nin wâbishkis*, proxies for the lost America of a dying Earth, *Gaa-waabaabiganikaag*.—Soon enough—within five years, to be precise—American Earthman Harry Bittering no longer exists, the settlement town remains “empty,” and a newly arrived expedition finds “native life in the hills,” presumably Harry, his family, and the original settlers whose race has been completely remade.

“Indian-hating identified the dark others that white settlers were not and must not under any circumstances become,” writes Richard Drinnon (xxvii).

Renewing racially intonated language, the narrative casts a young lieutenant in the cycle of first contact; he defines “native” identity in terms of skin color: “Dark people. Yellow eyes. Martians. Very friendly.” While the lieutenant is assured of amicable relations with the locals, appeased because they seem to catch onto the English language facilely (for why would the conqueror deign learning the language of the soon-to-be subjugated?), the captain’s reply hints at a colonial character: “‘Dark, eh?’ mused the captain. ‘How many?’ ” (108). While it is possible that the captain is simply curious about Martian demographics, one gets the sense that “dark” means “dangerous” on Mars once again, and that the captain immediately sizes up the Martians as a martial adversary, a commercial property, or both.

“The modern epoch was founded on European imperialism and African slavery,” writes Winant. “Both these systems were organized racially.—The theft of labor and life, of land and

resources, from millions of Africans and Native Americans, and from Asians and Pacific Islanders, financed the rise of Europe... Conquest, imperial rule, and the chattelization of labor divided humanity into Europeans and others” (205).

The longstanding cycle of Euro-American empire repeats with the arrival of the post-war colonizers five-years after nuclear holocaust has changed the Bitterlings’ point of view to yellow, *nind osâwis gaie nind osâwa*, five years after the news of the bombs began to blacken them, *nin makatéwitchige*—“Ferocious and unending cultural and psychic energies were expended to sustain this schism [between Europeans and other], which was also constantly challenged and undermined in innumerable ways,” Winant continues. *Pitchâ babamadizwin. Pitchâ chibimoodaywin*. Harry’s long journey out of the white settler cottage to which he can never return is renewed in the figure of the lieutenant whose transformation is beginning as this story ends: “The lieutenant snapped his gaze from the blue colour and the quiet mist of the hills far beyond the town. ‘What? Oh, yes, Sir’” (109).

What had the captain been instructing him to do? In the end, it won’t have made any difference.

If we extrapolate the western American frontier from Bradbury’s Mars, it is easy to analogize Earth’s colonization with white settlement of the west and to read Bradbury’s Martian stories as challenging and undermining the ferocious and unending cultural and psychic energies that were expended to sustain the schism between white and Indigenous peoples, *nawaii waiâbishkiwedjig gaie bemâdisidjig bejig gaie bemâdisidjig nabané*.

*Akhi nin adjinikas*—“Manifest Destiny” was, of course, a coinage, not an invention. Sacvan Bercovitch points out that the Puritan founders sought to re-enact the biblical story of Exodus and made their *chibimoodaywin* migration about conquest and occupation rather than

emancipation (qtd. in Spanos 127). Edward Ingebretsen writes, “Manifest Destiny could be read onto new-world geographies partly because its terms had already been established as a moral geography by which to map the wild terrain of the soul” (200). “At our country's founding,” writes Gary P. Stewart, “Americans embraced a sense of the nation's universal mission and manifest destiny” (59).

“Manifest Destiny proclaimed the Messianic mission with its accompanying myth of the ‘promised land,’ and the terror of white supremacy,” according to E. San Juan, Jr. (3). “The idea of innate Anglo-Saxon superiority was nurtured by, and became an integral part of, American racial ideologies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” writes Audrey Smedley. “It also became part of American mythology...Indeed, the myth was at the heart of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, by which some white Americans expressed belief in themselves as a “chosen people” destined to rule and civilize others, according to Smedley (188).

“Manifest destiny has always been a bloody and disastrous notion. In its American manifestation it has led to the killing of millions of native Americans, Mexicans, and Filipinos,” writes Lawrence Davidson. “What was originally only an alliance between God and America’s continental destiny, has now become God’s alleged assertion that American manifest destiny is synonymous with the world’s destiny” (169).

“Manifest Destiny would cause the death of millions of tribal people from massacres, diseases, and the loneliness of reservations. Entire cultures have been terminated in the course of nationalism. These histories are now the simulation of dominance...The postindian simulations are the core of survivance...the postindian conversions are in the new stories of survivance over dominance” (*Manifest Manners* 4).

“Dark They Were and Golden Eyed” erases white supremacy and ameliorates Manifest Destiny by imagining racialized *becoming* in place of racialized *othering*. There really are no Martians. There is only us. This message of unity, which might strike us, even today, as wishful thinking at best and as hallucinatory in practice, brings *The Martian Chronicles* to an end:

The night came down around them, and there were stars. But Timothy couldn't find Earth. It had already set. That was something to think about.

A night bird called among the ruins as they walked. Dad said, "Your mother and I will try to teach you. Perhaps we'll fail. I hope not. We've had a good lot to see and learn from. We planned this trip years ago, before you were born. Even if there hadn't been a war we would have come to Mars, I think, to live and form our own standard of living. It would have been another century before Mars would have been really poisoned by the Earth civilization. Now, of Course--"

They reached the canal. It was long and straight and cool and wet and reflective in the night.

"I've always wanted to see a Martian," said Michael. "Where are they, Dad? You promised."

"There they are," said Dad, and he shifted Michael on his shoulder and pointed straight down.

The Martians were there. Timothy began to shiver.

