

her major philosophy. She was intelligent and imaginative, but her ideas have in many ways limited architecture and urbanism. Little Italy is not the only good form of city life, and it is not an applicable model everywhere. Other social thinkers have had to tease out the value of her thesis by separating it from the single-mindedness of her proposals.

Abrams wrote poetry about urban economics.⁸ He was a strategic thinker and a wordsmith, an unusual combination in the jargon-filled world of planning. His grasp on issues that relate economic and urban development, his span from tribal to advanced economies, and his open-minded willingness to contest received wisdom helped me turn toward philosophies of “evolving from” (rather than “imposing on”) in architecture and urbanism. So when he was a juror for the 1967 Brighton Beach competition, Robert Venturi and I were sad to learn that he did not spot the relevance of our design to his ideas and followed the judgment of his friend José Luis Sert.

Lloyd Rodwin’s view of the forces that shape cities molded my view of urban design and the process of its making. I agree when he suggests that architects, planners, and landscape architects “rank among the least important of the forces” and that urban design may be held back by the thinness of its intellectual and artistic capital. But fifty years after his calls on the design profession to kindle “the same passion and insight for gracious and large scale urban design they now have for contemporary architecture or the planning process,”⁹ it appears that achieving the good city takes more than the passion of designers. And Rodwin and I part company when he talks of “the masses.”¹⁰ From reading Herbert Gans or observing the marketing profession or Comcast, we should know that we must disaggregate “the masses” into subgroups, segments, and profiles.

Ladislav Segoe discussed the city-building propensities of transportation systems. Francis Violich described a case in which these systems threatened an existing historic city. The reasons, he said, lay in politics, overlapping authorities, and the engineering and frontier mentalities. He attributed gaps in coordination to the lack of a cultural framework, insufficient professional involvement, and “most important, the lack of mechanics for co-ordinating three-dimensional planning at the urban design level.”¹¹ Similar reasons could be given today. Reginald Isaacs augmented Rodwin’s list of city-forming forces. Noting that the school of planning at the University of Chicago followed the advice of its social and political scientists, he sus-