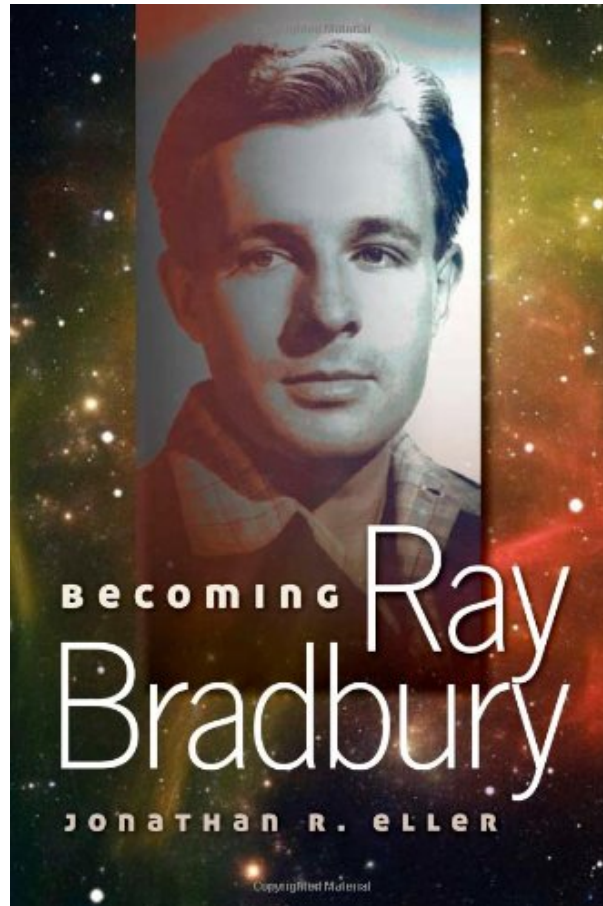
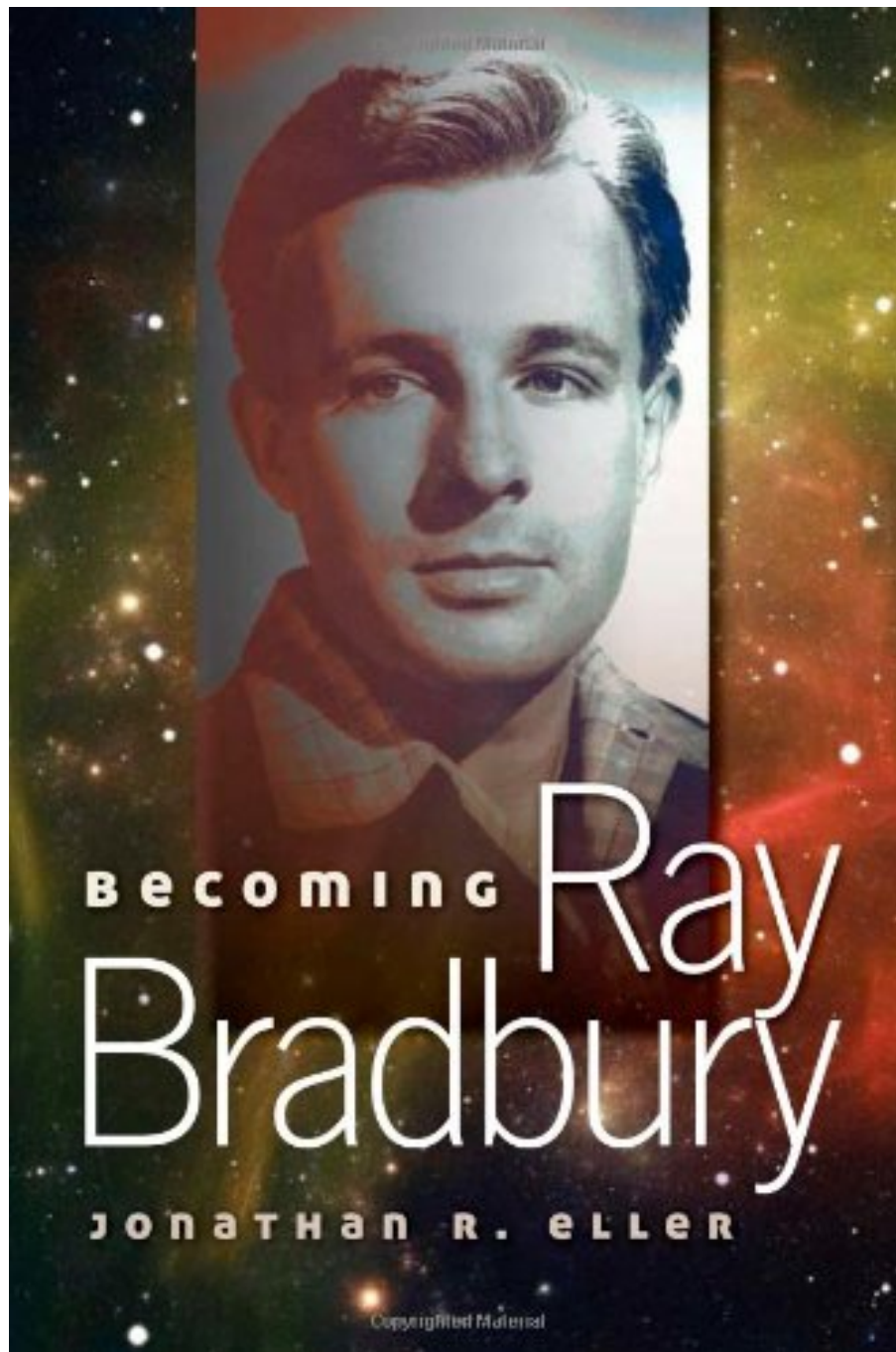


