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Becoming Ray Bradbury by Jonathan Eller, and: *Ray Bradbury Unbound* by Jonathan Eller (review)

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Madison contends that through politics Indiana created a distinctive identity based in part of a balanced two-party system that fostered compromise and moderation. With strong Christian beliefs Hoosiers sought to ensure that church and family, not government, would deal with moral issues which, of course, despite their wishes affected politics, including the prohibition of alcohol sales at grocery stores on Sundays. Madison notes that while Indiana might be considered politically liberal in some areas, such as the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1971, it also maintains a conservative low tax mentality that accepts inadequate aid for education and prefers limited social services. Indiana's struggle to deal with same sex marriage, charter schools, and the ultraconservative religious right based on the Tea Party agenda transcend state borders.

This well-illustrated, clearly written, and suggestive history challenges the reader to delve more deeply into a host of issues lightly discussed and which need further research. Clearly, *Hoosiers* is now the basic text for any course on the history of Indiana. But, it can be more than a standalone state history. Anyone teaching a course on the history of the Midwest would do well to use this book as an anchor. So broad is the topical coverage that it can easily link to the historical development of the region writ large.

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Jonathan Eller, *Becoming Ray Bradbury*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011. 360 pp. \$34.95

Jonathan Eller, *Ray Bradbury Unbound*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014. 352 pp. \$34.95.

The title of Jonathan Eller's first volume of his extensive biographical treatment of Ray Bradbury is well chosen because Eller carefully documents Bradbury's struggle to affirm his own identity as a writer. The book covers Bradbury's childhood in the American Midwest (Waukegan, Illinois), his attempts to publish his stories, his marriage to his wife Maggie, and his emergence as a mainstream author in the early 1950s. Eller also provides a wealth of background information to enable the reader to understand Bradbury's struggles as a fledgling writer. Of special interest is the rich

and rewarding relationships Bradbury developed with friends to whom he turned for advice and help with his stories. One special person was Don Congdon, a literary agent who encouraged Bradbury and helped him break free of the limitations of a reputation gained through publishing in pulp and genre magazines. His fellow midwesterners August Derleth and Robert Bloch also aided Bradbury with his early writing. Eller reveals that he was influenced by writers such as Bertrand Russell, Lewis Mumford, and the Nebraskan Loren Eiseley and books such as Philip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers*. Bradbury's famous *Fahrenheit 451* was influenced by Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (not, as it would seem, by Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*). Bradbury's wife Maggie also made suggestions to expand his reading. All of this assistance was crucial because Bradbury did not attend college, but educated himself through a program of wide reading in public libraries.

Bradbury's books *Dark Carnival*, *The Martian Chronicles*, and *Golden Apples of the Sun* brought Bradbury into the mainstream of American writers in the early 1950s and his fame grew. Christopher Isherwood was also instrumental in making Bradbury well known in England. Beyond books, Bradbury made a name for himself in radio and early television and was drawn to movies as an outlet for his work. Since Bradbury had been labeled as a writer of science fiction, detective fiction, and horror fantasy, all considered minor genres, Don Congdon and others urged him to connect with the "modernity" of the 1950s. Since modernity at that time meant Realism, a genre that did not appeal to Bradbury, the young writer struggled.

As a result of these conditions, according to Eller, Bradbury took a different path. First, he accepted himself as a fantasist, and he used science fiction as a loose framework for some of his stories. Next, he sought to reaffirm the child's sense of wonder and fascination for the mysterious: the fear of death and the terror of the darkness that he had first experienced in a ravine near his home in Waukegan, Illinois, and the feeling of isolation that is an essential truth of the human condition. To this mixture, Bradbury added two potent problems of modernity: the atomic bomb and the growing threat of totalitarianism. In defining himself as a fantasist, Bradbury affirmed his Romantic temperament and, symbolically, his *locus amoenus* in Waukegan, Illinois. Although Bradbury's characters traveled around the world and beyond, the sense of his midwestern home was always a driving force in his writing.

