
“The Future That Haunts Us Now”: Oblique Cli-Fi and Indigenous Futurity

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This article assesses how recent literary depictions of futurity coincide with grassroots activism in the Upper Midwest that aims to affirm treaty rights and to protect land and water. These efforts that have been ongoing for centuries are finding new iterations in current resistance to settler colonial resource extraction in such forms as camps, tours, partnerships, and local food initiatives. For instance, ceremonial water walks occur regularly around the Great Lakes, food sovereignty programs continue to emerge with support from tribal governments and local nonprofits, and creative responses to proposed extraction have been undertaken, like the Lac Courte Oreilles Harvest Education Learning Project, which in 2013 established a camp in northern Wisconsin to affirm Ojibwe rights in ceded territory and against a proposed open-pit iron ore mine. These actions also take a long view, informed by Anishinaabe teachings that foreground obligations to life beyond one’s immediate generation, demonstrating potential affinities with future-oriented speculative fiction.

Such actions further espouse interdependent, reciprocal relationships between humans and the more-than-human world, the type of relationship often featured in representations of Indigenous lifeways. However, as Kyle Whyte argues, it is also important to attend to the *qualities* of these relationships. For Whyte, qualities are properties, such as trustworthiness and ecological redundancy, “that make it possible for a relationship to have wide societal impact by motivating the discharge of responsibilities” (“Food Sovereignty” 356). Through this approach, Whyte’s analysis

avoids superficial platitudes about reciprocal relationships while further offering a model for examining trans-Indigenous climate justice. Comparing the state of qualities as they appear in varied global contexts offers more granularity and possibly more opportunities for intervention. For instance, the context of global climate change offers no shortage of opportunities to compare degrees of what Whyte terms "ecological redundancy"—the ability to repeat and maintain interactive processes like gathering food within environments—given that climate change is everywhere affecting or even dismantling the conditions for such redundancy.

Stories help reinforce these relationships and illuminate their qualities. This article focuses on Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God*, which in part imagines promising opportunities for a reservation community in an otherwise dystopian narrative. Despite what appears as a harrowing dismantling of biological reproduction and evolution, Indigenous characters in the novel find renewed purpose as adapting to the situation revivifies traditional practices. Although rampant environmental devastation threatens lifeways and bonds of reciprocity, Erdrich demonstrates how those responsibilities were never predicated upon fixed, unchanging environments but instead dynamically respond to them as characters seek right relationship with other beings.

Stories, including narrative fiction, further reinforce relationships, enriching audiences' affective engagements and relational commitments by exercising these capacities through their vicarious experiences of characters and plot. Advocates for arts and humanities education, particularly literary studies, have long cited studies suggesting that reading builds empathy. Broadening the sense of attachment and care beyond the exclusively human, studies in cognitive and empirical ecocriticism have considered the potential for readers to become more responsible toward places and the beings inhabiting them. In considering whether fiction can affect readers' political

attitudes and actions, “the empirical evidence is so far inconclusive, but the studies that exist suggest that reading fiction does enhance theory of mind and empathic capacities while reducing outgroup prejudice” (Weik von Mossner 574). For dystopian climate fiction in particular, empathy might be one affective response observed alongside readers’ engagement of anxieties about climate change and may further elicit exploration of newer emotive phenomena such as solastalgia (Albrecht).

These inquiries into affective and ecological dimensions of dystopian fiction frequently must account for the genre’s sociocultural underpinnings, particularly EuroAmerican Christian eschatology, and the degree to which writers recapitulate them. Indigenous writers of speculative fiction overwhelmingly rebut this Western temporal structuring of apocalypse and dystopia via reference to violent settler colonial histories. Their consistent reframing of the present as already postapocalyptic radically upends dystopian literature’s dramatic force of imagined imminent catastrophe. Such a claim can be found in Grace Dillon’s resonant introduction to *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, and the point has since been reiterated by scores of creative writers and scholars. This recurrent idea in Indigenous futurist art invigorates possibilities for speculative fiction by decentering its settler colonial influences and advancing Indigenous storytelling amidst contemporary global climate change.

