Many academic disciplines could claim Patrick Geddes as a pioneer and early inspiration. Sociology was always Branford’s priority, just as biology was J. Arthur Thomson’s, and during his long career Geddes floated back and forth between these two fields and collaborators. Just as often, however, he delved into other fields, notably education, geography, and city and regional planning. To complicate the disciplinary panorama even further, Geddes promoted and contributed to art, literature, and theater, and he had strong interests in architecture, landscape architecture, psychology, and comparative religion. He was an intellectual omnivore, and despite all Branford’s promotion of his image and reputation as a sociologist, he was never willing to concentrate his efforts on sociology.

From 1888 till 1919, Geddes’s primary academic position was professor of botany at University College Dundee, a convenient nominal appointment that enabled him to spend most of his time in Edinburgh, then in London, then globetrotting, with extended periods in India. From 1919 till 1924, Geddes held the title of Professor of Civics and Sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of Bombay. While based in India, both during and after World War I, he traveled extensively within and outside the country and he took numerous small consultancies focusing on city planning.

Of all the disciplines with which he was associated, it is planning, rather than sociology, where Geddes’s name is best known, and where he has had the most impact. He was a Renaissance scholar, rather than a narrow specialist, and his contribution to planning came from the social and environmental sciences, rather than from architecture and design. He did not pretend to be an architect or an engineer, but he often drew on the
skills of his architect son-in-law Frank Mears, and on the work of a number of architect-planners with whom he worked through Crosby Hall and the Cities Committee of the Sociological Society. Most notable were Charles Ashbee, a leader in historic preservation and the arts and crafts movement, and Raymond Unwin and Patrick Abercrombie, the two leading figures in twentieth-century British planning.

Geddes used maps, diagrams, sketches, and photographs extensively in his publications, and he was fascinated by classifications, lists, and inventories. His notes and publications were often illustrated by matrix typologies, which he called “thinking machines”: graphic versions of his folded sheets of paper that were intended to illustrate the relationships between different concepts and entities. In his writings, Geddes usually erred on the side of excess detail, excess illustration, and frequent repetition, so the sheer volume of his output presents a problem to anyone seeking to identify his principal ideas. Despite all his failings, however, a number of major ideas have resonance and lasting significance in city and regional planning. Most of those ideas gained wider prominence through the agency of Lewis Mumford and his associates in the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), and a few have regained prominence recently in the literature on engaged universities, university-community partnerships, and sustainability. Most important of all, however, are the ideas that he developed on urban neighborhood upgrading in India. These were communicated to a broader audience through the writings and work of Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and John F. C. Turner, and are now part of a global conventional wisdom on self-help housing and spontaneous settlement in developing countries.¹

Geddes’s major ideas on city and regional planning focused on six major concepts: regionalism, civics, surveys, decentralization, pacifism, and conservative surgery. Through his portrayal of paleotechnic and neotechnic cities, he also pioneered another concept, without actually using the term—sustainability—and his work is often considered an inspiration to later writings on environmentalism, ecology, and bioregionalism.²

REGIONALISM AND PLANNING IDEAS

Though few of his ideas on regionalism were in any way surprising or innovative to geographers, who had long considered broader spatial contexts and human-environment relations, Geddes had a significant impact on architect-planners and on some budding sociologists, who tended to view urban buildings and neighborhoods in isolation from their broader contexts. Geddes was obsessive in emphasizing that broader context, arguing that the quality of the built environment has a major impact on social conditions, that neighborhoods should be considered in the context of cities, that
adjacent cities may fuse together into conurbations, that cities should be considered in the context of their surrounding regions, and that nation-states should be studied through the identification and description of subnational regions. He emphasized the concept of “region,” not as an arbitrary entity envisioned for a specific purpose, but rather as an obvious feature of world geography, multifaceted, multidimensional, and essentially organic, setting human activity in an environmental context. As we showed in chapter 4, his simplistic model of “the valley section” and his “place-work-folk” thinking machine, repeated and reprinted again and again, argued that livelihood is, and should be, determined by topography and natural resources, and that human activity is substantially influenced by environmental conditions. Thus, mining is located where mineral deposits are found, fishing villages are located beside water bodies containing fish, and agriculture is most viable on fertile and well-watered land. His more important contribution was to encourage interest in rural-urban interactions and complementarities, seeing rural areas as major sources of food, water, power, and migrant labor for cities, and cities as service centers for the people of surrounding areas. Thus he emphasized interdependencies, linking together different parts of a region, different regions of a country, and the different countries of the world.

