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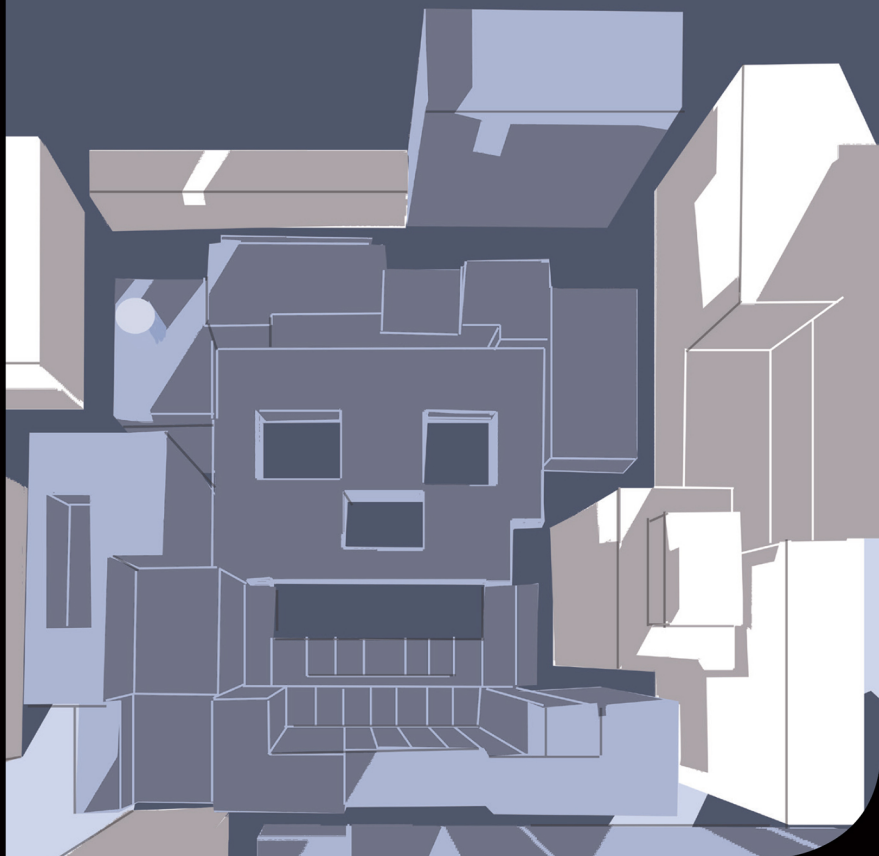


Library

A MACAT ANALYSIS

JANE JACOBS'S

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES





An Analysis of

Jane Jacobs's

**The Death and Life of
Great American Cities**

Martin Fuller
with
Ryan Moore



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THE MACAT LIBRARY

The Macat Library is a series of unique academic explorations of seminal works in the humanities and social sciences – books and papers that have had a significant and widely recognised impact on their disciplines. It has been created to serve as much more than just a summary of what lies between the covers of a great book. It illuminates and explores the influences on, ideas of, and impact of that book. Our goal is to offer a learning resource that encourages critical thinking and fosters a better, deeper understanding of important ideas.

Each publication is divided into three Sections: Influences, Ideas, and Impact. Each Section has four Modules. These explore every important facet of the work, and the responses to it.

This Section-Module structure makes a Macat Library book easy to use, but it has another important feature. Because each Macat book is written to the same format, it is possible (and encouraged!) to cross-reference multiple Macat books along the same lines of inquiry or research. This allows the reader to open up interesting interdisciplinary pathways.

To further aid your reading, lists of glossary terms and people mentioned are included at the end of this book (these are indicated by an asterisk [*] throughout) – as well as a list of works cited.

Macat has worked with the University of Cambridge to identify the elements of critical thinking and understand the ways in which six different skills combine to enable effective thinking.

Three allow us to fully understand a problem; three more give us the tools to solve it. Together, these six skills make up the

PACIER model of critical thinking. They are:

ANALYSIS – understanding how an argument is built

EVALUATION – exploring the strengths and weaknesses of an argument

INTERPRETATION – understanding issues of meaning

CREATIVE THINKING – coming up with new ideas and fresh connections

PROBLEM-SOLVING – producing strong solutions

REASONING – creating strong arguments

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CRITICAL THINKING AND *THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES*

