



An annotated reader of key works by Sir Patrick Geddes



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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Patrick Geddes
Annotated bibliography
Urban planning
Regional survey
Biotechnic
Eutopia

ABSTRACT

This annotated reader of key articles and essays by Sir Patrick Geddes' aims to help the readers of the Special Issue have a grasp of Geddes' contribution to city and landscape planning. The articles in this section were selected and included in this bibliography because they address certain general issues of importance to Geddes that are still important at present time. Taken together, his distinct methods and themes have an interdisciplinary development and application that provide contemporary urban planners a life-centered foundation for theory and practice. (For extended bibliographies of Geddes' opus see Noah Hysler-Rubin's *Patrick Geddes and Town Planning: A Critical Review*, John Scott and Ray Bromley's *Envisioning Sociology: Victor Branford, Patrick Geddes, and the Quest for Social Reconstruction*, and Phillip Boardman's *Esquisse de l'oeuvre educatrice de Patrick Geddes, suivie de trois listes bibliographiques*).

1. Introduction

Scottish urban planner, Sir Patrick Geddes' written work spans a lifetime of prolific output covering key themes developed and applied across multiple disciplines. The motivation for this annotated reader is to highlight the themes that suggest a healthy, life-sustaining approach for contemporary urban planning theory and practice. An additional incentive of including this selection of his work is to stress the consistency of his themes across multiple disciplines and their perpetual applicability.

The works cited here collectively illustrate Geddes rejection of classical economics that undermine his broader understanding of wealth which includes a cleaner environment in which to work and live, and the development of industries harmonious with the history, culture, and regions from which they arise. Readers will also note the repetition of key themes and in some cases entire passages, a tendency that is consistent with his often hurried life, unconventional style, and holistic application.

2. Annotated bibliography

Geddes, P. (1881). *The Classification of Statistics and Its Results*. Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. University of Toronto, Library. A & C Black. <https://archive.org/details/classificationof00gedduoft>.

Presaging later work in town planning and civics, examples from nature and biology are drawn on in this manuscript to guide the classification of statistics and the cataloging of a wide range of data. The special contribution of this work is the importance placed on

ranking actions on a moral and economic scale, and how to use this data to reveal actions that disrupt unity between sociology and ethics. The arguments in this early piece are laid out in a simpler fashion than those developed in his later work.

Geddes, P. (1883). Morphology. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (9th ed.), 16, 836–847.

“Morphology” is a review of scientific progress towards comprehending and categorizing organic forms. The role of mainstream scientists is explored with brief credit to tangential professions of alchemists and apothecaries. A critical analyzes of the contribution and development of terms, processes, and schools of thought about man's interest in nature is also included in this review.

Geddes, P. (1884). *An Analysis of the Principles of Economics*. In *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburg*. London: Williams & Norgate.

The failure of modern economics to include biological and psychological principles is discussed in this mixed methods analysis. By including these principles, production and consumption may be redefined as a means to increase the ‘true’ wealth of nations. Production of what Geddes calls, permanent products and the associated re-organization of industries are advocated and suggested for reprioritization according to their degenerative or evolutionary effects on organisms.

Geddes, P. (1885a) John Ruskin: Economist. *Edinburgh: Brown. Advancement of Science Annual Report*.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2017.07.009>

Received 21 November 2016; Received in revised form 11 July 2017; Accepted 14 July 2017

Available online 25 July 2017

0169-2046/ © 2017 Published by Elsevier B.V.

In a review of John Ruskin's political economy all the expected popular criticisms of Ruskin's work are entertained only to build it back up with a practical logic leaving Ruskin established as an honorable economist. At the heart of this critique is Geddes's continuing rejection of individual, siloed professions that approach subjects without recognizing their inherent interactions with other fields of study. Ruskin is praised for addressing economics not from a narrow perspective of the value of commodities but with consideration for intrinsic values measured by their ability to support life.

Geddes, P. (1887a) *Every Man His Own Art Critic at the Manchester Exhibition*, Manchester: John Heywood.

In this piece the life work of an artist is decomposed into three elements: sight, arrangement, and style. The first element is approached pragmatically, describing art as a reflection of the artist's 'in-world,' and classifying the second two elements as the 'out-world,' and the observer's 'in-world' respectively. Building on this concept, the progress of man's interpretation of reality is tracked from a child of nature and pre-historic ways of life, to conventional ideals of life, spirituality, and landscape. An artist's new combinations of color are compared to the color of each individual life and place in past and current times. The piece ends with reflection on an artist's developing perceptions, ideals, visions, and their potentially freer expression of knowledge and character than may be allowed in other professions.