While literature may not provide direct solutions to climate-related crises, its power to frame these issues and elicit emotional engagement matters. Narratives afford imaginative spaces for assessing the state and strengths of relationships affected by climate change. Analyzing contemporary Native American novelists in New England, Siobhan Senier notes, “Sustainability requires political will and policy decisions around carbon emissions, certainly; perhaps more profoundly, however, it requires *cultural* and collective negotiations of reciprocal relationships with skies, trees,

plants, and waters" (116–7). Senier's point is consonant with Daniel Heath Justice's finding that "story makes meaning of the relationships that define who we are and what our place is in the world... It also highlights what we lose when those relationships are broken or denied to us, and what we might gain from even partial remembrance" (75). These capacities for story suggest literary versions of Kyle Whyte's arguments about relationship qualities, suggested when Justice articulates that authentic kinship requires the quality of attention, of putting "that relatedness into thoughtful and respectful practice" and fulfilling the responsibilities they demand of us (86). Speculative fiction imagines transforming qualities of relationships in response to climate change, even when climate change is not a central or explicit theme.

Future Home of the Living God can be read alongside other postapocalyptic Indigenous novels (e.g., Cherie Dimaline's *Marrow Thieves*, Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow*) as "oblique cli-fi," novels whose catastrophes are not primarily figured as climate change but whose contemporary readers cannot help but consider them in this light, given the pervasive framing of climate change as catastrophe. However, any motivation to read *Future Home* as cli-fi should not lose sight of its singular nature as a departure from Erdrich's "standard" literary fiction, not to mention the novel's political significance both as a response to the 2016 US presidential election and in its calls for reproductive justice and land restoration. *Future Home* received mixed critical reviews, but as one of the most experimental and speculative works in Erdrich's oeuvre, it should be celebrated as an example of transmotion—"an original natural union in the stories of emergence and migration that relate humans to an environment and to the spiritual and political significance of animals and other creations" (Vizenor 183)—that flouts American literary expectations while imagining Indigenous futurity. As oblique cli-fi promotes broader climate awareness, environmental grassroots activism likewise can advocate for climate justice even while

campaigns may have other specific goals. Local organizing draws power from being “rooted in site-specific struggles” and is less constrained by the political limitations other environmental organizations experience (Bevington 37); such rootedness attunes activists to climate change impacts in their region. Like cli-fi, grassroots activism also utilizes linguistic strategies to persuade audiences, what Tamar Katriel calls “defiant discourse,” including speech acts “in which social actors renegotiate and reshape the social value systems of their societies” (109). Demands for action on climate are especially apparent in contestations over nonrenewable energy projects. Resistance to these projects consistently underscores the connections between energy extraction, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate destabilization.

Among the environmental concerns Indigenous nations of the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest have faced thus far in the twenty-first century, few if any have gained as much attention as infrastructure projects for transporting and refining petroleum and natural gas. The construction and operation of pipelines and refineries through Indigenous lands poses risks to waterways, species habitat, and human health. Fossil fuels, from their initial extraction to their consumption, degrade and threaten Indigenous lands, lives, and lifeways (in one example, with suspected associations between industrial operations and elevated cancer rates among the communities of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Mikisew Cree First Nation to aberrant birthrates at Aamjiwnaang First Nation). Of course, these projects also contribute significantly to anthropogenic climate change throughout their construction and operation and the ultimate burning of the fossil fuels they transport—fuels that are themselves less energy efficient than conventional crude oil—an increasingly central point made by their opponents. Among many instances of resistance in recent years, the Standing Rock encampments against the Dakota Access Pipeline brought considerable public attention to the effects and risks of these projects, informing a great deal of scholarly

