

A final point — although I was stung into defending myself from Cook's attack upon my powers of comprehension (or lack thereof) I confess I have found it difficult to rekindle my initial fervour for the subject in dispute, primarily because my original letter of criticism, which was written in April 1984, immediately upon receipt of *Archivaria* 17, appeared and was commented on only in May 1985. With such vast silences between salvos, momentum is almost impossible to maintain. Is there some insuperable obstacle to publishing the two annual issues of our journal somewhat more widely apart even than the "official" publication months of March and July? At present we are receiving two issues within four months and must suffer a dearth of archival stimulation for the remaining eight. Perhaps a full half year between issues would permit more immediate responses in the letters section and mercifully limit bloodletting to a period of months rather than years.

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### ***Terry Cook Replies***

Dr. K.E. Garay's rejoinder to my comments is a transparent attempt to wriggle out of an uncomfortable corner in which she has placed herself. The letter would merit no reply save that my silence may be construed as somehow agreeing with her curious notions.

In her first five paragraphs, Garay attempts to rebut my criticisms of her original letter. It is a sorry attempt, marred by abandoning her original ground where I had cut it out from under her feet and by changing the terms of the debate to suit her purposes. She originally charged in *Archivaria* 19 that Gordon Dodds's article, "Canadian Archival Literature: A Bird's-Eye View," was unworthy of being published, that it certainly should not have had the lead position, that it almost amounted to "a page-by-page synopsis of *The Canadian Archivist* and *Archivaria*," and that *vis-à-vis* Dodds's own role with the journal it was "navel-gazing ... self-congratulatory ... self-serving...." The last point Garay made not once but twice in a short letter: the page-by-page synopsis occurred "with, it seemed to me, particular concentration on the role played by one Gordon Dodds in steering the archival flagship," and again that Dodds's view was "suffused with an air of rosy nostalgia ... particularly when it deals with the years of his own editorship...."

Taking her original comments in order, I drew forward the example of similar literature surveys in other disciplines being a normal part of professional activity and scholarly writing, and cited the *Canadian Historical Review's* practice in this regard. In her current "rejoinder," Garay ignores the point. I mentioned that such pieces often had the lead positions in other discipline's journals. Garay ignores the point. I disputed her "page-by-page synopsis" scenario by demonstrating Dodds's search for broad themes, trends, and patterns and his downplaying (given its relative size) the role of *Archivaria* — some 80 per cent of Canadian archival literature, but less than 40 per cent of his article. Garay ignores the point. I most strongly challenged her misguided belief that Dodds was engaged in self-serving and self-congratulatory reflection, and did so in two ways. First, I underlined his thematic

approach to archival theory, his clarion call to move beyond the mere threshold of archival knowledge at which we have barely arrived, and his consequent eschewing of any Whiggish perspective or analysis. Garay ignores the point. Secondly, I noted that the “particular concentration on the role played by one Gordon Dodds in steering the archival flagship” amounted to less than 5 per cent of the article’s pages. Garay ignores the point. What she feebly returns with is a transparent switch in the terms of the debate by noting that some two-thirds of the article dealt with *The Canadian Archivist* and *Archivaria*. That is quite different from Gordon Dodds’s alleged personal self-aggrandizement, the difference of 5 versus 66 per cent. (And if Garay wants to nit-pick, she might note that 14.5 pages out of 22 is not “fully” two-thirds.)

If Garay ignores or ducks most of my responses aimed at her intemperate attack on Gordon Dodds, her next point about my concluding paragraph is simply baffling. She now asserts that in her earlier letter she specifically assumed “to be wrong the suggestion that the editorial eye has kept the views of *Archivaria*’s detractors out of the journal....” And yet, regarding this notion of editorial censorship, she originally said: “If this was true of the Dodds era ....” she trusted that it was no longer the case. It was this slur on the Dodds era that I rebutted. As the quotation shows, her specific assumption was hardly as clear-cut as she now claims. And she certainly muddies the situation with her current letter. She does not challenge my assertions in defending the journal’s selection standards that, first, many ideas appearing in *Archivaria* have been fundamentally at odds with the editors’ well-known and publicly stated personal views on archival subjects, and, secondly, that detractors of *Archivaria* have appeared as authors on its pages when writing in a scholarly fashion about archival topics. What she does do, however, is raise the curious notion that Dodds or any other editor should permit in *Archivaria*’s pages attacks on the journal per se (rather than on its ideas) as a fat-cat PAC luxury that has little relation to the archival profession, and that failure to allow such attacks is evidence of the editor’s eye engaged in unfair censorship. This is an absurd proposition. Such debate might well take place at an association’s annual meeting, among its executive, or in its newsletter — and such a debate certainly raged in the ACA in the early years culminating in the *Archivaria* Survey of 1980-81 and the Halifax conference meetings — but the idea that a journal devoted to scholarly research and writing would allow attacks on itself in its own pages that advocate the journal’s suicide by its transformation into something non-scholarly (the supporting “contention” of that “extreme” for exclusive concentration on workshops, brochures, manuals, and newsletters) is almost incomprehensible. It makes as much sense for the editor of the *ACA Bulletin* to profile views attacking his publication and suggesting that it be turned into a scholarly journal! If submissions are received that cross this line, then the “editorial portcullis” should indeed slam down. That is neither censorship nor egos run mad, but a normal limiting of issues and debates to their proper forum.

Garay’s final three points regarding the W. Kaye Lamb Prize, the PAC control of *Archivaria*, and the journal’s publishing schedule have little to do with my response to her letter, and so I will comment only briefly on each. As the founder of the W. Kaye Lamb Prize, I would strongly oppose a popularity contest via a ballot to all journal subscribers. As with the various book prize committees of the Canadian Historical Association, which have only four or five members each, the selection should be made by a limited number of senior specialists in whom the editors can have confidence that they have read all, or almost all, of the articles involved and that they have the experience and discretion to choose the best one. It is a studied judgment, not a democratic election. (And is it not a

little “churlish” of Garay, after congratulating Dodds on winning the prize that thus so undermines the contentions of her first letter, to immediately go on in the next sentences to question the composition of the selecting panel and the method of selection?)

The publishing schedule and composition of the editorial staff have always been limited by the very shoe-string realities of *Archivaria's* existence. In that manuscripts simply do not come in over the summer and there is never a backlog of submissions — as Dodds graphically noted, it is sometimes like drawing teeth to pull an issue together — the editorial process does not get under way until the early fall and, even with hundreds of personal volunteer hours of evaluating, editing, and proofreading by all members of the editorial staff, the earliest an issue can be ready in these circumstances for mailing is March. The next one can be ready by late June. It could be held as Garay suggests until October to space the two issues out, but that puts it into the Association's next fiscal and membership year, and could confuse the SSHRCC grant structure as well. On the other point, in that the members of editorial staff (at least under my direction) actually edited and proofed and did not just lend their names to enhance a journal's masthead's respectability, in that the exigencies of the Canadian mails and publishers' deadlines do not permit the mailing of galleys to willing proofreaders across the country, and in that the journal's finances could never support bringing a pan-national editorial board to headquarters, it is inevitable — if not desirable, as Dodds notes — that the General Editor's home institution will dominate the journal. Regional editorships were tried formally and informally before, and were a dismal failure. If the journal leaves the PAC again, I doubt that this feature will change unless, as with the richer sponsors of the *American Archivist* or the *Canadian Historical Review*, the editors were to have the onerous production side of the journal removed to a permanent office and performed by a regular paid staff. Unfortunately, that day seems far off given the ACA and *Archivaria's* finances.

I have nothing against debate or even a bloodletting from time to time, but perhaps we can better focus our future energies in *Archivaria* on archival records, issues, and theories, and relegate the politics and internal management of the journal, if they must be discussed, to some more appropriate forum.

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