from books. No criteria for selection have been given, other than that the critics are 'significant commentators.' The Appendix does not list every book and periodical consulted in preparing the volume.

In selecting the authors for each volume the editors choose authors who 'represent a variety of genres and nationalities and who are currently regarded as the most important writers of this era.' Each volume in TCLC includes fifteen to twenty authors. Of the eighteen authors in volume 22, eleven are newcomers to the Gale series and seven have appeared before, usually in Contemporary Authors.

Many of the authors included in volume 22 are unfamiliar, I recognized only four. The Preface justifies their inclusion, calling them 'lesser-known writers whose significant contributions to literary history are important to the study of twentieth-century literature.' Herein lies the primary attraction of the book for libraries with literature requests. Gathered in one place is a goldmine of information – dates, pseudonyms, biographical information and criticism from books and periodicals – which many libraries would have difficulty assembling on their own.

Each volume of TCLC includes invaluable cumulative indexes to authors, nationalities, and critics. These indexes include references to all Gale Literary Criticism Series and cross-references to other Gale sources. They are crucial to locating any author within the Gale complex.

An annotated list of authors, to be featured in volumes 23 and 24, appears with a list of additional authors for future volumes. How the editors choose what authors for which volume is not explained. Eventually TCLC will surely have an entry for every writer of any nationality, in the period, whose reputation did not die with him. The editors invite suggestions for authors they may have missed.

The volume is part of a set and has minimal usefulness on its own because the authors included are so diverse. Whether or not TCLC is a useful set without other parts of the Gale Literary Criticism series depends, of course, on the requirements of the library. I should think TCLC would be too limited on its own and needs the complement of Contemporary Literary Criticism and perhaps Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism, not to mention the weighty Contemporary Authors. In for a penny, in for a pound, but there is nothing comparable available.

ELLEN PILON
(Ellen Pilon lives in New Minas, NS)


At a time when we face a confusing proliferation of questionably designed typefaces produced for electronic reproduction, Walter Tracy's study should be cause for rejoicing. Unfortunately, I opened the book with enthusiasm and closed it with a deep sense of frustration and annoyance.

Walter Tracy brings many decades of practical experience to his subject. The first half of his book (the better half by far) discusses the history and development of type design. Tracy feels that letterforms are subject to rules of taste, proportion, and clar-
ity. He includes a glossary of typeface terms and states the importance of understanding type classification.

The section on type measure and the development of the point system is admirably handled and Tracy makes astute comments on the difference in purpose between type designs for text use and those for publicity or display. He also suggests that the revivals in metal type of historic typefaces, ‘created when printing was a craft, not an industry,’ maintain the accepted standard of quality against which electronically-produced versions should be compared.

He offers a general history of the development of punch cutting and typefounding and expresses concern for the ‘correcting’ of the designer’s intention by the creators of matrices and patterns. He also traces the evolution of electronic typesetting and discusses the storage of visual information. The digitization of a letterform for different qualities of resolution means ‘averaging’ a design for the lowest common denominator of character output. Tracy advocates a high-resolution typeface for final reproduction and a low-resolution version for proofing only.

He mentions the size ratio between capitals and lowercase and is concerned about the compromises made to a type master designed for both text and display use. He feels that the inevitable lining figures in a font should be supplemented with old-style numerals but says nothing about the need for true-cut small capitals to accompany them. He discusses the problems of distortion in slimming, fattening, and sloping a letterform and aims salvos at the psychologists and philosophers of letterform, who lack practical experience and cannot distinguish the uses of various type styles.

In the second half of the book Tracy assesses type designs by Jan Van Krimpen, Frederic Goudy, Rudolf Koch, W.A. Dwiggins, and Stanley Morison. His biographical sketches of each designer show conscientious research. But Tracy falls into the trap of critical evaluation in retrospect. It is tempting to speculate with the convenience of hindsight how graphic history might have been changed. But letterform design is an interpretative art, and the ground rules of proportion and clarity are subject to the designer’s personal taste, influenced by the period and circumstances in which the design is created. The designer’s personal tics and fetishes should be accepted as a fait accompli, without retrospective reconsideration.

Van Krimpen is criticized for his limited range of refined classic types and for thinking ‘like an artist, not a designer.’ Goudy’s work is found too individual, with soft-edged variations on old-style letterforms. Tracy ignores Goudy’s remarkable technical skill in producing his own designs.

Koch’s work is admired for its ‘originality and craftsmanlike quality,’ though Tracy thinks Koch ‘was not interested in’ Marathon, his finest roman design. Mercifully, Tracy feels incompetent to judge blackletter, so we are spared criticism of Koch’s greatest achievements. Koch’s freely-cut Neuland letterform is criticized because the spontaneity of each character ‘is incompatible with the regularity of type in print.’ Perhaps Tracy has dealt for too long with unobtrusive classic book types to accept designs with greater character.

Dwiggins gains merit for his close involvement with the possibilities and limitations of type manufacture. His Electra typeface is praised for its plainness and lack of
expression, and there is considerable discussion about his experimental Winchester type with its alternate uncial characters. But Tracy cannot resist attacking Dwiggins’s book illustrations, ornaments, and decorations – a topic totally irrelevant to the subject of the book. (Earlier Tracy takes Edward Johnston to task for being exactly what he was: a calligrapher with no extensive practical experience in designing typefaces.)

Tracy’s assessment of Morison’s development of Times Roman contains few diatribes, though the type is found to be ‘well-bred but dull’; here the virtue of plainness that Tracy finds in other types becomes a defect.

The book ends weakly with complaints about the low quality of some current typefaces ‘designed by the incompetent and produced by the cynical.’ Tracy has supplied his own jacket lettering – characterless, clubfooted reworkings of Weiss and Trump – which speak volumes about the refinement and imagination in the work of the designers Tracy criticizes.

Most of us who design enjoy working with the diversity and the communicative potential of letterforms. Letters are endlessly fascinating and life-affirming. But it is hard to get that sense from Tracy’s joyless, mean-spirited book. There is some good practical information herein, but much of Letters of Credit does little credit to its subject.

WILLIAM RUETER

(William Rueter is Senior Designer at the University of Toronto Press and proprietor of The Aliquando Press.)


Hal Draper’s *Marx-Engels Cyclopedia* is a labour of love. In it, he combines his skills as a former librarian and bibliographer at the University of California, Berkeley, with a life-long devotion to socialism, evident in his many books on the subject, in his former position as editor of *Labor Action* and of *The New International*, and as director of the Center for Socialist History at Berkeley. He is also known for his science fiction stories and articles on library science.

The three volumes of the *Cyclopedia* are intended to fill the lacuna, which Draper has long deplored, in reference works on the history and bibliography of socialism. He remarks in the *Glossary*, the third volume of the set, that ‘General encyclopedias tend to be defective in treating socialist figures – rather, in not treating them at all,’ and that the *Glossary* is a ‘partial substitute for the encyclopedia that isn’t there’ (p. xi).

Each volume of the *Cyclopedia* provides independent access to information about Marx and Engels. Queries about specific dates in their lives are addressed by reference to the volume *The Marx-Engels Chronicle: A Day-by-Day Chronology of Marx and Engels’ Life and Activities*, a chronologically arranged bio-bibliographical narrative in separately numbered paragraphs (allowing cross-references from the