inquiry as well. Humanities scholarship has likewise registered growing attention to energy infrastructure's effects on Indigenous communities. Anne Spice compellingly critiques and reappropriates the rhetoric of pipelines as "critical infrastructure," noting how "the language of infrastructure itself can work to legitimize 'modern' assemblages like pipelines while rendering invisible the living assemblages that would strengthen Indigenous sovereignty and lifeways" (48). Winona LaDuke and Deborah Cowen have applied Anishinaabe cultural teachings in their figuring of nonrenewable energy infrastructure as essential to the functioning of "wiindigo economics," writing, "At the center of the Wiindigo's violence and destruction is infrastructure's seemingly banal and technical world. *Wiindigo infrastructure* has worked to carve up Turtle Island, or North America, into preserves of settler jurisdiction, while entrenching and hardening the very means of settler economy and sociality into tangible material structures" (244). In addition to tangible material structures, these projects effect the harder-to-trace impacts of accelerating climate change.

Energy infrastructure can seem nearly invisible in the public sphere—as oil and gas companies no doubt prefer it—until there's a spill or accident. Extending the concept of "petromodernity" (LeMenager, *Living Oil*), scholars in the energy humanities have considered the pervasive inescapability of petroleum, which can render it difficult to even perceive in everyday life. Petroleum's extensive material presence and use also conditions art. Roman Bartosch describes the phenomenon of a "petroleum unconsciousness": "The ubiquity of oil and its utter elusiveness as an object of aesthetic contemplation and narrative concern have combined to hinder recognition of petroculture and petrofiction" (118). At the same time, shifts in energy production and demand alongside growing calls for climate justice have rendered nonrenewable energy projects more visible. Movements like the Standing Rock encampments and others bring further attention to the erstwhile "petroleum

unconscious.” Pipeline activism, ceremonies, and fiction bring pipelines into wider public attention: for instance, the figure of the black snake used in reference to pipelines brings these projects imaginatively and alarmingly to life.

The associations of the black snake with prophecy invites consideration of broader timescales, since part of what makes it captivating to public audiences is how it figures a past foretelling of these projects and the ethical choices they would pose. Examining infrastructure projects invokes similar temporal considerations. Remarking on the aspirational nature of pipelines, Anne Spice notes how they “anticipate the circulation of certain materials, the proliferation of certain worlds, the reproduction of certain subjects. But, sometimes, their bluster hides their tenuous nature, and their future focus creates an opening in which other possibilities can assert themselves” (50). It is within such indefinite spaces that alternatives might be negotiated and achieved, recognized by water protectors in their direct action and by others in their repudiation of the “destructive teleology of settler petro-futures” (52). Such potentiality motivates frontline activism, and it also aligns with directions in Indigenous futurisms and speculative fiction, echoed for example in Leanne Simpson’s assertion that Indigenous stories “have always talked about the future and the past at the same time... A lot of what science fiction deals with—parallel universes, time travel, space travel, and technology—is what our Nishnaabeg stories also deal with” (201).

Oblique cli-fi, fiction that addresses climate in an elliptical manner or that uses other crises and catastrophes partially to convey climate concerns, serves Indigenous futurisms with its capacity for complicating narrative structures. Some scholars have aimed to distinguish cli-fi from postapocalyptic writing, a helpful move in many cases. However, oblique cli-fi recognizes how enfolding narratives of climate change within or alongside depictions of different crises enables further formal innovations and other possibilities, as *Future Home of the Living God* shows.

Unsettling Dystopia

Future Home is an epistolary novel taking place between one August and the following February in the near future, a series of diary entries chronicling the pregnancy of twenty-six-year-old narrator Cedar Hawk Songmaker, an adopted daughter of white Minneapolis liberals who reconnects with her Ojibwe birth mother and family. Soon after the reunion society begins swiftly falling into disarray, as evolution appears to go haywire, causing panic about the viability of human reproduction. Amidst the chaos a new theocratic government is installed, the Church of the New Constitution, which begins detaining pregnant women. Cedar goes into hiding, moving between Minneapolis and the northern reservation where her birth mother lives.

Cedar decides to write the diary to her unborn child as "a record and an inquiry into the strangeness of things" (62). This indefinite "things" registers the multiple sorts of strangeness Cedar encounters: the intimate wonder of fetal development, conveyed in the periodic factoids about the baby's growth; the radically transforming social and biological conditions surrounding her; the revelations of her newfound family; the mysteries presented by her Catholic faith; and, amidst it all, the environmental weirding of climate change.