The Martians were there--in the canal--reflected in the water. (Bradbury, *Martian*, 181)

“Dark They Were and Yellow Eyed,” “The Million-Year Picnic,” “The Third Expedition” et al. (all chronicles of Martian metamorphosis) are mixedblood messages and survivance stories. Gerald Vizenor describes his own Anishinaabe-French-Swedish *indian* identity as mixedblood /crossblood and characterizes his own work as “encountering a mixedblood experience in a creative way, to give consciousness to crossblood experience, to create a consciousness of crossblood identity” (qtd. in Coltelli 112). This project is an act of survivance. The policies of Manifest Destiny established Indian identity in terms of blood quantum even though for peoples like the Anishinaabeg, “Percentage of Indian and white blood was not a determining factor in distinguishing a mixedblood...For the most part the distinction was cultural” (*The People* 107). Manifest Destiny strategized robbing Native Americans of the right to decide who they are and how they choose to define themselves; blood quantum legislation imagined Indians would breed themselves out. “The practice of determining tribal identities by geometric degrees of blood, or blood quantum, as if blood could be measured in degrees, has elevated a racist unscientific method to the level of a federal statute,” writes Vizenor—“Elected officials expected the tribes to vanish...certain that in one or two generations tribal cultures would no longer exist” (*The People* 106).

“The mixed-blood person has the power to expose *mishi nimakinago* constructed nature of Indian identity, to prove the difference between blood and culture,” writes Deborah L. Madsen (41)—Vizenor calls upon mixedbloods to create “a new consciousness of co-existence” and to “swim deep and around through federal enclaves and colonial economic enterprises in search of a few honest words upon which to build a new turtle island” (*Earth Divers* ix-xi). “This is a confrontation in so many ways,” he says—“It’s an international confrontation, it’s a confrontation

of American racialism because of the genetic categories of who's Indian, and I'll not allow the world to deny my experience just to fulfill some genetic category" (Coltelli 112).

*Nind anishinâbew, nin wâbitchiia.*

Gerald Vizenor is a mixedblood trickster prophet, *Neegoniwabungigaywin*, who commands white tropes, *enallage*. He spells *indian* using a lower-case "i" and italic font to draw attention to the strangeness of the word. "Indians" don't exist. "The word Indian, and most other tribal names, are simulations in the literature of dominance" (Manifest Manners 10-11).

*The American settlers had shown wisdom, using old Indian prairie names: Wisconsin, Minnesota, Idaho, Ohio, Utah, Milwaukee, Waukegan, Osseo. The old names, the old meanings.*

Ray Bradbury is a mixedblood European American, *nigân win dibâdjim gedijiwebak bidâdjimotage gaie*. "In recounting his own mixed European ancestry," writes Jonathan E. Keller, "Ray Bradbury offered these private thought in an undated high-school diary entry: 'That's the one thing I like about being an American. You have so many bloods and types mixed into you it is impossible to brag about one's racial credentials, one just confusedly gives up and says, Hell. I'm an American. Isn't that enough?'"

"Ray Bradbury does not displace the issue of American racism from a representation of our real, lived culture to a pretend culture on another planet with others, that is, aliens," writes Ellen Bishop. He "brings us down to Earth in order to emphasize the social, political, and psychological effects of racism on the 'master' class" (p. 87). Jonathan R. Eller writes, "Bradbury touches on all the capital crimes that can result from bigotry" and creates white



characters that transform racially so that they resemble those they have “so terribly wronged” (p. 235). Speaking of the *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury once said “I was warning people...I was *preventing* futures.”

*Win nigamis*—*Win niganâdjim*, imagining the old names, the old meanings. His survivance stories advocate a mixedblood message of racial diversity.

Ray Bradbury died on Tuesday, June 5, 2012, according to most reputable sources.

In its obituary, The *Indian Today* Media Network repeated the HarperCollins vision of Bradbury’s Mars.

“Bradbury’s Mars is a place of hope, dreams and metaphor—of crystal pillars and fossil seas—where a fine dust settles on the great, empty cities of a silently destroyed civilization,” reads the description on his official website from his publisher, HarperCollins. “It is here the invaders have come to despoil and commercialize, to grow and to learn—first a trickle, then a torrent, rushing from a world with no future toward a promise of tomorrow. The Earthman conquers Mars ... and then is conquered *by* it, lulled by dangerous lies of comfort and familiarity, and enchanted by the lingering glamour of an ancient, mysterious native race.”

“This may or may not have been influenced by his wife’s Cherokee heritage,” the Indian Today Media Network goes on to say.—“Her grandmother was Cherokee, according to the site’s entry about Marguerite Bradbury, who died in 2003.”

Sam Weller confirms the ancestry of Marguerite Susan McClure: “She came from a rich genealogical background...Her grandfather had married a full-blooded Cherokee Native American in the late 1800s.”

I accessed the story by Sam Weller and many others when I was asked to write this chapter on how Ray Bradbury shaped the way that I imagine Indigenous futurisms.

The site included a panel of pictures of Marguerite Susan McClure, Ray Bradbury’s Cherokee wife.

*Waiâbishkwid!*

I thought that, or something like it, immediately. In that split second, I recognized myself as a *bitterling*. Not an *earthling*. Not a *martian*. In that instant, the spirit sank heavy into the marrow of my bones.

On September 20, 2012, in a televised debate between incumbent Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren, the Senator said, “Professor Warren claimed that she was a Native American. A person of color. And as you can see, *she’s not*.”

I watched that debate during the time that I was working on this chapter. And I considered the words of the prophet.

*Something was going to happen...It was coming nearer...At any moment it might happen.*

*And then it happened.*

*Babamadjimowin*

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