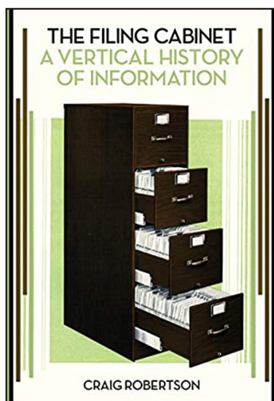
Breaks (Coffee House Press 2021)—are beautifully and honestly crafted projects, which many readers will find relevant to LIS.

While the (anti-)principles set forth in these books may appear to be antithetical to a library's purpose, and even a threat to ideals that so many of us hold dear, perhaps a wild "framework" born out of a "utopian hopefulness" can help us to imagine our way out of the colonial structures that order academic libraries and librarianship. As Halberstam writes, "It is within the epistemologies established by colonial encounters, by colonial brutality, and by a colonial will to know that the wild is established as a space of otherness" (18). We can start by questioning "mastery," "disciplinarity," and literacy itself, considering the ways in which libraries have become spaces that have othered wildness in order to contain it. It seems very possible that privileging enchantment, bewilderment, fugitivity, relationality, and the erotic in our libraries would help to rearrange the library according to queer, anti-racist, and anti-colonial principles. Sometimes I wonder if the purpose of a library's order is to contain desire. If what Anne Carson says is true—that reading and writing are erotic experiences that reside in "the play of imagination called forth in the space between you and your object of knowledge," a library is an overflowingly erotic place.[3] If readers and researchers and library workers all encounter their desires, their wonder, their beloved objects of study, then the space in which this happens is indeed a wild one. Helping current and future readers and researchers inquire into and gain access to their own desires is an indispensable (and too often unacknowledged) aspect of our profession.—*Melissa Adler, Western University*

Notes

1. See Emily Drabinski, "Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction," *Library Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (2013): 94–111; Karen P. Nicholson, Jane Schmidt, and Lisa Sloniowski, "Editorial," in Special Focus on Academic Libraries and the Irrational, *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship* 6 (December 2020): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.33137/cjal-rcbu.v6.35194.
2. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), quoted in Snaza, *Animate Literacies*, 93.
3. Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 109.

Craig Robertson. *The Filing Cabinet: A Vertical History of Information.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2021. 280p. Paper, $27.95 (ISBN 978-1517909468).



Take a moment and think: when did you last consider the humble filing cabinet? Ubiquitous to the point of invisibility, especially for anyone who has worked in or simply passed through an office, reading Craig Robertson's *The Filing Cabinet: A Vertical History of Information* set this reviewer's mind adrift, wondering when I had last seen this piece of furniture. Once a required presence in any office, the filing cabinet now appears to be the purview of interior designers looking to add an *industrial chic* edge to a loft, or a cheap DIY project of choice for smoked meat enthusiasts.[1] Has the filing cabinet's moment passed, condemned to become a relic—much like slide rules, banker's lamps, drafting tables, barrister shelves, and the like—to be fetishized by weekend flea market browsers?

Robertson would argue otherwise. It would be tempting to be pithy and state that, regardless of its physical presence in our lives, this is the filing cabinet's world and we're just living

in it, but the situation is more complicated than that. Robertson aims to show that, while the filing cabinet itself is not an agent of change, its very materiality provides a window into a particular moment in industrial capitalism when *information*, along with *information work* and the *information worker*, as opposed to the knowledge worker, was ascendant, and how that shaped—and continues to shape—the world we inhabit.

The book opens by considering a key principle in the late nineteenth century business world: *verticality*. Not only was this manifested physically in the form of the skyscraper—an efficient way of housing a maximum amount of office space and workers on a relatively minimal plot of land, the construction of which was made possible by breakthroughs in the manufacturing of steel—but also in the organization of companies for the sake of efficiency and cost-cutting in the name of cornering markets. In these hierarchical, heavily Taylorized spaces, there existed an increased need for the retrieval of discrete bits of *information*—anticipating both Paul Otlet and Vannevar Bush—as opposed to reliance on larger, more holistic bodies of knowledge. Modern theories of management had no need for the wizened clerks and scriveners of old, doddering about in dusty offices and retrieving bits of paper from batteries of pigeonholes in rolltop desks. Newer, sleeker, and more easily operable technological developments were called for. Enter the filing cabinet. With a steel form evocative of the skyscrapers they would be housed in, these storage containers allowed for the vertical storage of files in a series of drawers that, through the miracle of hanging folders and tabbed dividers, could accommodate a wide range of organizational schemes.