Because of the breadth of his scholarship, bridging environmental sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities, Geddes was acutely conscious of the role that nature plays in the human environment. He had a strong interest in forestry, crops, and livestock, and in the role of parks and gardens within the city. His first major book on City Development (1904b) was written for the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust and was subtitled A Study of Parks, Gardens, and Culture-Institutes. He described this monograph as “at once naturalistic, horticultural, architectural, educational, and social, and in all these respects having to utilize past history and present resources.” The book was really a consultancy report for the trust, providing recommendations for the improvement of Pittencrieff Park and surrounding historic areas of Dunfermline, but Geddes inserted his own priorities and an extraordinary number of projects. The work was immensely detailed, proposing how to make a private park into a public amenity, how to clean the polluted stream that runs through the park, how to preserve and adaptively reuse all the historic buildings in the area, how to upgrade slum areas, how to landscape the park, and how to create a wide range of local amenities. Among the projects were social institutes, a central institute, a children’s park, a men’s gymnasium, a women’s pavilion, an open air theatre, an orangery, a Japanese teahouse, numerous gardens, a zoo, a nature palace, a nature museum, a labor museum, a smithy, a crafts village, a hall of medieval history, technical schools, an art institute, a music hall, and the settings for city hall, the historic abbey, and the cathedral. Street trees, sidewalks, statues,
 conservatories, and sanitation issues figured prominently, as did the choice of plant species for landscaping. The book had many “before and after” pairs of photographs, contrasting the contemporary landscape with the future landscape that would result from implementing his proposals. The primary emphasis was the careful blending of nature, buildings, and human activity, emphasizing recreation, culture, and education for the general public. The images emphasized the historic architecture of Scotland, blended with romantic landscape designs similar to those of such great pioneers as Calvert Vaux, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Joseph Paxton.

Like City Development, Geddes’s best-known book, Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and the Study of Civics (Geddes 1915b), uses a case study approach. Instead of focusing on one case, such as Dunfermline, however, he took the reader on an esoteric ramble through his ideas, projects, and an eclectic set of examples. Several editions of Cities in Evolution have been abridged to cut the length of the volume, but even in abridged form it does not make easy reading. The book combines overviews of world urbanization, economic globalization, and housing policy with a detailed survey of German urban policy before World War I, a review of the state of town planning and civic exhibitions, a treatise on how citizens and planners should be educated, and synoptic essays on “the spirit of cities” and “city betterment.” Frequent jumps from global to local, and vice versa, combined with esoteric examples and questions posed but left unanswered, can leave the reader confused or bemused. After a brief paragraph comparing the emergence of conurbations on British and U.S. coalfields, for example, comes the following:

Of the needful water supplies of all these potential conurbations we leave engineers to speak; but food supplies are conceivable enough, and at all standards, from the too generous dietary of the American hotel to those innumerable costermongers’ barrows of cheap and enormous bananas which range through the poorer streets of New York, and grimly suggest a possible importation of tropical conditions, towards the maintenance and multiplication of an all too cheap proletariat. What, in fact, if our present conditions of food supply and of mechanical employments be tending to produce for us conditions hitherto only realized, and in simpler ways, by the teeming millions of China? And what of China herself, already so populous, when her present introduction of Occidental methods and ideas has developed her enormous latent resources of coal, of cheap water communications, as well as railways and the rest? (Geddes 1915b, 49–50)
Despite its evident failings, Cities in Evolution inspired the young Lewis Mumford. He adopted many of Geddes’s ideas and terms, diffused Geddesian thoughts on planning in his famous books The Culture of Cities (1938) and The City in History (1961), and emerged as one of the world’s foremost writers on urbanism and technology. Largely because of Mumford’s enthusiasm, Geddesian regionalism became central to a relatively informal and short-lived “think tank” of U.S. urbanists, a group of about twenty-five activists based in New York City and calling itself the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). The senior convenor of the group was the architect Clarence Stein, and other leading members included Henry Wright, Benton MacKaye, Edith Elmer Wood, Catherine Bauer, and Alexander Bing (Parsons 1994). The group met only for ten years from 1923 to 1933, but its influence was felt for a much longer period through model neighborhood and new town schemes such as Sunnyside Gardens (Queens, New York) and Radburn (New Jersey), through MacKaye’s grand vision for the Appalachian region, focused around his flagship project for an Appalachian Trail (Anderson 2002), and through New Deal projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Greenbelt Towns.