Primary critical thinking skill: EVALUATION

Secondary critical thinking skill: REASONING

Despite having no formal training in urban planning, Jane Jacobs deftly explores the strengths and weaknesses of policy arguments put forward by American urban planners in the era after World War II. They believed that the efficient movement of cars was of more value in the development of US cities than the everyday lives of the people living there. By carefully examining their relevance in her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs dismantles these arguments by highlighting their shortsightedness. She evaluates the information to hand and comes to a very different conclusion, that urban planners ruin great cities, because they don't understand that it is a city's social interaction that makes it great. Proposals and policies that are drawn from planning theory do not consider the social dynamics of city life. They are in thrall to futuristic fantasies of a modern way of living that bears no relation to reality, or to the desires of real people living in real spaces. Professionals lobby for separation and standardization, splitting commercial, residential, industrial, and cultural spaces. But a truly visionary approach to urban planning should incorporate spaces with mixed uses, together with short, walkable blocks, large concentrations of people, and a mix of new and old buildings. This creates true urban vitality.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE ORIGINAL WORK

American author, journalist, and activist **Jane Jacobs** was born Jane Butzner in 1916 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She moved to New York City in 1934, where she became a journalist, writing for magazines including *Architectural Forum* and *Fortune*. As a resident of Lower Manhattan's Greenwich Village, she joined a grassroots movement in the late 1950s to save her neighborhood from its planned destruction to make way for new expressways. Jacobs expressed her opposition to dominant yet ill-conceived ideas of city planning and policy in her 1961 work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Many urban planners have since adopted its ideas to make cities more diverse, walkable, and densely concentrated. Jacobs died in 2006 at the age of 89.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF THE ANALYSIS

Dr Martin Fuller holds a PhD in sociology from the University of Cambridge, focusing on the sociology of art in New York and Berlin. He is currently a researcher at the Technische Universität, Berlin.

Dr Ryan Moore holds PhDs in sociology and cultural analysis from the University of California, San Diego. He has taught at universities across America and is the author of *Sells Like Teen Spirit: Music, Youth Culture, and Social Crisis* (New York: NYU Press, 2009).

ABOUT MACAT

GREAT WORKS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Macat is focused on making the ideas of the world's great thinkers accessible and comprehensible to everybody, everywhere, in ways that promote the development of enhanced critical thinking skills.

It works with leading academics from the world's top universities to produce new analyses that focus on the ideas and the impact of the most influential works ever written across a wide variety of academic disciplines. Each of the works that sit at the heart of its growing library is an enduring example of great thinking. But by setting them in context – and looking at the influences that shaped their authors, as well as the responses they provoked – Macat encourages readers to look at these classics and game-changers with fresh eyes. Readers learn to think, engage and challenge their ideas, rather than simply accepting them.

‘Macat offers an amazing first-of-its-kind tool for interdisciplinary learning and research. Its focus on works that transformed their disciplines and its rigorous approach, drawing on the world’s leading experts and educational institutions, opens up a world-class education to anyone.’

Andreas Schleicher

**Director for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development**

‘Macat is taking on some of the major challenges in university education ... They have drawn together a strong team of active academics who are producing teaching materials that are novel in the breadth of their approach.’

Prof Lord Broers,

former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge

‘The Macat vision is exceptionally exciting. It focuses upon new modes of learning which analyse and explain seminal texts which have profoundly influenced world thinking and so social and economic development. It promotes the kind of critical thinking which is essential for any society and economy.

‘This is the learning of the future.’

Rt Hon Charles Clarke, former UK Secretary of State for Education

‘The Macat analyses provide immediate access to the critical conversation surrounding the books that have shaped their respective discipline, which will make them an invaluable resource to all of those, students and teachers, working in the field.’

Professor William Tronzo, University of California at San Diego



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WAYS IN TO THE TEXT

KEY POINTS

- Jane Jacobs (1916–2006) was a US journalist who criticized urban renewal*—the policy of reconstructing cities, frequently by demolishing neighborhoods for the construction of automotive highways—and postwar city planning.
- *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* exposed the failures of urban planning* (the process of designing cities with concerns for infrastructure, transportation, communications, and public welfare).
- Jacobs presented an alternative method for understanding cities based on the firsthand observation of social interaction. She proposed ways to make cities more diverse, walkable, and densely concentrated.

Who Was Jane Jacobs?

Jane Jacobs, the author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), was born in 1916 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She moved to New York City in 1934 to become a journalist, writing for the journal *Architectural Forum** and other magazines. In the late 1950s, Jacobs helped lead a movement to save Lower Manhattan—the southern part of New York City’s largest island, with neighborhoods such as East Village and Chinatown, as well as the World Trade Center—from