Technology, however, is only one facet of this history. Durable and efficient, the filing cabinet still requires someone to perform the action of filing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was work largely considered acceptable for younger, single women with some—but not too much!—education. While varying levels of managers and administrators took on ever more granular and specialized tasks involved in the running of large firms, they depended on the labor of secretaries with incredibly generalized training. The principle governing the operation of the filing cabinet was one of speed: one simply needs to glance at a few specific fields on a document to know where in the filing cabinet it ought to go. The same principle works, nearly in reverse, for the retrieval of a file. This operation was considered, both by the managers of business using filing cabinets as well as the sales departments of the filing cabinet manufacturers, to be so logical as to be practically automatic. However—and this is where Robertson's book truly shines—such semblances of automation promised by technology hinge on the labor of people considered to be so interchangeable and fundamentally marginal as to be rendered invisible. While the ideal filing secretary would not be so educated as to overthink her duties, filing cabinet manufacturers published reams of training material on basic filing systems, even manufacturing miniature filing drawers and other didactic tools for course modules that were pushed by industry and taken up in many junior and high schools across the United States. Reading this, it's not hard to hear echoes of the many tiresome calls to "learn to code," and subsequent pushes to have this preferred form of skill building integrated into school curricula as a means of combating twenty-first century job stagnation, or even the pointed disdain and interchangeability to which contingent workers for the myriad rent-a-serf apps are expected to accustom themselves.

Moving beyond labor, the filing cabinet has had a curious lingering cultural impact. The vogue for efficiency represented by the filing cabinet made its way into the home early on—particularly in America, where the built-in closets in our bedrooms and the particular

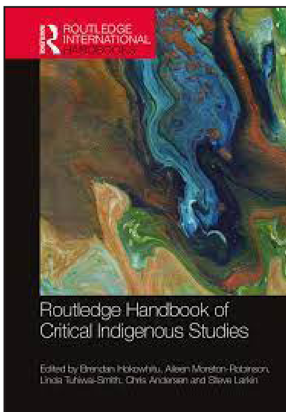
manner in which built-in kitchen cabinets are arranged in relation to refrigerators, ranges, and ovens, offers a vestigial promise of better living by getting one's house in order. And by the time GUIs made their way into computing, the language of the filing cabinet had become so naturalized that both the file folder and its companion, the trash bin, became icons to orient users in operating a new piece of machinery.

It is difficult to do justice to Robertson's thrilling history of the filing cabinet. Other outstanding surprises include a panoply of amusing images—early advertisements depicting men jumping into open filing cabinet drawers to demonstrate just how well-built a particular cabinet is, disembodied and shapely hands caught in the act of opening a file drawer (sex, as always, seems to sell), ridiculous cartoons—and even a poem gently mocking secretaries making filing errors while distracted by the thought of after-work dates and other frivolities. A useful and thought-provoking text for those of us dependent on the filing cabinet and the subsequent technologies they inspire, this book deserves a wider readership in both the art historical and cultural studies fields.—*Caleb Allen, Independent Scholar*

Notes

1. That's right—strip down your filing cabinet, add a heating element, and you too could be making a few briskets in a Fire King filing cabinet. Prefer something more novel? That's alright, you can transform your neglected filing cabinet into a rotisserie as well.

Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies. Brendan Hokowhitu, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, Chris Andersen, and Steve Larkin, eds. Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2020. 632p, 32 B/W illustrations. $250.00 (ISBN 978-1138341302).



For better or worse, Routledge has a long history of publishing content on Indigenous peoples and has recently published handbooks on Indigenous people's rights, Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, Indigenous environmental knowledge, and, most recently, Indigenous well-being. *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* was published in late 2020; it asserts that it is "ambitious in scope, ranging across disciplines and national boundaries, with particular reference to the lived conditions of Indigenous peoples in the first world."

As one would hope, all authors are Indigenous, with roughly a third of the authors identifying as Native American or First Nations peoples, one third as Māori, and the remaining third of authors as Aboriginal, Kānaka Maoli or Kānaka ʻōiwi, Sámi, Alaska Native, Mexican, and Samoan.

In many ways, I am the model audience for this book, as an Indigenous practitioner in multiple disciplines and professional spaces. Additionally, many of the authors in this volume are scholars whose works I had read previously and whose works I follow closely. On a personal note, it is nice to see other Māori scholars so well-represented in a mainstream work. However, I see this book as having a broad appeal across many disciplines, ranging from Indigenous studies (including Hawaiian, Māori, Pacific Islander, Native American, First Nations, or other Ethnic Studies departments or programs), history, sociology, anthropology, gender or queer studies, law, politics, literature, social movements, and more.

Moreover, this book embodies a spirit of collaboration and an uplifting of Indigenous ways of knowledge sharing that is evident in the very organization of the book. A different