One of the RPAA’s projects, the 1926 regional planning proposals for New York State, largely authored by Henry Wright, used a Geddesian approach in developing long-term strategies for land-use, urban development, and transportation investments (New York State 1926). Wright and his RPAA colleagues analyzed and organized the state according to the principles of the valley section, identifying prime areas for agriculture, fishing, mining, and forestry, designating areas of landscape and natural resource conservation interest, and concentrating transportation infrastructure and urban development along the L-shaped corridor from New York City northward to Albany, and then westward to Rochester and Buffalo on the Great Lakes. They focused on the state’s territory, rather than on the great concentration of population in and around New York City, and they envisioned a growing integration between urban and regional development across the northeastern United States. They followed the logic of Benton Mackaye’s original vision for the Appalachian Trail, not just a recreational path along the crest of the mountain range, but the symbolic centerpiece of a mountainous region devoted primarily to cooperative forestry (Mackaye 1921). The trail and forests were intended to provide city dwellers with opportunities for work, recreation, and experiential learning, and to create a permanent green belt to prevent the fusion of expanding urban areas into giant conurbations.

The RPAA’s intense period of intellectual activity and community building paralleled a much grander initiative in New York, the preparation of the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs. This was a massive
collection of research studies followed by the publication of the plan itself in two volumes (Regional Plan of New York and its Environs 1929, 1931). The plan was prepared by and for the business community of the Tri-State New York Metropolitan Region, and it led to the establishment of the Regional Plan Association (RPA), a research and advocacy organization, which has continued in existence ever since. Most of the funding for the 1929–1931 Regional Plan came from the Russell Sage Foundation, a charity founded in 1907 by Margaret Olivia Sage in memory of her late husband, Russell Sage, a financier and railroad entrepreneur. The foundation was promoted and advised by Robert De Forest, president of the New York Charity Organization Society, and it provided support for the development of social work, social surveys, and improved urban environments. It funded the Pittsburgh Survey directed by Paul Kellogg, long-term editor of The Survey and Survey Graphic, key U.S. journals promoting activist sociology and publishing articles by Geddes and other members of his circle (Chambers 1971). The foundation also supported the development of Forest Hills Gardens, a garden suburb in the borough of Queens, initiated in 1908, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Grosvenor Atterbury, and reproducing many of the features of Hampstead in London (Klaus 2002).

The key coordinator and author in the preparation of the 1929–1931 Regional Plan of New York and its Environs was Thomas Adams (1871–1940). Born, brought up, and educated in the Edinburgh region, Adams migrated to London in 1900 and later became the first full-time secretary of the Garden City Association, and the first president of the Town Planning Institute. Though never a prominent member of the Geddes circle, Adams was a close associate of Ebenezer Howard, worked with many of the members of the Sociological Society's Cities Committee, and was very aware of Geddes's ideas on regional planning, town planning, and civics. When Adams was elected president of the Town Planning Institute in November 1913, Raymond Unwin and J. W. Cockrill were elected vice presidents, and Geddes was elected honorary librarian. By February 1914, the institute was negotiating for the acquisition and permanent display of Geddes's Cities and Town Planning Exhibition, and it was campaigning to protect Hampstead Garden Suburb from encroachment by new railways (Simpson 1985, 64–66). In the autumn of 1914, however, Adams left Britain for Canada, and in 1923 he was appointed as General Director of the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs. He divided the remainder of his career between Canada, the United States, and the UK, mixing planning practice with university teaching and the publication of numerous reports and several significant textbooks (e.g., Adams 1935). As his career advanced, Adams continuously emphasized pragmatism, willingness to work with those who held wealth,
power, and influence, desire to create plans that would be implemented, and desire to influence legislation to facilitate plan implementation.

The 1909 Plan of Chicago (Burnham and Bennett 1909) and the 1929–1931 Regional Plan of New York and its Environs are probably the most famous metropolitan plans ever prepared in North America (Bromley 2001). The New York plan was the subject of numerous critiques by members of the RPAA, synthesized in an exchange between Mumford and Adams in the New Republic. In one of the most famous polemics in U.S. planning history, Mumford (1932) argued that the plan was insufficiently regional, did not take adequate account of New York’s hinterland, and failed to propose garden cities in the metropolitan region. He also portrayed it as top-down, elitist, and insufficiently conscious of neighborhood communities. In contrast, Adams (1932) argued that the plan represented “the art of the feasible”—what could realistically be achieved in the current socioeconomic and political system. Superficially, at least, this seemed like a clash of Adams, the pragmatist, and Mumford, the Geddesian visionary. Ironically, though, both Mumford and Adams were writing in the immediate aftermath of Geddes’s death, and both sought his mantle. Drawing on his Edinburgh roots, Adams claimed a much deeper knowledge of Geddes than Mumford had, arguing that Geddes was more pragmatic than Mumford, and that Geddes would have supported the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs. In the end, portions of the 1929–1931 Regional Plan were implemented, notably much of the proposed highway and park systems, while other portions, notably the strategy for railroads and mass transit, were largely forgotten. The New York Metropolitan Region already had some garden suburbs, and more were built, but it never got a true garden city. The RPAA had launched its own garden city project at Radburn, New Jersey, in 1928, but construction was paralyzed after the Wall Street crash of 1929, and all that remains are two model neighborhoods, surrounded by post–World War II suburban sprawl (Stein 1951, ch. 2).

Despite Adams’s claims that Geddes would have supported the 1929–1931 Regional Plan, Lewis Mumford and his RPAA colleagues continued as the prime promoters of Geddes’s ideas in North American urban and regional planning. Mumford was forty-one years younger than Geddes, and although he met him only twice, and then very briefly, he had an extended correspondence with him from 1917 till his death in 1932 (see Novak, ed. 1995). Mumford (1948) considered Geddes to be his greatest inspiration, ranking Victor Branford and Thorstein Veblen second-equal, behind Geddes. Mumford’s relationship with Geddes was very problematic on a personal level, because Geddes tried hard to persuade Mumford to become his literary assistant and to somehow take the place of Alasdair, his elder son who had
been killed in action in World War I (Mumford 1966). Understandably, Lewis Mumford wanted independence and refused to take on such roles. His respect for Geddes was so high, however, that he and his wife Sophia named their only son Geddes. In a grim sequel to the Geddes family’s tragedies during World War I, the young Geddes Mumford was killed in action during World War II (Mumford 1947).

CIVICS AS PRACTICE

Throughout his adult life, Geddes was a keen advocate for continuing education, museums and exhibitions, cultural activities such as art and theatre, and cooperative and communitarian solutions to social problems. He deplored idleness, poverty, and squalor, and he saw great potential in involving people in positive programs to improve their education, promote cultural activities, upgrade living conditions, and generate incomes. His civic work, as we showed in chapter 4, began in Edinburgh in 1884 with the formation of the Environment Society, soon renamed the Edinburgh Social Union, a group of civic-minded Edinburgh University lecturers and students and some concerned citizens, who sought to improve social and living conditions in Edinburgh’s tenements, promoting window boxes, painting walls, and sometimes adding murals. With his marriage to Anna Morton in 1886, Geddes’s civic endeavor became a joint project, living with his wife in Edinburgh’s Old Town and promoting many small efforts to improve living conditions, spread education, and build a sense of community (Mairet 1957, 44–81). Patrick and Anna took a special interest in the housing problems of Edinburgh University’s students, and they launched University Hall, the first cooperative student hostel in Scotland. Geddes gradually built a following of loyal students, many of them living in University Hall. After the acquisition of the Outlook Tower in 1890, to be developed as a regional museum and sociological laboratory, he was able to launch more ambitious community surveys and development efforts in Edinburgh’s Old Town tenements. Eventually, he was able to launch the construction of Ramsay Gardens, a larger student housing cooperative located beside the Outlook Tower, and to publish the four issues of The Evergreen in 1895–96, corresponding to the four seasons and promoting a Celtic cultural revival. To Geddes, who saw interconnectedness everywhere, all these various activities were “civics,” increasing the links between town and gown, fostering the education of Edinburgh University’s students through community engagement, supporting a wide range of cultural and educational activities, conducting research on community problems, and physically building the fabric of Edinburgh University and Edinburgh’s Old Town (Geddes 1906; Kitchen 1975, 112–56). The Outlook Tower provided a symbolic centerpiece for all this activity,
envisaged as “a laboratory” to teach about and research on the universe, the world, the British Empire, the Scottish nation, the region, and the City of Edinburgh. Charles Zueblin (1899) described it as “the world’s first sociological laboratory.” The stockholding company established in 1896 to manage Geddes’s Edinburgh projects was fittingly called the ‘Town and Gown Association Limited,’ symbolizing the community-university partnership that Geddes held so dear (Boardman 1978, 147).

Gradually, from 1900 onward, as the Geddes household spent more and more time away from Edinburgh, the civic activities with which Geddes was associated in Edinburgh declined in significance. He was already becoming something of a celebrity, with invitations to visit, lecture, and serve as a consultant to numerous projects both in Britain and overseas. He held a successful Summer School in Paris coinciding with the 1900 World’s Fair—the *Exposition Universelle*—but he failed to consolidate a much larger project called the “International Index Museum.” This was intended to create a permanent global studies center in Paris, based on donated exhibits from all the nations participating in the World’s Fair (Meller 1990, 110–16). Unable to create a permanent global center, Geddes refocused his efforts on regional museums and traveling displays, intending to promote civics and city and regional planning.

Starting with a collection of materials that he contributed to the Town Planning Exhibition held at the Royal Academy in London in 1910, Geddes gradually built up his “Cities and Town-Planning Exhibition,” taking it to Dublin, Belfast, and Edinburgh, and eventually to the International Exposition in Ghent (Meller 1995). Geddes used this exhibition as a consciousness-raising tool in his civic agenda, intended to educate the public and to foster an international movement for civics and town planning. To many observers, however, the exhibition was simply a static and eclectic collection of clippings, postcards, photographs, and maps. The significance of such displays diminished rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s with the development of sound and imaging technologies, creating new opportunities to project ideas to the public through radio, gramophone, cinema, and television.

In 1914 the expanded exhibition was shown in Dublin as part of a major effort to develop a new city plan, and then Geddes accepted an invitation from Lord Pentland, the governor of Madras, to take his exhibition to India. Despite the loss of his original exhibition materials at sea, the exhibition was successful and allowed him to spend most of the decade from 1914 to 1924 in India, working there on civics and city planning.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, civics was an emerging field of social activism in both Europe and North America, being particularly associated with the Settlement House movement, the international YMCA movement, the Red Cross, and other nongovernmental
organizations. These movements quickly internationalized, and Geddes was one of many who carried pioneering civics initiatives to new lands. The range of priorities and services provided in civics programs varied between countries and cities, but the emphasis was always on voluntary and charitable action through nonprofit organizations. Civics promoted volunteerism, community development, counseling, and popular and continuing education, and it provided day care, counseling services, and food pantries. In America, at a time of mass immigration, it often included English-language classes, and it encouraged voter registration and knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities. Geddes was a leader in applying civics to city planning in Britain, Ireland, and India, and he was well aware of comparable work being done in the United States in association with the Settlement House movement, progressive education, the Plans of Chicago and New York, and the emerging urban survey movement (see Dole 1899; Moody 1912; Chambers 1971).

**SURVEY THEN PLAN**

Probably the best-known Geddes phrase is, “Survey then plan,” a maxim that has been repeated thousands of times to generations of planning students. The idea seems logical, but Geddes’s passion for detail and comprehensiveness could turn surveys into an obsession, postponing action rather than facilitating it. Sometimes, planners face emergency situations, and it may be necessary to take quick decisions in order to prevent a disaster, minimize its impact, or bring immediate help to its victims. Sometimes, also, problems are simple, rather than multifaceted, and the answer may be known and ready for implementation. For most issues, however, “Survey then plan” is a good maxim for planners.

Though Geddes recommended surveys as a first stage in the planning process, he would not have wanted “Survey then plan” to be his best-known message to the world. He advocated surveys both as data sources for planning and as worthy projects in their own right. For him, as we have shown, surveys are crucial elements in education and community development. Designing and conducting a survey is a means for citizen-students to learn about neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions and to observe firsthand how different social and environmental variables interrelate with one another. Gradually, a network of Geddes-inspired survey educators emerged, working through schools, the Civic Education League, Le Play House, and other organizations, keen to promote surveys for their educational value: providing a purpose for field trips, a focus for learning, and topics for scholarly debate. Examples of such figures included Valentine Bell, Mabel Barker, Margaret Tatton, Christopher Fagg, and Geoffrey Hutchings. The results of
surveys were often published in the *Sociological Review* and other journals, or as monographs, and Le Play House accumulated a massive collection of archived surveys, many of them still held in the archives at Keele University (see Matless 1992). Though nowadays, in a world of remote sensing, geographic information systems, and vast digital databases, the old surveys may seem quaint and bulky, they are often the only data sources available to give clues to local conditions at the time they were conducted.

