

## **Jane Jacobs: A Public Celebration – June 28, 2006**

### **List of speakers:**

- Roberta Brandes Gratz, host, co-founder, The Center For the Living City at Purchase College
- Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
- State Senator Tom Duane
- Assemblymember Deborah Glick
- City Councilmember Rosie Mendez
- Robert Tierney, Chair, LPC, reading mayoral proclamation for Jane Jacobs Day
- Andrew Berman, co sponsor, exec dir, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Pres'n
- Ned Jacobs, Jane's son
- Paul Goldberger, columnist, The New Yorker Magazine
- Ron Shiffman, The Center For the Living City Board member, Director Emeritus, Pratt Center for Community and Environmental Development
- Sandy Ikeda, Economics Prof, Purchase College
- Erik Wensberg, longtime Greenwich Village ally of Jacobs, founding member Committee to Save the West Village, journalist, teacher
- Eliza Nichols, representing Village Voice days, daughter of Mary Nichols
- Hillary Brown, environmentalist and architect
- Elizabeth Yeampierre, attorney, Executive Director, UPROSE, oldest Latino community-based organization in Brooklyn
- May Shamis Erouart, 15-year-old granddaughter of Mary Nichols

### **Introduction and Welcome, Roberta Brandes Gratz**

Welcome on behalf of the Center for the Living City at Purchase College and our co-hosts, the NYC Parks Dept and the Greenwich Village Historical Society. The Parks Dept has done an amazing job making this event possible.

A word about the Center for the Living City at Purchase College which most of you had not heard about until today. The Center was formally established this past year after several years of conversations and collaboration with Jane Jacobs. Inspired by her work and committed to build upon it, the Center will develop symposia, training programs, fellowships, internships, workshops, research and publications, all of which approach city building issues using collaborative, participatory and transdisciplinary processes.

Jacobs' thought was as complex and multidimensional as the issues she wrote about. Today's program reflects, in part, the diversity of her ideas and interests.

But first a short word about her. Jane Jacobs was not a lot of the things she's been credited with since her death but she was many things that have not been appropriately recognized.

First of all, Jane was never the go-to person for all design and planning decisions. She didn't want to be. Understanding about anything -- figuring out what should be done, coming up with solutions in any situation, she argued, comes only through direct observation and persistent inquiry. She reminded us that cities could only be fully understood with our eyes, feet, ears and noses – all of our senses and sensibilities. The opening page of “Death and and Life” notes: “The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities...”

She said in recent conversations that one should listen to the fears expressed by people when they testify at public hearings in opposition to big plans. One could learn that people are not against change per se but against overwhelming and inappropriate change, the kind of change that wipes out functional, viable places and threatens residents and livelihoods for illegitimate reasons. They oppose change in which they have no role shaping.

The process of inquiry she advocated may be her greatest legacy, particularly meaningful in our culture of immediacy with its expectation of quick answers, detailed plans, clear solutions, fashionable designs.

Jane Jacobs' fundamental precept was that everything should be connected, that whatever the place, the community, the suburb or the city, it should emerge holistically. Equally importantly, places should grow as needed through additions that don't overwhelm, insertions that relate to the context and scale that is more comfortable for the pedestrian, the transit user, not dependant on the car.

Jane's inclusive spirit emphasized the value of all participants and gave greater weight to the informed citizen than the credentialed expert. She described this once as “trusting the local” to prevent inauthentic incursions into our urban ecologies.

Two issues I feel compelled to address. They truly grate on me. First, a tendency exists today in some circles to pine for another Robert Moses who can get things done. To soften the horror of this idea, commentators will add that it should be a “gentler” Moses, a cross between Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs. Well, let the word go forth that this is the clearest definition of an Oxymoron ever to be spoken. Moses and Jacobs represent polar opposites of urban thought.

Second, Jane had no problem being referred to as a housewife. Her observations about her street and neighborhood were just the first step leading to her observations about all streets, neighborhoods and cities. But to those who would dismiss her as “just a housewife,” I point out that the view of the resident and observant homemaker is vital to understanding any place. But, additionally, here was a woman who was an economist, historian, environmentalist, humanist, and sociologist. She wrote a book in Socratic dialogue, read and quoted such esoteric journals as the Chemical and Engineering News, had her economic ideas referenced by a Nobel-prize

winning economist, studied the ancient world and read and quoted from a variety of classic books. If this is the definition of “just a housewife,” it is a standard to which we should all aspire. Watch out for such housewives.