While the precipitating calamity of the novel's dystopic conditions is "biological confusion" more than it is climate change (5), awareness of the latter is threaded throughout and can appear equally vexing. Early in the book, while enjoying a pleasant dinner with her parents, Cedar observes how "all of this is terminal. There will never be another August on earth, not like this one; there will never be this sort of ease or precision" (61). The comment certainly alludes to the present reproductive crisis, but it also evokes climate change in the way it is set amidst comments about unusual weather and other hints, like the fact that "maples here no longer produce" (60). After

the dinner Cedar spends the night; leaving early the next morning, she notices the power is off on the street. The disquieting stillness creates for her a sense of “the muted perfection of a ‘before’ disaster photograph,” as she cannot help but feel that “instead of the past, it is the future that haunts us now” (63).

This observation concludes an entry filled with considerations of time (at the dinner, Cedar and her parents discuss geologic time and millennia of human development). If the concerns about evolution unraveling prompt these considerations, they are nevertheless reminiscent of discussions about anthropogenic climate change and its deformations of experiencing time—the blurring of seasonal changes, the whiplash of conceptualizing epochal timescales alongside appallingly short projected deadlines for reducing carbon emissions—references that attest to the novel’s suitability as oblique cli-fi. Erdrich’s linking of “biological confusion” and “the strangeness of things” to climate change carries through to the end of the book, a passage imagining the end of snowfall on a warming planet, creating narrative space in which readers might well recognize and engage their own anxieties about climate destabilization.

The novel reinforces allusions to *anthropogenic* global climate change with its references to transnational capitalism, whose material expenditures are conspicuously absent in the products it manifests. In Cedar’s entries, Catholic miracles and the wonders of evolution are contemplated alongside the dazzling productions of global trade, which is thrown into sharp relief by the prospect of its imminent undoing. Descriptions of mundane items acquire an artifactual feel in the light of the book’s social upheaval, becoming objects to marvel at (akin somewhat to the sacramental Coca-Cola can in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*). Early in the novel, Cedar lays out some of the food she purchased while stocking up on supplies in anticipation of commercial shutdowns: “At home, I set my treats out on my desk. How long, I wonder,

will there be a snack like this to eat—cheese from a cow milked in Italy, crackers packaged in New Jersey, fruit squeezed in Florida, an apple from the other side of the world?" (70). The complex, sprawling operation of globalized markets required to conjure the goods on the desk becomes more astonishing because of its anticipated disappearance. Later, as Cedar's situation has grown more precarious and she is on the run, having escaped from "female gravid detention," she first hides at a waste and recycling center, where she has time to decorate the notebook in which she records her story with scraps from the facility: stickers, labels, and wrappers highlighting global trade, "mementos of the curious world" for posterity (171). These moments of global consciousness preface the book's concluding passage, which also scales out to the global by reflecting on the earth's final snowfall. While each of these moments initially seems to suggest endings in a standard dystopic manner, Erdrich's work ultimately frustrates any simple linearity.

Describing the future as the thing that haunts, *Future Home* upends simple teleological versions of dystopian fiction. Indeed, the "biological confusion" becomes a matter of perspective: Cedar is not acutely distressed by the changes to species around her, and this would-be apocalypse does not situate her at the outset of a dystopic afterward; she sees herself not "at the end of things, but a beginning" (92). This quiet but growing assurance remains with Cedar through even her most harrowing moments of capture and coercion by the authoritarian government. Her confidence can seem irrational given her circumstances, yet it helps refuse the conventional terms of a dystopian plot and may help inspire a degree of tempered optimism in readers or even Erdrich herself, who like Cedar sees herself not at the end of a linear trajectory, but amidst a cycle. The summer after *Future Home* was released, Erdrich posted a letter to the mailing list for Birchbark Books, her independent bookstore, which begins, "Have you ever known a time when things seemed to be moving backward?" Erdrich

