



and character. The argument is weakest when Crowther attempts to make what is best in Mencken "relevant" to today by speculating on his possible responses to the "Koch brothers ... the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizen's United case" and to the ranting of "new demagogues pandering to old racists" (55). **Summing Up:** ★ Optional. Graduate students, researchers, professionals.—*T. P. Riggio, University of Connecticut*

52-2954 PR1585 MARC
The Dating of Beowulf: a reassessment, ed. by Leonard Neidorf. D. S. Brewer, 2014. 250p index afp (Anglo-Saxon studies, 24) ISBN 9781843843870 cloth, \$99.00

The publication of *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Colin Chase (1981), instigated three decades of often-impassioned scholarly debate. Prior to 1981, most *Beowulf* scholars assumed that the poem was composed early in the Anglo-Saxon period, most likely in the seventh or eighth century. The 1981 collection presented a range of arguments for both early and late dates, but the late-date arguments changed the field. The present volume provides a thorough overview of recent scholarship that argues, contrary to late-date assertions made in the 1981 collection, that *Beowulf* was indeed composed in the seventh or eighth century. The contributors are prominent, well-established Anglo-Saxonists, most of whom have already published more detailed studies on the dating question. Essays summarize this previous work, presenting a wide range of linguistic, metrical, onomastic, paleographic, and historical evidence. The contributors' various methodologies are more technical and more objective than those of pre-1981 early-dating arguments, and collectively offer a cohesive and compelling case for *Beowulf's* early composition. Not only is this volume a necessary companion for the 1981 collection, it stands on its own as an introduction to key issues in the dating of Old English poetry. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*S. Downey, California University of Pennsylvania*

52-2955 PS1638 2013-46759 CIP
Dowling, David. Emerson's protégés: mentoring and marketing transcendentalism's future. Yale, 2014. 332p index afp ISBN 9780300197440 cloth, \$65.00

Dowling (School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Univ. of Iowa) has written a delightful study of Emerson's acolytes in his transcendental Concord circle. Individual chapters focus on Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Christopher Cranch, Samuel Gray Ward, Ellery Channing, Jones Very, Charles King Newcomb, and Ellen Sturgis Hooper. Emerson, at one point or another, mentored these individuals. However, as a mentor, Emerson was an anti-mentor, pushing his acolytes away as he accepted them. He was influenced as much by them as they were by him. In his essay "Friendship," Emerson defined friends as "beautiful enemies," and Dowling elaborates on Emerson's affection for and conflict with his protégés. But the more one quarrels with Emerson, the more Emersonian one becomes. Dowling's study is well researched, and he does a beautiful job of connecting Emerson's universal statements in his essays to the particularity of his relationship with his protégés. Dowling's focus on friendships sheds light on the transcendentalist influence on American literature and literary studies. Though certainly useful for those studying Emerson, this book will be even more important to those interested in the protégés listed above. It is also a fascinating read for those interested in American cultural history and the regional history of New England. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.—*R. T. Prus, Southeastern Oklahoma State University*

52-2956 PS3529 2014-14634 CIP
Dowling, Robert M. Eugene O'Neill: a life in four acts. Yale, 2014. 569p index afp ISBN 9780300170337 cloth, \$35.00

Dowling (Central Connecticut State Univ.) has written a fascinating biography of O'Neill (1888–1953), the only American dramatist to ever win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The biography portrays O'Neill's dysfunctional childhood, his life as a sailor, and his eventual discovery by the Provincetown Players. His early works, from the "sea plays" to such full-length masterpieces as *Desire under the Elms* and *Anna Christie*, mark the transformation of American drama. The strength of the book is the meticulous weaving of the events that had happened, or were happening, in the playwright's life with the plays themselves. This is particularly evident in *Exorcism*, written in 1919 but found only recently. Dowling does not shy away from the more unsettling aspects of O'Neill's life, including his alcoholism, his outright negligence as a father, and his troubled marriages. He might once and forever have set the record straight on the strange events surrounding the publication and staging of the autobiographical *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Making extensive use of letters, diaries, and newspaper reviews of O'Neill's works, Dowling paints a picture of a scared, emotionally troubled playwright using the theater as a means to escape the past—and in so doing forging a new American drama. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. All readers.—*M. D. Whitlatch, Buena Vista University*

52-2957 PS3568 2014-7292 CIP
Drowne, Kathleen. Understanding Richard Russo. South Carolina, 2014. 142p bibl index afp ISBN 9781611174021 cloth, \$39.95; ISBN 9781611174038 ebook, contact publisher for price

Books in the "Understanding Contemporary American Literature" series, which comprises dozens of titles, are designed as companion guides for "undergraduates and non-academic readers." Certainly Russo (b. 1949) has earned his spot in this series. From *Mohawk* (1986) to his 2012 memoir *Elsewhere*, a detailed account of his mother's interior life, Russo continues to probe his Gloversville, NY, beginnings; his environment; and family conflict, mostly between father and son (the latter notably in *Nobody's Fool*, 1993). Drowne (Missouri Univ. of Science and Technology) has written the first book-length study of Russo's work. Using trade and scholarly sources, reviews, and interviews, the author provides biographical background and an in-depth literary analysis that reveals the not-so-hidden connections between Russo's novels and his vision as a whole. Zeroing in on the pageant of her subject, Drowne examines what Russo achieved in the six novels that succeeded *Mohawk*. Includes endnotes and a comprehensive bibliography. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Lower- and upper-division undergraduates; general readers.—*A. Hirsh, Central Connecticut State University*

52-2958 PS3511 2014-8805 CIP
Faulkner and film, ed. by Peter Lurie and Ann J. Abadie. University Press of Mississippi, 2014. 233p index afp ISBN 9781628461015 cloth, \$65.00; ISBN 9781628461022 ebook, \$65.00

This is the latest release in the "Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha" series, which publishes scholarship presented at the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference (this volume covers the 2010 conference). Abadie has edited several volumes in the series, and Lurie (Univ. of Richard) brings to the volume a background in film. Faulkner wrote (or cowrote) the screenplay for many films—readers know such well-known films as *The Big Sleep*, *To Have and Have Not*—and though