Jane did not want blind followers or clones. She didn't want people doing things because she said so. She wanted people to observe first hand, question and discover for themselves and she relished lively discourse in which her ideas were sometimes challenged. She loathed theory, anything not rooted or tested against direct observation of what actually is. And she ranted against ideologues, always somewhat amused by people who assumed she was either a liberal or conservative because she could never be pigeon-holed.

None of the speakers we will now hear from are blind followers, clones or ideologues. In fact, some of them do their extraordinary work without ever first reading or knowing about Jacobs. But they reflect the ideas and values she wrote about and help give a fuller measure to the ideas that mattered most to Jane Jacobs.

*Robert Tierney, chairman of the Landmarks preservation Commission will read a proclamation from Mayor Michael Bloomberg*

**Whereas: Jane Jacobs chose to live in Greenwich Village, attracted to its vibrant streetlife, diverse population and mixed-use buildings. It was here that she observed the fundamental qualities of the street, the neighborhood and the larger city that she wrote about so profoundly.**

**Whereas: In 1934, Jacobs moved from Scranton, Pennsylvania to Brooklyn Heights to live with her sister and find a job. Every morning, she hopped on the subway to explore the city and arbitrarily chose a stop to get off at and look for work. She fell in love with the Village as soon as she emerged from the Christopher Street station, and it was there that she found a job, an apartment, and a new way life.**

**Whereas: Jane Jacobs wasn't the first or last person to draw inspiration from Greenwich Village, but no other writer had a more tangible impact on the neighborhood. The publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961 ultimately resulted in a dramatic and necessary realignment of priorities among both city planners as well as everyday citizens. Her vision of dynamic, dense, and diverse urban spaces forever altered the world's perspective of cities. But Jacobs was not only one of our brightest intellectuals, she was also a committed activist who inspired Americans to get involved in their communities. It is thanks to her leadership in the resistance to destructive development that SoHo became a model of urban rebirth, the West Village survives intact and we can gather today in beautiful Washington Square Park, which Jane Jacobs helped save.**

**Whereas: From Banana Kelly and the coalition of community groups along the Bronx River**

to Greg O'Connell's regenerated piers in Red Hook, the ideas of Jane Jacobs have been wholly incorporated into our vibrant residential and commercial neighborhoods. I am proud to join the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, and the Center for the Living City at Purchase College in celebrating the legacy of a remarkable New Yorker, whose fundamental principles remain the bedrock of authentic urbanism.

Now therefore, I, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York, in celebration of her contribution to New York City and all cities, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, June 28, 2006 in the City of New York as

**“Jane Jacobs Day”**

*And then, Andrew Berman, executive director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, will speak. The society is the co-sponsor of this celebration.*

**It’s an incredible honor to stand here today to celebrate the work of someone who so profoundly affected my own view of the world, as she did so many others.**

**As the executive Director of the GVSHP, it’s hard to know where to begin to pay tribute to someone we owe so much.**

**Were it not for Jane, there would likely be no Greenwich Village Historic District, that first-of-its-kind large-scale landmark district in NYC, that has kept Greenwich Village from becoming the Upper East Side, or so many other places that it could have become.**

**Were it not for Jane, Robert Moses’ Lower Manhattan expressway would have cut through much of SoHo and the South Village, replacing vibrant neighborhoods with a superhighway.**

**Were it not for Jane, most of Greenwich Village west of Hudson Street would have also been demolished, as part of a “slum clearance plan” by the City.**

**Were it not for Jane, there would be no West Village Houses, which for more than 30 years have provided affordable housing to hundreds of families. But unlike other housing developments at the time, these subscribed to the radical notion that they should actually relate to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood, that they should be unfancy and unpretentious, and that this was a good thing.**

**And of course, were it not for Jane, cars would still be running through Washington Square Park, right where we are now standing.**

**But perhaps even more important than these tangible aspects of Jane’s legacy are the**

intangible ones. Jane helped the world recognize that older, human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented cities are not only good, but preferable to new, pre-fabricated, car-oriented ones.

By describing the sidewalk ballet of her block, she showed us that random interactions with a diverse group of people on your street is a good thing, not a sign of blight to be corrected.

And Jane taught us that the future of our neighborhoods should not be left solely to city planners, real estate developers, and government officials. Instead, we, the residents and business owners, should ALL have a say in determining our community's future.

In some ways for me this last part of Jane's legacy is perhaps the most important. Because Jane not only accomplished so much in her 89 years, but she inspired others to do the same, and gave them the tools and the roadmap to do it.