Geddes, P. (1887b) *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*. Edinburgh: Douglas 1887. Reprinted from 'Industries', Edinburgh, David Douglas.

This critical analysis reviews the importance, evolution, advantages, and disadvantages of international exhibitions. The stated intention is not only to improve future exhibitions, but to identify ills in the current age such that the material and human resources supporting exhibitions may be balanced with the societal value they could produce in the future. By situating previous exhibitions in their political and historical context, progress is tracked from focusing on manufacturing and industrial processes to higher-end concepts and actions such as education reform or sanitation which return real wealth to the community.

Geddes, P., & Thomson, J. A. (1889). *The Evolution of Sex*. London: Walter Scott.

Co-authored with John Arthur, this book explores the differences between sexes and is a reflection of Geddes early interests in biology. The intention of the book is to supplement the theories of Darwin through observational and experimental analysis of his theories and the critiques against them. The current relevance of the biological arguments made in this book is left for the reader to investigate. The final chapter's takeaway for planning and sociology is Geddes conclusion that love, as opposed to competition and war, is the highest evolutionary process.

Geddes, P. (1898). *The Influence of Geographical Conditions on Social Development*. *The Geographical Journal*, 12 (6), 580–586.

This piece is an analysis of the impact of geography on man and the resulting implications to culture, professional development, and the development of good and bad elements in cities over time. Through multiple interpretive and comparative examples, the piece tests the methodology of this idea. In the reverse reflection on the impact of man on his environment, the reach for an all-inclusive study of human and non-human life in all times and places is continued.

Geddes, P. (1904). *Adolescence*. *British Periodicals*, 7(28): 303.

In this contribution, social questions found in the literature of the time surrounding adolescence, education, aging, and psychology are

explored. The unique value of this piece to the present is his application of biological studies to religious choices and doctrines. More specifically observations in biology are linked to particular beliefs about evolution and the connection between individual souls and collective consciousness.

Geddes, P. (1904). *City Development: A study of parks, gardens and culture-institutes*. A report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust. Bournville: Saint George Press.

This book is Geddes' proposal for planning the Estate of Pittencrieff, a gift from Andrew Carnegie to the small city's citizens and managed by the Dunfermline Trust. The report concurrently includes planning recommendations specific to the local problems (some unconventional as admitted by Geddes), as well as recommendations for civics, sociology, and education in general. The suggestions are strongly conservationist and preservationist in nature, and provide an excellent example of using photographic survey as a technique in planning through every season to capture all uses of a place.

Geddes, P. (1904). *Civics: As Concrete and Applied Sociology*, Part I and II. Project Gutenberg.

In this reading, ideas are presented on city and regional surveys and their usefulness in civics, sociology, and regional planning. A strong thread in this work is the importance of comprehending both geography and history to understand the present and how best to plan for the future. Geddes work here may be distinguished from other urban planners by his view of city development as a part of evolution. While not a piece of quantitative work, the forces influencing development are described and supplemented with diagrams to systematically explain the concepts of how to study and understand the interplay of these forces and their impact on the unfolding of cities.

Geddes, P. (1906). *A First Visit to the Outlook Tower*. Edinburgh: Geddes and Co.

This guide was prepared by members of an Outlook Tower committee with blanket excerpts from Geddes lectures and notes. The guide describes in what manner a guest is encouraged to visit the Tower, such as starting from the top of the edifice and working their way down through the presentations on each floor. Visitors are also encouraged to employ a combination of direct observation and imagination, abstract and concrete thinking in their intellectual engagement with the Tower displays. Historic, geographic, and cultural explanations are provided for each section along with detailed suggestions for reflection and highlights for observations the visitor may otherwise overlook without the aid of the Tower and its contents.

Geddes, P. (1909). *City deterioration and the need of city survey*. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 34(1), 54–67.

This journal article is a case study analysis contrasting Great Britain's cities of Dundee and Aberdeen. Throughout this work insistence is placed on extending geographical and historical survey to sociology. As argument, generalized terms for society in economics and politics are explored for how they represent an author's version of society in a particular time and place. This idea is used to point out the evolutionary nature of society and thus the need for a comprehensive survey of cities and regions to understand their problems and possible range of solutions available to them.

Geddes, P. & Mears, F.C. (1911). *Cities and Town Planning Exhibition: Guide-Book and Outline Catalogue*, Edinburgh: Outlook Tower and Crosby Hall.

The exhibit this piece is written about provides an example of Geddes' expansive methods for surveying a city through the use of

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