



**49-4344** PQ2159 2011-19881 CIP  
Mortimer, Armine Kotin. **For love or for money: Balzac's rhetorical realism.** Ohio State, 2011. 333p bibl index afp ISBN 9780814211694, \$52.95

Also author of *Writing Realism* (2000), among other works, and long an influential critic of Balzac, Mortimer (emer., Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) collects here 21 lively essays devoted to love and money, what she calls the "Balzacian Prime Movers"—an Aristotelian term designating the driving forces of Balzac's monumental opus. Mortimer argues that "what Balzac invented was precisely a world in which Love needs Money and vice versa; neither ever works alone, and it is the powerful interaction between them that defines *La Comédie humaine*." Divided into three sections—"Rhetorical Forms of Realism," "Semiotic Images of Realism," and "Mimetic Structures of Realism"—and anchored by a useful brief reading of Rastignac's transformation in *Le Père Goriot*, this volume touches on a wide range of novels and stories, from *Les Chouans* and *La Maison Nucingen* to *Pierrette* and *La Rabouilleuse*. Although the author defines her reading of the *Comédie* as "narrow" rather than exhaustive, in particular chapters, for example, "The Language of Sex" and "Balzac and Poe: Realizing Magnetism," she manages to develop her thesis in unexpectedly rewarding ways. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*W. Edwards, Longwood University*

**49-4345** PQ1979 2010-44823 CIP  
**New essays on Diderot**, ed. by James Fowler. Cambridge, 2011. 266p bibl index ISBN 9780521769563, \$90.00

Known as the author of *Voicing Desire: Family and Sexuality in Diderot's Narrative* (2000), Fowler (Univ. of Kent, UK), has assembled a distinguished group of essayists, all having established their credentials as Diderot specialists with publications on subjects closely linked to the topics they address here. Using the diversity of Diderot's philosophical interests as the guiding thread for this collection, Fowler has constructed five thematic groupings, with many of the 16 chapters focusing on individual works. This organization might lead the reader to anticipate an introductory-level volume similar to "Cambridge Companions" titles, which include overviews of major figures like Rousseau or Voltaire. The interests of the present essayists, however, tend to be more narrowly defined, sometimes verging on the arcane. Thus, the readings are stimulating but in many instances require a fair degree of familiarity with the material under consideration. A reader desiring a more basic English-language introduction to Diderot might fruitfully consult Otis Fellow's *Diderot* (CH, Oct'77; 2nd ed., 1989), released in "Twayne's World Authors Series," or Peter France's *Diderot* (CH, Jun'84), in Oxford's "Past Masters." **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*J. R. Iverson, Whitman College*

## Slavic

**49-4346** PG2949 2011-20879 CIP  
**A History of Russian literary theory and criticism: the Soviet age and beyond**, ed. by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov. Pittsburgh, 2011. 406p index afp ISBN 0822944111, \$60.00; ISBN 9780822944119, \$60.00

The history of Russian literary theory and criticism from the 1917 revolution through the end of the 20th century is both contorted and tortured. In no other European country has literary theory and criticism

been so heavily politicized—and sometimes a matter of life and death for its practitioners. Only with the demise of the Soviet regime has this rather arcane area of literary studies been restored to the diversity and vibrancy of the century's early years. Dobrenko (Univ. of Sheffield, UK) and Tihanov (Univ. of London, UK) have gathered an international group of 18 leading specialists to offer a detailed examination of the turbulent period. The 15 essays, arranged chronologically, are well informed and by far the best survey of their subjects to date, and much superior to Russian-language titles edited or written by Valerii Prozorov (2002), Aleksandr Kazarkin (2004), and Mikhail Golubkov (2008). The present volume assumes a wide knowledge of 20th-century Russian literature. The extensive notes section provides an excellent bibliography; an appendix offers a list of translated Russian periodicals. All told, a useful work—albeit for specialists. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Graduate students, researchers, faculty.—*D. B. Johnson, emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara*

## Performing Arts

**49-4347** PN1590 2010-43128 CIP  
Catanese, Brandi Wilkins. **The problem of the color(blind): racial transgression and the politics of black performance.** Michigan, 2011. 214p bibl index afp ISBN 9780472071265, \$75.00; ISBN 9780472051267 pbk, \$28.95

Catanese (Univ. of California, Berkeley) explores questions of racial representation in the narrow contexts of regional theater, Hollywood, and reality television. The smoothly written first chapter considers 21st-century "racial etiquette," reframing W. E. B. Du Bois's famous dictum to the color-blind—"those who wish to disavow the continued material manifestations of race in our society." Drawing on Butler, Foucault, and Gilroy, the author uses first-person narratives of the contemporary college classroom and voter defeat of California's Proposition 54, the 2003 "Racial Privacy Initiative," to theorize racial transgression. Case studies include August Wilson/Robert Brustein debates over color-blind casting (1996-97); the "limits of color blindness" in the suppression of Denzel Washington's erotic film personae, especially in *The Pelican Brief* (1993) and *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995); and the original production of Suzan-Lori Parks's play *Venus* (1996). The final chapter considers Ice Cube's trajectory from gangsta rapper to family film star, and his work as producer of the controversial 2006 television program *Black. White*. The author also provides a brief, helpful discussion of "postblackness," a term that "does what postrace does not: it names and thereby keeps blackness alive even while demanding that its significance to the public sphere be renegotiated." **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*T. F. DeFrantz, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

**49-4348** PN1922 2011-19190 CIP  
Rozik, Eli. **Comedy: a critical introduction.** Sussex Academic, 2011. 242p bibl index afp ISBN 9781845194772, \$74.95; ISBN 9781845194789 pbk, \$37.95

Rozik offers a complex critical introduction to comedy in 14 chapters. He argues that comedy is a function of "mood" rather than of genre, structure, or other elements, and he employs this conceit to study comic structure, character, range, and the relationships between comedy and carnival, joke telling, "tangential genres," and different media. He summarizes many of the major theories of comedy, laughter,