
*Becoming Bucky Fuller* is an engaging look at the persona and development of the genius commonly known as Bucky Fuller. Loretta Lorance breaks new ground in her insightful study of Richard Buckminster Fuller's early years. At the heart of Lorance’s work is a meticulous reading of the Fuller archives to determine how he came to envision the Dymaxion House, his first independent project. Much has been written by and about Bucky Fuller. Lorance’s work differs from previous writings, in her use of archival material to test her contention that later in life Fuller carefully constructed an account of how he wished to be perceived by the public. Lorance uses the archives to elaborate on Fuller’s life and ambitions, beginning with his work on the development and marketing of a fibrous building block system, called the Stockade Building System. While Fuller wrote about the negative lessons learned from working at Stockade, Lorance states: “The other side of the story consists of positive lessons. Stockade taught him how to maneuver through the regulations and obstructions of the construction industry” (p. 63). The author offers archival evidence here and elsewhere that contradicts Fuller’s later reflections on his life.

After exploring the genesis of the Fuller Houses, Lorance then focuses on the Dymaxion House. Fuller became more philosophical in his approach to advertising the project, stressing the benefits of the house in terms of the health and welfare of the owners as well as the economic advantages. Lorance reveals how Fuller’s rhetoric changes over time to include more references to God and a better, more meaningful life and demonstrates “the Dymaxion House was not simply about creating a new image for the private house; it was also about creating a new approach to living with technology” (p. 175).

Fuller was never able to manufacture his Dymaxion House, but in doing so, he succeeded in creating the persona of Bucky Fuller, the visionary: the man who sought to bring the entire human race into contact with technology as a way of ending war, overpopulation, hunger, and disease.

*Becoming Bucky Fuller* is an important addition to the writings about Fuller, but it deserves noting that this book presumes a basic knowledge of the man, his ideology, projects, and completed works. Only a brief introduction to Fuller and his life story is included in the text. Lorance presents a strong case for her contention regarding his constructed persona, but the text is quite dense, populated with long quotes, notes, and asides. At times, her transitions seem too abrupt. But as the work progresses, Lorance includes clear illustrations which support the text. The use of color reproductions is targeted and adds value for the dollar. Certainly this book should be in academic libraries and those public libraries with advanced collections in the arts and technology.

Bucky Fuller is again being studied by a new generation. Loretta Lorance’s book will help them to understand the man behind the myth.

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