

Book Review

DEAR SCIENCE AND OTHER STORIES. By Katherine McKittrick. Durham: Duke University Press. 2021.

In a period containing newfound drives to pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion across a breadth of academic fields, *Dear Science and Other Stories* comes as a confirmation of how DEI-centered scholarship can excel. McKittrick begins the book with a concrete, parsimonious explanation of the text's mission: to center black creatives and think through how they attend to science in their work. *Creatives*, in this context, bridges what is too-often considered 'academically gray,' considering the work of poets, musicians, and visual artists broadly. The goal of uplifting the field of black, critical race, indigeneity, and anticolonial methodologies is undoubtedly met as McKittrick seeks to articulate and advance the value of Black Studies within and outside formally academic spaces.

Critical indigeneity and race scholars in particular will get much from McKittrick's elevation of storytelling as it contributes to—and disseminates—theory-building. Indeed, McKittrick begins the text with a musing on Wynter's theorization that humans are truly *homo narrans*, a storytelling species. This centering of storytelling persists into the second and third chapters, where McKittrick challenges current practices in citation and methodology. The critique of citations as tools reproducing power relationships in knowledge systems (affecting the very process of conclusion-drawing) is something that has gained a deeper foothold in the humanities and social sciences than the hard sciences; consequently, the practical suggestions and literal restructuring of chapters that McKittrick undertakes demonstrates the importance of rethinking producers of knowledge in a concrete way. Her footnotes, in a very real sense, are just as much a part of the stories she tells as the later content. Readers finish each section with a sense that McKittrick is not telling stories in a vacuum: she is facilitating conversations between the authors she cites.

As McKittrick continues her discussion on methodology, readers settle into a fuller awareness of what it means to practice 'rebellious methodological work.' In one form, this means adjusting one's reading practice as a way to 'unlearn' racist, ableist, and sexist discipline conventions. A result of these adjustments can be the personal redevelopment of what it means to know—prompting, at its core, a challenge to the absolute Western view of what science is, or is not.

McKittrick's work consistently advances a central theme of *storytelling* as she seamlessly weaves together theory, literature, music, poetry, personal observation,

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and stream-of-consciousness-like thought processes; each is like a character in a novel that comes to interact with one another, ultimately learning and growing from their interactions. She introduces examples such as the electronic-duo Drexciya (52), the story *The Kick Drum is the Fault* (122), and the work of Dionne Brand (63) to illustrate Afrocentric anti-colonial work that embodies the narrative nature of analysis and scholarly experimentation.

In concluding *Dear Science and Other Stories*, McKittrick pens a short letter to 'Science,' a summarization of her entire project. This letter also serves to remind readers that just like storytelling is an inherently community-based activity requiring tellers and listeners, scholarship—just like any important work worth doing—is a successful effort only when it is collaborative and community-minded.

Dr. Ellen A. Ahlness

Department of Veterans Affairs, Seattle