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**Linda M. Morra, *Unarrested Archives: Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Canadian Women's Authorship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 244. CDN\$54.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-4426-4881-4.**

**Reviewed by Shawn Brackett, University of Calgary**

Archives are nuanced constructs with the power to affect who and what is remembered in history. Prominent scholars like Foucault and Derrida have argued that archives are sites of power, altering the contours of possible knowledge. In the tradition of Steedman and Stoler, Linda Morra extends the explorations of knowledge generation, intellectual selfhood, and the meanings of “arrested” and “unarrested” through the lives of five women authors in twentieth century Canada (7). *Unarrested Archives* is a welcome contribution to literary studies, intellectual history, and women’s and gender history.

Institutional archives, as official repositories of documents, have largely constrained “what could be said about and by women,” hindering understanding of women’s contributions and perpetuating the marginalization of women (176). Those constraints were sometimes written into policy, but more often, as Morra points out, the result of nebulous social forces. Studies of Canadian women authors, therefore, have suffered from the opacity of archives. *Unarrested Archives* seeks to unarrest the “archives” from the connotation of archive as a place of sanctuary for written records and in doing so, complicate the process of archiving and legacy-making by women as political and intimate acts. The book explores the cases of five women authors from the late nineteenth century through present day and, in taking each author in her own historical and personal context, develops a classification scheme that is at once sensitive to the individual and potentially applicable to a broader group of authors.

Morra argues that women authors in Canada exercised self-agency through their engagement with and creation of archives: the archive of embodiment, the archive of kinship, the archive of imminence, the archive of activism, and the minor archive. *Unarrested Archives* follows Morra’s taxonomy in its chapter structure and organizes them by chronology. Chapter 1 focuses on E. Pauline Johnson, a famous Canadian poet of Mohawk-British heritage. Johnson’s public performances, as Morra suggests, denied the efforts of the state and men to control her. By “rendering herself in spectacular terms,” Johnson legitimated herself and her work despite the later gaps in formal archival holdings (37). Chapter 2 returns the reader to institutional archives, in this case, the papers of Emily Carr at the British Columbia Archives. Her decision to entrust her documents to close friend Ira Dilworth represented a way for Carr to speak and gain agency after her death. When discussing Sheila Watson in chapter 3, Morra continues upon the intellectual path she has laid, namely, that of the place of women author’s inner thoughts reified in their decision-making. By selectively releasing her journals for someone else to publish (“displacement”), Watson demonstrated the technique of almost, but not quite, telling her own story (81). Thus imminence allowed Watson to retain authority over herself.

In a similar vein, Jane Rule not only acted for herself, she acted for a movement with her archive. Morra details in Chapter 4 how Rule, a lesbian author who frequently wrote stories featuring lesbians, navigated the publishing industry in the mid-twentieth century. Rule arrested her archives at UBC to ensure the propagation of her work and ideas on gay and lesbian liberation at the same time the government of Canada arrested her books at the border to prevent the same. The final chapter of *Unarrested Archives* engages with Habermas's thoughts on public space and posits that "contemporary media are a kind of social system" (149). M. NourbeSe Philip has created what Morra terms a minor archive—something that is smaller, but no less important, and not dependent on the institutional centre of archives. Philip's archive, as something still under her personal possession and control, may represent the power of women authors to effect major change without following dominant ways of archiving.

Morra builds a convincing argument while effectively balancing theory, evidence, and accessible prose. At times, the narrative shifts uncomfortably between past and present tense (53, 77). This minor issue aside, she does an excellent job of problematizing gender, race, and class, and weaves nuanced understandings throughout. *Unarrested Archives* addresses significant challenges to researchers in studying women authors and to the public in remedying the marginalization of women in creative pursuits and the academy. In other words, she has written an accessible and useful work that adds to our understanding of authors, archives, and agency. *Unarrested Archives* also challenges us to reconsider the boundaries we draw around knowledge and how we create it.