The second volume of Eller's biography begins with a lengthy, detailed account of what Bradbury frequently called the turning point in his career:

the opportunity to work for the famous screenwriter and film director John Huston by writing the film script for *Moby Dick*. Bradbury idolized Huston and deliberately refused to meet the great film director until he had published a significant body of work. Huston selected Bradbury because of Ray's story "The Fog Horn," which had appeared earlier in the *Saturday Evening Post* under the title "The Beast from 40,000 Fathoms." To work on the film, Bradbury moved his family to Ireland, a move that opened up the exciting experience of travel. Bradbury, however, paid a high psychological price for his work with the demanding Huston.

After completing the script for *Moby Dick*, the Bradbury family visited Italy, where Ray formed a friendship with Bernard Berenson, the famous art historian and scholar. Berenson inspired Bradbury to explore the rich world of art. After leaving Italy, the Bradburys visited France, and Ray fell in love with that country. Bradbury was becoming "unbound," free to explore other interests such as playwriting, lecturing, editing, as well as beginning to offer his thoughts on creativity in interviews and articles about writing. He spent a summer in England, working with Sir Carol Reed to convert the story "And the Rock Cried Out" into a play. Also, Bradbury's interest in films enabled him to meet Charles Laughton and his wife Elsa Lanchester.

By the mid-1950s Don Congdon and Walter Bradbury (no relation to Ray) were concerned that Bradbury had not published many short stories and were also urging him to complete the "Illinois novel" which Bradbury had promised to write back in the late 1940s. Bradbury procrastinated and struggled with this project, but the Illinois-based novel was finally published in 1957 under the title *Dandelion Wine*. The novel was not well received in England because of what Eller calls a disdain for "American nostalgia," and Bradbury was generally disappointed with the critical reaction from abroad. But Bradbury was undeterred. In the 1960s, he published the major novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, set in Greentown, Illinois, which was Bradbury's name for his hometown of Waukegan. Many of Bradbury's other stories similarly reference Illinois and confirm Bradbury's continued identification with the American Midwest.

During the 1960s, Bradbury's literary success gave him a large platform and he became a nationally known speaker and a spokesman and popularizer of the space race, which culminated in the Moon Landing in 1969. The last part of *Bradbury Unbound* explains Bradbury's experiences with televising his stories and his work with Alfred Hitchcock and Rod Serling. It also explains Bradbury's attempt to transform *The Martian Chronicles* into a film.

Eller's notes at the end of both books reveal that his study is based on an access to a wide body of knowledge about Bradbury: interviews, letters, travels, and influences. No brief review could possibly do justice to Eller's excellence in examining with clarity, insight, and authority the growth of Bradbury from a struggling young writer to a respected and loved mainstream writer in the 1970s. Given Eller's access to so much rich material, a reader might ask hopefully, "Will there soon be a third volume?"

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Larry Haeg, *Harriman vs. Hill: Wall Street's Great Railroad War*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 384 pp. \$29.95.

Larry Haeg's entertaining and well written *Harriman vs. Hill: Wall Street's Great Railroad War* could alternately be titled *Capitalists vs. Regulators*. Haeg, a former executive vice president for corporate communication at Wells Fargo & Company, focuses on the "accidental" 1901 corner of Northern Pacific Railroad stock by brokers acting on behalf of James J. Hill and J. P. Morgan for the Great Northern Railroad and those acting on behalf of Edward H. Harriman and Jacob Schiff for the Union Pacific. The corner and unprecedented New York Stock Exchange panic that followed might have led to a broader national and international financial crisis, Haeg argues, if not for Morgan and Schiff's timely decision to call a truce and calm the markets by making credit available to overextended brokerage houses and delaying required delivery of stock certificates from speculators who had shorted "Nipper" stock in the run-up to the corner. Haeg views the amicable resolution of the crisis as an illustration of free market forces at work and argues that the financial titans' ability to act decisively in the best interest of both investors and the economy as a whole, without interference from federal or state officials, is one of the important lessons to draw from the event. Furthermore, he sees the 1904 breakup of Northern Securities, the trust subsequently created by the warring parties to jointly manage their combined shares of the Northern Pacific, Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and Great Northern Railroads, as a miscarriage of justice brought on by the opportunistic, populist demagoguery of President Theodore Roosevelt and his political allies. *Harriman vs. Hill* highlights the precariousness of