identifies such a regressive time in the year following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, particularly with George W. Bush's reinstatement of the global gag rule blocking federal funding to non-governmental organizations providing funding or referrals for abortions. Identifying this sociopolitical context occurring in the months she first began writing Cedar's story, Erdrich clarifies her choices for the novel's plot and themes. She describes setting the manuscript aside for years; when she returned to it in 2017, she felt as though she has "circled back" to 2002, given the incoming administration's revival of the global gag rule. Erdrich addresses these political moments to underscore the gendered effects of the rule and the severe consequences it will impose on women's bodies and wellbeing, effects largely invisible beyond the political spectacle of the rule's implementation.

Erdrich writes at the end of her letter that Cedar "evolves toward faith in the natural world even as the world irrevocably changes shape around her." Cedar's disposition thus suggests her ability to reorient to changing circumstances and to attend to the changing qualities of her relationships, and it also defies common expectations for characters in dystopian narratives (whether toward detachment or despair). I turn next to some of the critical reception of *Future Home* in order to further highlight its selective engagement with dystopia and its alignment with other Indigenous futurist art.

Critical Misses

Patterns in the criticism of *Future Home* reveal expectations aligned with prominent versions of dystopia in Anglophone fiction, observations at the level of genre whose examination helps distinguish the features of this text as Indigenous futurism and oblique cli-fi. The general critique from reviewers of the novel is that its plot seems rushed and that it fails to fully realize its speculative world-building potential. Some of

the same reviews that find fault with this apparent haste cite Erdrich's letter discussing how the book originated in 2002 partly in response to the Bush administration's reinstatement of the global gag rule. Thus, even if the novel seems rushed, it took fifteen years to develop, appearing in different versions and as a short story before Erdrich returned to it after the 2016 US presidential election. And while the book was indeed rushed to publication after this point, this speed further testifies to its purpose as a political response.

This recurrent criticism of the book's hastiness pairs with another repeated complaint that it is inexplicably vague (Schaub), "unclear and oddly derivative" (Winik), "incomplete" (Greenblatt), containing "too many unexplained absences and leaps in the plot" (Scholes). Clearly, reviewers sought a greater degree of exposition pertaining to the changes in evolution and subsequent societal collapse and were frustrated when such details were not forthcoming. However, these observations should be regarded less as a failure in craft than a deliberately selective adoption of conventions of dystopia; in other words, *Future Home* is less an attempt to tell a great dystopian story than it is an attempt to redirect the energies of that genre. Instead of imagining in minute detail the dissolution of US democracy into theocratic totalitarianism, Erdrich focuses instead on Cedar's experiences. This constrained perspective arguably accomplishes more verisimilitude for human reactions to crises than some of the histrionic depictions in other dystopias. Throughout the novel, mundane moments persist alongside the extraordinary events: watching her family laying sod, Cedar remarks, "This is how the world ends... everything crazy yet people doing normal things" (25). Reviewer Anita Felicelli commends the novel's frequently quotidian depictions for "captur[ing] the flavor of our Trumpian reality perfectly." Erdrich herself states in her letter that "writing this work of speculative fiction felt like writing a form of truth." Indeed, despite the copyright page's disclaimer that "nothing in this book is

true of anyone living or dead," the novel reflects the very real situations of those facing reproductive injustice, state violence, and environmental degradation. Meanwhile, the commingling of the extraordinary and the mundane also suggest the novel's exemplifying the "everyday Anthropocene," an affective state Stephanie LeMenager argues novels are well suited to convey, conveying the experiences of living "through climate shift and the economic and sociological injuries that underwrite it" ("Climate Change" 225). As oblique cli-fi, *Future Home's* foregoing of extensive apocalyptic exposition better enables readers to consider the myriad, shifting circumstances of intensifying climate change.

The first-person diaristic form also inhibits the possibility for a more precise rendering of the social collapse. The limited perspective of Cedar's entries resists an omniscient overview. Reviewer Michael Schaub laments the fact that the novel "never really comes close to getting off the ground," but his metaphor misses the fact that it intentionally remains quite close to the ground, chthonic even: a central scene midway through the book occurs within one of the sandstone caves beneath and near the Twin Cities, literalizing Cedar's going underground to evade state surveillance and capture. Later, she learns, "They're calling in drone strikes on the basis of voice and facial recognition, so people are holed up anywhere there is a tunnel system" (222). The use of less-detailed exposition suits Cedar's own delimited understanding of the events in her world, dramatizes various needs for dissimulation, and strengthens focus on the characters and their relationships. This interpretation aligns with Silvia Martínez-Falquina's finding that "[t]he lack of detailed information about the changing natural and political contexts is a strategic element in the narrative, expressed both explicitly and through literary subtlety" (167). Martínez-Falquina finds the lack of detail helps portray Cedar's uncertain future as an expectant mother while inviting readers' sympathy, given their own uncertain futures. This feature additionally captures the tone

and realities of activist organizing today, with the need for secrecy given the surveillance and infiltration of activist groups and legislative attempts to criminalize them.

The novel's epistolary form, with diary entries written directly to Cedar's unborn child, emphasizes relationships over situational details. While a dystopian narrative precisely detailing its given catastrophe may be imaginative or accomplished, such detail may also serve to assuage readers' anxieties by affording a sense of distance, oversight, or control, aligning with the same kinds of environmental technocratic salvationist fantasies that environmental justice scholars critique for continually overlooking social inequities. Cedar's narration instead suits the call, in Giovanna Di Chiro's words, "to imagine and build a new paradigm of care" (310). Reading Cedar's entries and motives with an eye toward this possibility, rather than critiquing a lack of details, invites opportunities for prioritizing relations.

In sum, Erdrich undertakes dystopia as a means, not an end. Reviewers overwhelmingly associate the novel with Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*; however, it makes sense to compare it with Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*, which received similar critiques about inadequate dystopian world-building. Dimaline, Erdrich, and other Indigenous writers disrupt notions of dystopia as radically new or impending, instead emphasizing how surveillance and social collapse and reconfiguration permeate colonial histories. As Kyle Whyte remarks, "Like dystopian narratives, we [Indigenous peoples] find ourselves in a time our ancestors would have interpreted as a portrayal of our societies with dramatically curtailed collective agency" ("Indigenous Science" 228). Whyte draws on Indigenous futurist scholars such as Grace Dillon and Elizabeth LaPensée to assert different conceptions of time at work in Indigenous speculative fiction, such as slipstream or what he calls "spiraling time," which "supports and guides [Indigenous peoples'] plans and future-oriented actions"

(232). Incorporating these keen observations on time would refine reviews of Erdrich's novel, showing how her plot and narrative choices rework more than conform to generic expectations.

Indigenous speculative fiction consistently resituates hegemonic EuroAmerican notions of apocalypse as already occurred or ongoing rather than futural. *Future Home* incorporates elements of both, but even as calamity falls, it offers new possibilities, especially for its Ojibwe characters. Erdrich suggests this most clearly through Eddy, the partner of Cedar's birth mother, who transforms from a melancholic intellectual tribal councilman and gas station attendant to a motivated leader as the evolutionary crisis advances. When Cedar escapes a birthing detention center and is ferried to the reservation in the latter half of the novel, she is reunited with Eddy, who says to her, "We're gonna be self-sufficient, like the old days... I never knew I had it in me, Cedar. I'm surprised. I think about seventy percent of my depression was my seventeenth-century warrior trying to get out" (227). Eddy presides over a meeting showing the progress in reclaiming and consolidating the tribal land base and planning for a redoubled population as urban relatives return north. Cedar writes, "He plots strategies. Thinks of survival measures, ways to draft our young people into working for a higher purpose... He wants to make the reservation one huge, intensively worked, highly productive farm" (226). Enfolding such moments into the plot, Erdrich further reveals her use of dystopian conventions not as a mere whim nor as an attempt to dash off a lucrative potboiler, but instead to develop a story that engages real-world concerns while imagining and affirming Indigenous persistence.