She taught us to never give up. One of Jane's great unfulfilled goals was seeing the Greenwich Village waterfront preserved, which was left out of the Greenwich Village Historic District in 1969. We lost a lot of this area in the 43 years since Jane first wrote to the Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair urging him to include it in the Greenwich Village Historic District then under consideration.

But I am proud to say that inspired by Jane, we didn't give up. In the last 3 years community activism has helped get two new historic districts designated along the Greenwich Village waterfront, and just this May we finally got the City to extend the Greenwich Village Historic District several blocks to the west towards the waterfront. This will hopefully ensure that Greenwich Village will stay Greenwich Village, and not become Miami, as it had been looking like it would inevitably become.

But we are not stopping there. We are also fighting to save the South Village, the old Italian-immigrant section of Greenwich Village around Bleecker and Carmine, MacDougal and Sullivan Streets, which was left out of the Greenwich Village Historic District in 1969 because its working-class history and architecture were not considered worthy of preserving.

Like ours, communities throughout the City are working hard to ensure that the diversity, human scale and vibrant qualities that make them desirable and interesting places to live are preserved, and not lost due to shortsightedness, bad planning, or no planning at all.

I think that Jane would expect nothing less of any of us. And with her inspiration and the guidance she provided, I think we actually have a chance to succeed.

Thank you.

*Ned Jacobs inherited his mother's simultaneous ability to observe the small nuances and large fundamentals of civic life, to recognize what is going wrong and to engage in the public conversation about how to set things right. Sometimes that public conversation can be controversial. And son, like mother, has been willing to be arrested as part of his committed civic protest.*

*For Ned, that tradition started early right here in Washington Square Park. Even after the family moved to Toronto in 1968, a piece of Ned's heart stayed in Greenwich Village.*

**I am honored to be representing the Jacobs family in the neighborhood where I spent my first 18 years, in the park where I played as a child and hung out as a teenager. I want to thank Roberta Gratz and The Center for the Living City, the co-sponsors, and this roster of knowledgeable, thoughtful speakers for providing a wide-angle view of Jane's work and influence. I also feel emotionally overwhelmed, to see the faces of dear, long-time family friends in attendance!**

**In *Dark Age Ahead* Jane reminds us that "everything is connected to everything else." Vital neighborhoods allow for living cities, functioning economies and creative exchange between cultures and nations. There could be no more appropriate place to celebrate Jane than here -- not only because this was her chosen home and where she wrote her first two books -- but because these neighborhoods, and Washington Square in particular, have for many years succeeded in being truly local, and truly global -- simultaneously, and in so many ways.**

**Now, I gather there are currently some local differences of opinion regarding proposed renovations for the Square, which I won't wade into, not knowing the particulars; but it is wonderful to see that people still care passionately about this place -- and I am relieved that the controversy doesn't involve an expressway! As a general comment, though, I would say: folks, if it aint really broke -- don't try to fix it. *[I subsequently looked into the issue, and agree with the vast majority of Villagers and park users that the proposed changes would be excessive and disruptive. They would also diminish the park's utility, versatility and distinctive character -- qualities that make Washington Square one of the world's great public amenities].***

**The battle to save Washington Square began in 1952 when the local community, lead by two young mothers, Shirley Hayes and Edith Lyons, fearlessly took on the all-powerful Robert Moses and fought him to a standstill. Jane became involved four years later, and by the spring of '58, when I was seven, she would bring the three children to the Square on weekends to collect petitions demanding that the highway plan be canceled and the park permanently closed to traffic. This was during the beatnik era, and my brother and I were outfitted with little sandwich boards that proclaimed "Save the Square!" That always got a laugh because people knew that "squares" would never be an endangered species -- even in the Village.**

These were also the dying days of McCarthyism. People were afraid -- even in the Village -- to sign petitions for fear they'd get on some list that would cost them their careers. But I would go up to them and ask "Will you help save our park?" Their hearts would melt, and they would sign. Years later, Jane recalled that we children always collected the most signatures.

It really bothered Jane that she was often characterized as a "Jane of Ark," who rallied the troops and saved the Village from Moses and the developers. Her concern went beyond the fact that this myth distorted the truth; she thought it important that in a crisis people not look to messiahs, but that communities of people act as leaders by achieving consensus, combining their skills, gathering critical information and seizing opportunities as they serendipitously arise.

