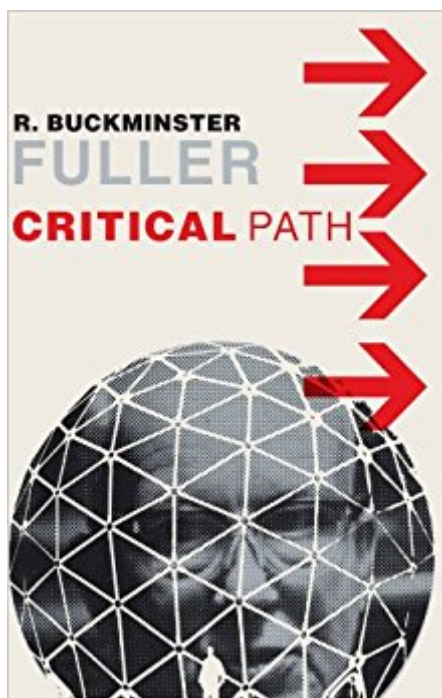


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Critical Path



Synopsis

R. Buckminster Fuller is regarded as one of the most important figures of the 20th century, renowned for his achievements as an inventor, designer, architect, philosopher, mathematician, and dogged individualist. Perhaps best remembered for the Geodesic Dome and the term "Spaceship Earth," his work and his writings have had a profound impact on modern life and thought. Critical Path is Fuller's master work--the summing up of a lifetime's thought and concern--as urgent and relevant as it was upon its first publication in 1981. Critical Path details how humanity found itself in its current situation--at the limits of the planet's natural resources and facing political, economic, environmental, and ethical crises. The crowning achievement of an extraordinary career, Critical Path offers the reader the excitement of understanding the essential dilemmas of our time and how responsible citizens can rise to meet this ultimate challenge to our future.

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Customer Reviews

“Critical Path is a state-of-the-art summary of human evolution.”
Marilyn Ferguson, author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*

R. Buckminster Fuller received 47 honorary degrees, held twenty-eight patents, was awarded the Medal of Freedom, and was the author of twenty nine books. He died in 1983.

This was my first encounter with the renowned R. Buckminster Fuller, and during the course of the book, with its odd abstract coinages and grand schemes, I frequently found myself debating the

man's sanity. Sometimes he appears to be raving like a mad man, other times he is blindingly brilliant. I emerged with the belief that RBF was indeed sane, an archetypal genius engineer in the tradition of Archimedes and Da Vinci, and an inspiring, visionary character to boot. He was an odd duck, sure, but not a quack. RBF implicitly warns you in the beginning of *Critical Path* that he's a little different. He thanks his friend e.e. cummings for reminding him that to "be nobody-but-yourself--in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else--means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight." To his credit, RBF committed fully to discovering his original self and offering it wholly to the world. This actualization of individual potential should be what education facilitates for everyone; this should be what a human life is all about, and in this sense, Fuller's life is a model human life. While the content of *Critical Path* is not always compelling or even accessible, the reader always senses the presence of a grand, visionary mind grappling with the biggest human questions: Who are we? Why are we here? What should we do? RBF is admirably committed to serving humanity on a global scale and solving our significant social, political, economic, and environmental crises. He demonstrates that, contrary to popular opinion, we can all thrive. He exposes how selfishness and scarcity-thinking contribute to a massively inefficient economy and how, by conceiving of the world as one, we can easily provide for all humanity and take care of the environment. He proposes a logical organization of all world resources with a method he calls the "world game"--using a computer to keep records and make intelligent, need-based allocations. He calls for the elimination of nations in favor of a single government that operates in the interests of the entire planet. In a nutshell, Fuller devised detailed plans for making the planet work for all humanity. It was inspiring to read how bold, independent imagination, when taken seriously, can transform the world. Fuller's inventions traveled far. Yet, it's tragic to recognize that, while Fuller and others like him have the vision and techniques to create an Earthly paradise, the power elite lack the will. We still have a long way to go.

Permit me to use this opportunity to lament the death of Prof. Fuller. To my knowledge, as of a couple of years ago, I was the last student of the last faculty member to have served in the same college (of engineering) at the same time as Prof. Fuller. In this sense, I regard myself as the last of the Fuller students. It seems that Prof. Fuller is truly dead, for all that university does now for Prof. Fuller is lend Prof. Fuller's name to a group of picnic tables, the purest insult if ever there were any. Perhaps the new engineering dean will fix that. But what I have done, so, too, must you. Read this book and add your own table of contents in the front pages to help you easily refer to Prof. Fuller's amazing observations as you continue to reflect for months and years after reading. And when you

learn of a professor that is teaching similar philosophies, but not using Prof. Fuller's works, then send that person a small case of a good handful of copies of this book. This is the best book I know; however, humanity needs something better. Too bad there is nothing better, and too bad Prof. Fuller is dead.

This book always blows my mind. It's like seeing into the thoughts of a world mover. Check it out. The man certainly fell into the category of intuitive thinker, and his intuitions were mindblowingly accurate in a lot of respects. The same way his Buckyspheres unknowingly complimented the complex nanostructures of fullerenes based off of candle soot structures, the connections in this collection of essays come together to reveal what sometimes seems so complex with transitions in subject so quick, its hard to differentiate from the super associative ramblings of a schizophrenic, and yet, this was one of the most influential men of the 21st century, the second president of Mensa until his death. This book is also good to get a glimpse of what the scientific community used to be, before the streamlining of a post dot com/supercollider media image. This is the era mythified and laughed at in Johnny Quest and later Venture Brothers, one still full of hope and dreams.

The mind of Buckminster Fuller was a wondrous place of engagement with reality.. Due to such a small deviation as poor eyesight, his endeavors to perceive and understand the surrounding universe went different directions from the majority. While much of his descriptive language is somewhat difficult to grasp at first, it is all exactly correct in its accuracy and importance. The most important ideas grasped by this man have to do with the level of life support and enhancement available. Anyone who can conceive ways to let "all world-around humanity exist at a higher level than any individual in the past has ever known" had no trouble leading me into a paradigm that promotes "less killingry, more livingry". Anyone who considers himself educated and engaged and who has not read as much as possible of Fullers' work is deluding himself about the quality of his "education". These are real ideas applicable to present problems as well as brilliant long term solutions to upcoming events. His extensive patented approaches to problems aimed to display solutions that would have expired patents by the time demand for the solution occurs. His development of "World Game" where the winners devise the most effective means of distributing global resources to the best advantage of the entire population needs to be promoted extensively as a useful and enlightening alternative to video game uselessness and violence.

I love reading Fuller, and this is a good sort of summation of his way of looking at the world. It's

more comprehensive than the Operator's Manual for the Spaceship Earth and less dense than Synergetics. A good middle place to get a view of his scope of thinking.

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