Characters like Eddy demonstrate the work Whyte sees accomplished by Indigenous speculative fiction. Early in the novel, Cedar asks Eddy what they will do about the shifts in evolution. Eddy says:

"Indians have been adapting since before 1492 so I guess we'll keep adapting."

"But the world is going to pieces."

"It is always going to pieces."

"This is different."

"It is always different. We'll adapt." (28).

Though Eddy's first line would seem to conform to a linear colonial timeline, his words here reflect a way of being that is not solely reactive to such a temporality. Eddy's resolve matches the broader tone in the novel—elicited elsewhere by Cedar's own equanimity and faith—a tone at odds with dystopia's typical melancholy, one that is less mournful of a perceived lost past because of a different orientation to time. Eddy's transformation over the course of the novel is not the result of a nostalgic longing for a return to the past so much as it is an awakening to the fullness of his present. As Elizabeth LaPensée states in a cautionary note, "Indigenous Futurisms reflects past, present, and future—the hyperpresent now. It is not merely 'Indigenous science fiction' nor is it in relation to Western ideas of space and linear time." *Future Home* doesn't simply imagine a possible future but instead champions characters' adaptability and their stances towards mystery that spring from this hyperpresent now.

As such, works like *Future Home* are instructive for imagining responses to apocalyptic crises readers may themselves encounter. While its central crisis is not climate change, as oblique cli-fi it models possibilities for responding to the emergency that climate change presents. Cedar's story emphasizes kin-making, both through her relationships with her family and the camaraderie she finds with other captured women, medical staff, even her mail carrier. As the book depicts different kinds of relationships, both domineering and reciprocal, it also offers ways of thinking about their different *qualities*: it frightfully imagines a disruption to evolution, but it also imagines adaptability. Above all, it shows that no relationship is static or inevitable.

Time's Up

These values are borne out in contemporary grassroots activism in the Upper Midwest, where environmentalist and Indigenous rights activists have long experienced similar adversities in terms of surveillance and cooptation to those imagined in the novel: corporations and agencies have frequently surveilled land and water protectors, and private security operatives have also infiltrated their groups (Brown); oil company Enbridge has fronted a pseudo-grassroots pro-pipeline group (Vardi). Despite these challenges, groups work to build coalitions and solidarity. Erdrich herself has called for climate action beyond her fiction. On December 11, 2020, she and her daughter joined a resistance camp in Palisade, Minnesota, to demonstrate support for water protectors resisting construction rerouting Enbridge's Line 3. She later published an opinion column in *The New York Times* reflecting on the visit, writing, "This is not just another pipeline. It is a tar sands climate bomb; if completed, it will facilitate the production of crude oil for decades to come." She explained findings that the ultimate carbon output resulting from the pipeline's operation would completely undo Minnesota's attempts at reducing emissions.

While nonrenewable energy projects continue to pose threats to both Indigenous lands and to climate mitigation plans, narrative and activism alike suggest that remaining attentive and adaptive to the qualities of relationships offers other possibilities. LaDuke and Cowen point out how "despite the severity of the situation, the future is not foreclosed" (244). From innovative legal approaches (e.g., according rights of personhood to wild rice), to cultural practices and storytelling that recenter Indigenous temporalities (e.g., prophecies motivating direct action), these responses guide and enact the continued unfolding of cosmovisions within what might be recognized as LaPensée's hyperpresent now, Whyte's spiraling time, or Leanne Simpson's call for an embodied present. Each of these concepts suggests an

orientation to climate change not wholly compatible with linear narratives about apocalypse or dystopia, and each affords a deeper grounding for Indigenous activism. Simpson writes that, for Indigenous peoples, "The generative and emergent qualities of living in our bodies as political orders represent the small and first steps of aligning oneself and one's life in the present with the visions of an Indigenous future... We then become centered in our Indigenous presents, rather than centered in responding to the neoliberal politics of the state" (192).

Or, as Cedar writes in *Future Home*, "Stop thinking about the future. Now is all we have, I tell myself" (69).

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