In 1968, my brother and I had three choices: go to Vietnam; go to prison; or go to Canada. It was a no-brainer, especially after my father, Bob, returned from a trip to Toronto and said: "There's a fine country up there -- I think we should go!" It was a decision none of us regretted.

But no sooner did we get settled than we learned that our new street was plunk in the path of an expressway! We joined forces with our new neighbors and contributed the experience gained from six years spent fighting the Lower Manhattan Expressway. I became the group minstrel, writing and performing protest songs, inspired by the ones I had learned as a child -- right over there at the fountain!

The people of Toronto won that battle, and many more. But you know, it's never-ending. For years I have lived in Vancouver, a city that said "no" to freeways in 1970. But now, a provincial government, whose transportation minister is a Robert Moses wanna-be, in cahoots with suburban land developers, construction firms and car dealers, are forcing a huge highway-building program on us. Like Jane, I have better things to do than fight expressways -- but knowing what I do about the consequences, I feel I have no choice but to do my best to defend my city. [*For more on this, visit [www.eagleridgebluffs.ca](http://www.eagleridgebluffs.ca); [www.livableregion.ca](http://www.livableregion.ca)].*

So in closing, I will remind you that Jane was above all else a realist. She understood early in life that Utopia is never an option. Throughout history, for all our struggles, humans have done well just to keep our heads above water. If we can manage that, then any genuine improvements we make along the way will help enable our descendants to keep afloat. When H.G. Wells first saw New York, he reportedly exclaimed: "What a fabulous ruins it will make!" He was right, of course. But let's not let it be ruined on our watch!

*Paul Goldberger really needs no introduction. Former architecture critic for the NY Times and current Skyline columnist for The New Yorker Magazine, Paul has shown in his writing a keen understanding of Jane Jacobs' precepts.*

There are three women who wrote books in the nineteen-sixties that changed the world: Betty Friedan, Rachel Carson, and Jane Jacobs. It is hard not to think of them together, not only because they were women of roughly similar age, but because each one of them was dismissed initially as something of a crackpot. Each broke radically, and courageously, with the established wisdom in her field. And each one of these three women turned out to be pretty much right, in the end.

Jane had the pleasure – or maybe the agony – of seeing the world come around to her way of thinking, and to see her words become gospel. She was smart enough not to be taken in by her status as a prophet; if there was ever anyone who knew better than to put too much trust in the adoration that surrounded her, it was Jane Jacobs. I think today it would be worth remembering that she was properly skeptical of all kinds of orthodoxies, including the one that grew up around her and her writings.

She knew better than to think the whole world could, or should, be cast in the mode of Greenwich Village. Much as she wisely saw in the blocks surrounding us here a model of the ideal urban community, her real lesson wasn't that everything could, or should, look like the Village – it was that we needed to look carefully at the reality of the city and learn from it. Of all the many memorable lines in “Death and Life of Great American Cities,” for me one of the most important of all was Jane's explanation of why she included no photographs: “The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking, you might as well also listen, linger, and think about what you see.” That line is perfect Jane Jacobs – a blunt, no-nonsense, and ever-so-slightly prim and proper call to the passions of real life.

Since Jane's death, I have worried not, as some critics have, about the fact that her writings did not give us clear direction about how to deal with certain kinds of urban form that was not so evident forty years ago, like the enormous power of twentieth-century cities like Los Angeles, since if we follow her dictum, and look at cities as they are and learn from how they work, we will figure out Houston as much as Toronto. I am concerned, rather, with a by-product of the success of her message, with what happens when radical ideas become the common wisdom. Today, the problem is not with people who disagree with Jane, but with people who claim to agree with her and then proceed to use, or abuse, her ideas for purposes deeply inconsistent with her values.

Who could have imagined, back in the nineteen-sixties, that shopping mall developers would start putting up pseudo-villages with pseudo streets, proclaiming them like real cities, as if these places were the natural outgrowth of Jane Jacobs' ideas? Who could have imagined that “mixed-use” would become not a sharp-eyed writer's observation of the what underlies the strength of an organic urban fabric, but a developer's mantra? Who could have envisioned the day when politicians and developers trying to sell New York on a gigantic football stadium beside the Hudson River would propose surrounding it with shops and cafes so that they could promote it as an asset to the city's street life? When that happened – when I heard people trying to sell the stadium as enriching street life – I knew the age of Jane Jacobs had

entered a new phase, the phase that comes when radical ideas move into the mainstream, and can be corrupted by those who claim to follow them. So if there is any lesson that matters right now, any way to follow Jane Jacobs, it is not to think of her as showing us a physical model for cities that we need to copy, but rather to think of her as providing a model for skepticism, a model for trusting our eyes and our common sense more than the common wisdom.

Today, embracing her skepticism may bring us to a lot of surprising places – I don't know. I only know that it is the right thing, since the city is not the same as it was in the years when Jane first began to observe it. In some ways it has become too big, and too gentrified, to continue to operate as Jane Jacobs wanted it to. In Jane's day, a fairly natural process gave us the city we love – the old, neighborhood-rich, pedestrian-oriented, exquisitely balanced New York – and Jane wisely saw that planning was not able to do much except upset this natural equilibrium. Today, however, the natural order of things yields something very different from the vibrant, street-oriented and highly diverse world Jacobs taught us to admire. The natural process of growth now gives us sprawl, it gives us gigantism, it gives us economic segregation and it gives us homogeneous, dreary design. In Jacobs' day, the intervention into organic urban growth was symbolized by Robert Moses. Today, the forces trying to intervene are the forces set in motion by Jane Jacobs herself. Her legacy is always to represent, one way or another, radical intervention.

*Ron Shiffman has probably done more than anyone else to implement the ideas of Jane Jacobs nationwide and in far away places, like South Africa, Russia, Germany and India. Ron uniquely combines the skills of the intuitionist and the professional in understanding the complex forces of our cities. Through his 40 years of work as director of the Pratt Center for Planning and Environment at Pratt Institute, Ron has been one of the fathers of the community development movement in this country.*

*Like Jane, Ron seeks to empower those who are voiceless in the halls of government, as they struggle to preserve, enhance and appropriately grow their communities.*

## **Celebrating the Life of Jane Jacobs**

**Washington Square Park**

**June 28, 2006**

**Comments by**

**Ron Shiffman, FAICP, Hon. AIA**

**Director Emeritus,**

**Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development**

**Forty-Five Years ago Jane Jacobs challenged the way professionals –professional planners, developers, architects, and politicians viewed our urban neighborhoods. The impact of that challenge reverberated through every major metropolis of this nation and has influenced**

planning and development decisions and action in every major city throughout the world. A little over 42 years ago Jane crossed the Brooklyn Bridge to leave her “west village neighborhood” where she successfully thwarted the building of the Lower Manhattan expressway and a number of other ill-conceived urban renewal efforts, to help rally the residents of a Brooklyn neighborhood against a Pratt Planning Department inspired and supported downtown renewal effort. Ironically, the defeat of that plan led to the creation of an entity originally organized to advocate for the urban renewal policies of the day. That entity, the Pratt Center for Community and Environmental Development, morphed into what today is the largest and oldest public interest, community-based planning, design and development center committed to the principles that Jane so clearly outlined. I had the unique opportunity to have led the Pratt Center for 40 years. But more important than the creation and evolution of the center was the fact that her visit catalyzed the resurgence of that neighborhood – Boerum Hill -- and in turn countless other neighborhoods in Brooklyn, in New York and other cities across the nation.

Jane’s gift was in listening and observing and communicating to others what she learned from those she met. She truly respected people whose collective experiences were the source of her knowledge. She not only learned about and developed approaches to planning and development but at an early point in time understood the importance of local economies – in ways that many still do not grasp. She was an environmentalist before environmental issues were on many of our radar screens, She was a manufacturing advocate, recognizing the need for neighborhoods to produce as well as to consume while others were pursuing policies to hasten the exodus of manufacturing from our cities. She understood the need for mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhoods while many pursued policies of segregation of uses and, by implication, the segregation of incomes and the emergence and reinforcement of patterns environmental racism. She understood the concept of density. Densities that were too low and could not support the vitality necessary for a neighborhood and densities that were too high and overwhelmed the social, cultural, and physical infrastructure of a neighborhood.

Jane also was not one who was easily intimidated and she never shied away from a fight. She proved that people acting collectively can defeat the “nightmare visions” of the powerful. That no deal is a done deal until it is built and that the arrogance of power is not a substitute for a well thought out participatory planning effort. She opposed the use of eminent domain for private gain and I believe would be in the vanguard of those opposed to the unfettered use of that power in Manhattanville, where Columbia University plans to expand its hegemony over the entire northern tip of Manhattan, or in Brooklyn, where Forest City Ratner is proposing to alter Brooklyn’s genetic footprint and impose a parade of out of scale, high rise buildings planted on a series of super blocks – a concept that was proven unworkable in the late 60’s.

