career, and an alternative — not the centre — of the historical profession. The supposed discovery of the discipline only during these periodic gnashing of teeth over the future of graduate history programs infuriates public historians. These discussions also imply that anyone with a history PhD can be a public historian with just a few tweaks. Collectively, the authors of this volume firmly disprove this latter notion.

Brock and Faulkenbury set three audiences for this volume: public historians at universities; other instructors who teach with similar pedagogical practices; and university administrators. Public history instructors will be inspired by the projects and lessons learned, and find solace in the experiences of their colleagues. University public historians are most often programs of one which can be isolating. Professors in non-history departments who also lead collaborative, community-based, and experiential learning courses can also find useful teaching strategies.

Administrators pondering a public history course or program should also read this book, but as a caution. Public historians welcome attention towards their discipline at universities, but few administrators who see it as a tactic to improve student recruitment or solve history teaching jobs crises understand the workload implications for professors, the financial investment to support collaborative community projects or student internships, or the ethical issues in (mis)representing history PhDs as sufficient training to enter the public history workforce.

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Krista McCracken and Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey

Decolonial Archival Futures

ALA Neal-Schuman, 2023. 112 pp.

Organized by a quadripartite structure, specifically through an examination of settler colonial sites of analysis (the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), Krista McCracken and Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey's *Decolonial Archival Futures* functions as a look at both the "productive" possibilities of the archive as well as its oft-documented and well-catalogued limitations. Outlining the importance and generative possibilities of archival practices, especially for Indigenous peoples, McCracken and Hogan-Stacey write: "Archival records are … important for those who have lost generational knowledge due to relocation or policies of forced removal. Archives that hold census records, records from industrial or residential schools, and government department documents can be vital for those who are reconnecting to their families or communities" (52–3). They continue by asserting that the potential purpose of an Indigenous archive is its "ability to speak back to [dominant, colonial] archives and identify what information is important to [Indigenous] individuals and communities" (52). To this end, the book is a commendable and worthwhile engagement for those new to archival studies, or new to

an approach to the archives that emphasizes a reckoning with settler colonialism.

Indeed, while the ambitions of the book should be praised further still (covering, as it does, four settler colonial nation-states with similar but vastly different historical, social, and political configurations), the scope of the project can, at times, come into conflict with or prevent a more comprehensive or thorough analysis. Put bluntly, in trying to do too much the book can sometimes read as cursory, losing much specificity in its desire to cover the complex dynamics informing four colonial nation-states and their varying engagements with the archive. And so, while an engagement with settler colonialism is foregrounded in the text, some of the prevailing issues of the settler colonial archive persist in the book, primarily in its lack of engagement or precision with "the land" (as named and theorized by Indigenous peoples) or with an extended examination of archives' relation to capital (how they are constituted, both structurally and symbolically, by settler colonial capitalist political economies and logics). For instance, the book's organizational structure (four nation-states that initially rejected but that have now signed on to some modified "implementation" of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP]) oftentimes eclipses the nations and communities on whose lands these archives now rest. As archives are increasingly (or simply *are*) digital or digitized, little to no sustained attention is paid in the book to issues like data mining, the increasing commodification of Indigenous knowledges through this data mining, or the ways in which colonial nation-states deploy the acquisition of data as a form of surveillance technology to monitor the activities of Indigenous groups organizing against issues such as resource extraction on Indigenous ancestral homelands and/or territories. Moreover, the text can, at times, reify or reproduce the mentality that the "internet" exists as a liberatory, horizontal virtual space accessible to all, and little room is dedicated to the ways in which virtual archival space itself is dependent upon material infrastructures that require the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands, as well as ecological degradation and the continual and sustained exploitation of workers that produce technological devices capable of engaging with the "digital archive." Simply put, if "decolonization is not a metaphor"[20] (to reference Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, writers the book's authors draw upon), then some prolonged engagement with the materiality of the archive itself is needed here.

Admittedly, however, these issues plague any engagement with "the archive" and "virtual space" more broadly, and given the sheer amount of information the authors are attempting to cover in this short book, it might be best to consider this text as a launching pad for more protracted, sustained engagements with the archive and settler colonialism. Indeed, this book can in many ways be read as an invitation to do "the work," since, as McCracken and Hogan-Stacey assert, budding and established "[a]rchivists, the archives profession, and archival organizations have work to do" (61). *Decolonial Archival Futures*, then, is their attempt to encourage others to "continue pushing the boundaries of archival practice, building relationships, and

20 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

challenging colonial ways of organizing information" (66). And as the title suggests, McCracken and Hogan-Stacey have the future in mind with this text, so in this way we can consider this work as prefigurative: it not only attempts to guide and orient archival impulses and practices in and into the future, but it also suggests that if we are able to imagine respectful, ethical, relational archival practices in that future landscape, then there is no reason why we cannot or should not be doing them *now* in the present. This book invites the reader to do this work or, simply, "the work" — readers should accept the invitation.

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Julia Erhart
The Children's Hour

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024. 168 pp.

The lives of Martha and Karen, two women who run a small private girls' school in the United States are destroyed when one of their disgruntled pupils spreads a rumour that the women are lovers. Such is the basic premise of *The Children's Hour*, the 1961 film directed by William Wyler based on a play by Lillian Hellman. In the 2024 book *The Children's Hour,* author Julia Erhart provides a compelling argument for the significance of the film and the story, both at the time of its release and into the present day.

Erhart's study is the tenth and latest addition to the Queer Film Classics series from McGill-Queen's University Press, edited by Thomas Waugh and Matthew Hays. These books offer relatively short studies of key films: written in an accessible manner, they provide historical context with some theoretical analysis. The feminist film scholar Erhart's treatment of the film fits very well into this series. She examines *The Children's Hour* via a three-part structure through which she first discusses the history of the film's production, then its reception by mainstream, trade, and lesbian reviewers, and finally turns to the movie text itself in terms of script, framing, and soundtrack. This approach allows her to develop an in-depth and thorough analysis of a film which is, as she rightly claims, "a protean and contradictory object, capable of meaning different things to different audiences and scholars" (80).

At the root of the film's contradictory meanings is the unresolved question of what it is actually about. Is the film a chilling depiction of how a story fabricated for gain by a mendacious child can whip up a moral panic with devastating consequences? Or is it a female-centred and nuanced account of lesbianism and the horrors of anti-gay persecution? Erhart suggests that what gives the film its classic status is the tension between these perspectives. Woven into every element of its production, reception, and content are different versions and interpretations of what story is being told.

The 1961 film was a remake of a 1936 film, *These Three*, also directed by Wyler: