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Letters to the Editor

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Against the Grain

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Letters to the Editor

Send letters to <strauchk@cofc.edu>, phone or fax 803-723-3536, or snail mail: **Against the Grain**, 209 Richardson Ave., MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the **ATG Homepage** at <<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>.

Dear Editor:

I was pleased to read the review of Grove's *Dictionary of Art* by **Tom Gilson** in the September issue of *Against the Grain* (v.9#4, p. 44), though Mr. Gilson notes a few errors and has some concerns about *The Dictionary's* comprehensiveness and appearance. For the benefit of your readers, I would like to address these matters point by point.

The article on cathedral architecture at Chartes uses the term *triforium*, with which Mr. Gilson was unfamiliar. As the word is not defined in the article itself, Mr. Gilson turned to a dictionary of architecture to discover the meaning, and he makes the point in his review that readers may need supplemental texts to guide them through *The Dictionary's* "technical ... subject matter." A look in volume 31 of *The Dictionary*, however, reveals an article entitled "Triforium," in which the term is defined and a cross-reference to an explanatory drawing provided. The editor and publisher of *The Dictionary of Art* take great pride in comprehensiveness, and except in the cases of the most obscure technical terminology, the reader should be able to find the information he is seeking without resorting to external sources.

As Mr. Gilson apparently did not have volume 31 in hand when preparing his review, he checked the Index and notes that there was a reference only to "triforium windows." The line above this entry, however, reads "triforia" and cites the "Triforium" article in volume 31. *Triforia* is the plural of *triforium*, and it appears in this way because, while *Dictionary* articles are in most cases given singular headings, their citations in the Index are normally in the plural, since the Index covers the topic in all its multiple manifestations

throughout the 34 volumes. Thus, for instance, the bold heading "door" occurs in volume 9, whereas the plural form "doors," appropriately alphabetized, is used for the 231 references in the Index. We are aware that this has been a cause of some confusion, and the November issue of *The Dictionary of Art* newsletter, *ART&FACTS* (sent to every purchaser), explains the system in detail.

In his search for the meaning of *triforium*, Mr. Gilson discovered a few errors in the Index, including two terms that were not in their correct alphabetical order. These will be corrected in the reprint of *The Dictionary* planned for early 1998. It is inevitable that in a project of this size mistakes will occur, and we are always grateful for notification of errors, so that they may be corrected at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, Mr. Gilson expresses disappointment at the use of mainly black-and-white colour illustrations throughout in *The Dictionary*. Unfortunately, obtaining reproduction permissions for colour illustrations throughout *The Dictionary* would have cost in the order of \$2 million more than at the present — an increase that would have had to be passed on to buyers, putting it out of the reach of any library. *The Dictionary of Art* was conceived as a reference book in which the focus is on information, and the principle investment went into insuring the highest possible academic standards and the latest research by the world's leading experts. The illustrations were expressly chosen not just for their decorative value but for their ability to elucidate points made in the text.

Sincerely yours,

Ian Jacobs (*Managing Director, Grove's Dictionaries, Macmillan Reference Ltd.*)

From your (soothed) editor:

On Monday morning after the **Charleston Conference**, I put this message on my answering machine — "Thank goodness it's Monday, and not Friday!" A lot of people from around the college didn't understand my reasoning, but I know that all of you out there who attended the seventeenth Charleston Conference do. The Conference was a wonderful, fantastic experience. After the Conference is over, I always have a touch of "post-Conference" depression. But it's always good that things go on as usual at work on Monday, as if nothing had happened the week before. And that's as it should be.

Like this issue of *ATG*. We just keep on going — discussing, conversing, trying to reach solutions together. And this *ATG* is no exception. There's a lot to discuss. The conversation starts with some great interviews with **David Rubin** (p. 28), **Tim Bradbury** (p. 24), **Norman Horrocks** (p. 26), **Miriam Lindsay and Bernard Howes** (p. 30), and **Mike Slicker** (p. 84). These span our landscape. David is a small press owner, Tim is GaleNet's vice president, Norman is a long-time librarian and teacher, Lindsay and Howes are a British bookseller and Mike Slicker is a seller of rare books. Then we get on to more specific issues: **Celia Wagner** is back (!), talking about academic book trends (p. 54), **Dan Miller** gives us an overview of reference publishing in 1997 (p. 52), **Fran Wilkinson** tells us about the 12th annual NASIG Conference (p. 60), **Rob Withers** helps us increase our efficiency with Internet resources (p. 1), **Connie Foster** asks us how we identify electronic journals in our OPAC (p. 66), **Dick Dougherty** outlines a realistic organizational change model (p. 68), **Ned Kraft** tells us about the "brute force librarian" (p. 58), **Nancy Soth** gives us some whimsy about saying good-bye to the cards in our library books. And of course, there's much, much more!

Happy Holidays to y'all! See you in 1998!

Yr. Ed



Against the Grain — Deadlines 1998

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