Today we celebrate Jane’s legacy and Jane’s life. I believe that the best way to do that is to interpret the lessons we have learned from her and support those processes that reinforce

**neighborhoods, that respect the environment and respect our diversity. At the same time we must also summon the energy to mobilize and defeat those who on the misguided premise of “visionary design” and alleged progress promote the kind of development that hasten the “Dark Age Ahead” that Jane so clearly warned us of.**

**Thank You Jane.**

*Jane Jacobs’ economics writing may be her most important and least well known. She is central to a college course taught by Sandy Ikeda, Associate Professor of Economics at Purchase College SUNY. In his course, “Cities, Culture & Economy,” he uses Jacobs writings as a starting point to explain how the conditions that promote creativity and discovery in culture and commerce have their origins in the city.*

**It’s an honor to be asked to talk about the significance Jane Jacobs’s work to economics. When I had the good fortune to meet her a couple of years ago, she said that she considered her main intellectual contribution was to economics.**

**(I recently learned that in 1969 she published an article in the American Economic Review, the economics profession’s premier journal.)**

**In fact, she defined a city (in *The Economy of Cities*) as – “a settlement that consistently generates its economic growth from its own local economy” – which is essentially an economic definition. She taught us that the city is a natural unit of economic analysis.**

**Now, at that meeting she also said, somewhat playfully but I think seriously, that her most important discovery was that of the “fractal.”**

**“Fractal” is a term (coined by the mathematician, Benoit Mandelbrot, in 1975) that became popular in the 1990s in connection with the theory of chaos. In simple terms, a fractal is something that looks the same at all scales of magnitude.**

**Neighborhood to city district, city district to the city, the city to the inter-urban global economy – one emerges from the other, and at each level there is a high degree of intricacy and a complexity of social relations – an unseen, dynamic social infrastructure that makes production and consumption...interesting.**

**For Jacobs, this is what social engineers with their top-down perspective fail to see. Cities are complex, spontaneous orders, not machines for living (and dying) that can be rubbed out and reconstructed at will.**

**For Jacobs the starting point of this social fractal is the perspective of the living, breathing individual. Indeed, I think Jacobs’s essential humanity is reflected in her focus on the**

experiences of the “ordinary person on the street.”

Informal, personal inter-actions in public space are the foundation for complex networks of trust and social norms. In *Death and Life* Jacobs coined the term "social capital" to refer to these, and social capital is now a very popular and important concept in sociology and economics.

She argued that people attract people, who collectively and informally monitor the local social norms that give rise to the perception of safety and of trust. Without safety and trust, there is no high population density, no great diversity of skills and personal tastes, and therefore no interesting dynamic processes.

I express this idea of hers with what I call the “four Ds”

Density + Diversity à Development and Discovery

Long ago, mainstream economics stopped thinking about markets as urban, and replaced it with what Jacobs called the "plantation model," in which diversity of inputs and outputs and the uncertainties of time were replaced with simple production functions in a world where time doesn't matter and preferences don't change.

The emphasis switched from diversity and complexity to homogeneity and simplicity, from dynamics to statics, and from creativity to efficiency.

Mainstream economics is fixated on this notion of “efficiency,” where today is basically the same as yesterday and tomorrow the same as today, and nothing can be made to work better than it already is.

For Jacobs the successful city is inherently inefficient, and that's a good thing because a successful city is an incubator of new ideas, where ordinary people, not just “creative types,” can be innovative. Innovation, trial and error, can be messy and inefficient.

So, we have...

1. The social fractal
2. Ordinary perceptions as the starting point of complex social processes
3. The urban-based conception of markets
4. The virtue of inefficiency

Economics today has a very long way to go to catch up with Jane Jacobs. Important exceptions are the economists Ed Glaeser of Harvard, who is directly inspired by her, and Israel Kirzner of New York University whose work on entrepreneurial competition embodies

essential Jacobsian themes.

**But if the rest of contemporary economics is beginning to catch up to the economics of Jane Jacobs, it's because, at least in part, she had been struggling to drag it, kicking and screaming, along with her for over forty years.**

**As a social activist, Jane Jacobs was very much of her time. As a social theorist, Jane Jacobs was ahead of her time. Now, though, is the time for Jane Jacobs – economist.**

*This audience is filled with citizen soldiers who fought urban battles with Jane. Erik Wensberg was one of her earliest allies, first as a founding member with her of the Committee to Save the West Village. A journalist and teacher, Erik was the first to read the manuscript of *Death and Life* before she submitted it to her editor, Jason Epstein at Random House.*