BECOMING RAY BRADBURY BY JONATHAN R. ELLER



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Review

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BECOMING RAY BRADBURY BY JONATHAN R. ELLER PDF

Becoming Ray Bradbury chronicles the making of an iconic American writer by exploring Ray Bradbury's childhood and early years of his long life in fiction, film, television, radio, and theater. Jonathan R. Eller measures the impact of the authors, artists, illustrators, and filmmakers who stimulated Bradbury's imagination throughout his first three decades. Unprecedented access to Bradbury's personal papers and other private collections provides insight into his emerging talent through his unpublished correspondence, his rare but often insightful notes on writing, and his interactions with those who mentored him during those early years.

Beginning with his childhood in Waukegan, Illinois, and Los Angeles, this biography follows Bradbury's development from avid reader to maturing author, making a living writing for pulp magazines. Eller illuminates the sources of Bradbury's growing interest in the human mind, the human condition, and the ambiguities of life and death--themes that became increasingly apparent in his early fiction. Bradbury's correspondence documents his frustrating encounters with the major trade publishing houses and his earliest unpublished reflections on the nature of authorship. Eller traces the sources of Bradbury's very conscious decisions, following the sudden success of *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man*, to voice controversial political statements in his fiction, and he highlights the private motivations behind the burst of creative energy that transformed his novella "The Fireman" into the classic novel *Fahrenheit 451*.

Becoming Ray Bradbury reveals Bradbury's emotional world as it matured through his explorations of cinema and art, his interactions with agents and editors, his reading discoveries, and the invaluable reading suggestions of older writers. These largely unexplored elements of his life pave the way to a deeper understanding of his more public achievements, providing a biography of the mind, the story of Bradbury's self-education and the emerging sense of authorship at the heart of his boundless creativity.

- Sales Rank: #1339902 in Books
- Published on: 2011-08-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.10" w x 6.13" l, 1.66 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 360 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

More and less than I bargained for.

By Strider4

I have always been a great fan of Ray Bradbury's work but this book, first, seems to be lost in the trees while ignoring the forest, so much detail that I had trouble following it....and second, does not give me much of a sense of Bradbury, the human being.

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Why Ray Bradbury is Important

By M. R. Hughes

This biography is the first in three volumes. It details Ray Bradbury's early life and who influenced and

mentored him, both in the science fiction and fantasy realm as well the literary, philosophical and psychological sources who shaped his thinking and aesthetics. As other reviews noted, Dr. Eller's biography bridges the scholarly insights and detailed information in one of the most readable books available. Where some scholars mire the reader down, this one does not. Dr. Eller understands that his audience is both scholars and fans and is able to address the needs and concerns of both without compromising the integrity of his work. For those interested, especially in the early shaping of Bradbury, Dr. Eller has some previously unpublished photographs of Bradbury in group shots with other early pioneers of the science fiction and fantasy, including one which Robert Heinlein.

For more on this particular work, see this review: [...]

And for more on Dr. Eller, you might want to visit the Center for Ray Bradbury studies' site: [...]

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Literary biography from an entertaining scholar

By Stephen Bridge

This is the first of three volumes of a "literary biography" of Bradbury, which will be an essential permanent text for future students of Bradbury and of the science fiction/fantasy field which Bradbury is (sort of) a part of. He never considered himself to be a science fiction writer at all. Eller makes a strong point that Bradbury was the first American writer to expand beyond the previous pulp fiction limitations placed on the early SF writers.

Eller's focus in this first volume is on Bradbury's sources and influences, along with his friendships with Ed Hamilton, Jack Williamson, Leigh Brackett, Henry Kuttner, and Catherine L. Moore, who were his early writing mentors. Since Eller has three volumes to work with (Volume 2 is coming out in August, 2014 and Volume 3 is underway), he can get into details about Bradbury's reading, education, and mentoring that Sam Weller did not have time for. (Sam Weller, the author of the also excellent *The Bradbury Chronicles*. On the other hand, Weller spent more time describing Bradbury's family and childhood in the Midwest.)

You might guess that a discussion of favorite authors and sources of inspiration would be dry, but Eller makes it fascinating. He has a lively writing style, and his own long friendship with Bradbury gives him plenty of entertaining stories and refreshing insight. We learn about his inspiration gained by reading well-known authors like Katherine Anne Porter, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and dozens of others. But I also learned about authors I had only vaguely known. One of the biggest influences on *Fahrenheit 451* was the post-WWII novel, *Darkness at Noon* by Arthur Koestler. Another major influence was Ayn Rand's first giant novel, *The Fountainhead,* where Bradbury learned to write what he wanted and not to take societal restrictions into account. (Many of his best stories were not published for decades, because they dealt with questions of racism, censorship, and morality which the magazines of the time would not touch.)

I'm really looking forward to Volume 2.

See all 5 customer reviews...

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