During the 1920s and 1930s, and especially after the deaths of Branford and Geddes, and with Alexander Farquharson directing Le Play House and editing the *Sociological Review*, community and regional surveys became less sociological and more geographical or ethnographic in character. Large numbers of surveys were conducted, both in Britain and on short organized field trips—often organized by Margaret Tatton—to different parts of Europe, but the emphasis shifted from understanding social dynamics, family structure, and labor markets, toward interpretations of the relationship between culture, economy, physical environment, and settlement morphology. “Muddy-boots geographers” were well represented, following in the scholarly paths of such Geddes and Branford associates as Andrew Herbertson, Charles Fawcett, Herbert Fleure, and Francis Younghusband. As academic sociology came to focus more on questionnaire surveys, rather than community and regional field surveys, Le Play House lost much of its sociological content and membership.

**DECENTRALIZATION AND PACIFISM**

Throughout their careers, Geddes and Branford were fascinated with peaceful anarchist ideas about decentralization, local democracy, community development, and cooperatives. They did not declare themselves to be anarchists, and they certainly did not support any violent revolutionary movements, but on many occasions they wrote about these topics. Both were very familiar with the writings of Robert Owen and with the British Cooperative Movement, and they had ties to Horace Plunkett and Henry Wolff, leading figures in the International Cooperative Alliance and the rural reconstruction movement (see chapter 7). Two of Geddes’s earliest publications were lengthy pamphlets called *John Ruskin: Economist* (1884b) and *Co-operation versus Socialism* (1888a), and both Geddes and Branford had strong links to the Arts and Crafts Movement. There was a strong cooperative underpinning to Geddes’s Cyprus work with the Eastern and Colonial Association (Geddes 1897a) and to Branford’s work with the West Indian Cooperative Union. Sybella Gurney had helped organize rural and urban cooperative housing programs through Labour Co-Partnership, and probably at her instigation, the Sociological Society published through a cooperative press in
Leicester. Both Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin, two of the world's most famous anarchist intellectuals, visited the Edinburgh Summer Schools in the 1890s, and Geddes and Branford had a thorough grounding in the history of utopian thought.\footnote{4}

Above and beyond links to famous anarchists, Geddes and Branford had many other reasons to be suspicious of big governments and imperialism. First and foremost, of course, Geddes was intensely Scottish, a Zionist, and a Francophile, and while he was in India he had strong links with advocates of Indian independence such as Rabindranath Tagore, Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), and Annie Besant (1925). Though not overtly or devoutly religious, both Geddes and Branford had a fascination with spirituality, and particularly with Celtic traditions and oriental religions. The recognition of a spiritual domain was crucial to their understanding of community, city, and nation, and to their concept of “the cloister”—the intellectual heart of the ideal community, “a culture-developing set of institutions . . . where the citizen could withdraw himself from day-to-day work and see the whole system” (Clavel 1968, xv). Just as Geddes had emphasized historic, cultural, and religious buildings and institutions in his plan for Dunfermline, he emphasized the synergy of education, culture, and religion, and the role of religion in developing great works of art and music.

In reasserting the importance of spirituality, Geddes and Branford emphasized that there are fields of human endeavor that are, and should be, beyond the reach and control of nation-states, empires, and capitalist corporations. Branford spent most of his life working as a financier and businessman, but he still had time to write many books, pamphlets, and articles on sociology. One of his best works is St. Columba, an eighty-three-page monograph first published in 1912. In his Prefatory Note Branford acknowledges the inspiration of “the Comte-Le Play-Geddes formulae, which resume the sociology of the past two generations, and . . . the Lange-James-Hall formulae, which . . . have done a similar service for psychology’ (1912, 7).

The story of St. Columba formed the basis for the epilogue scene in Geddes’s Masque of Ancient Learning, performed in 1912 and 1913 (Defries 1928, 41–48). St. Columba was an AD sixth-century Irish monk, who from a base on the island of Iona organized missionary activity to Scotland, and who turned Iona into a model community with many economic and technological innovations. Iona was self-governing, productive, and prosperous. St. Columba was, in Branford’s words,

at once a priest, a philosopher, a statesman and an educator. It was his task and his ambition to transform his region into a heaven on earth. His monastic settlement he aspired to build into a city dispensing with both the policeman and the lawyer. In fact, he anticipated a modern sociologist in the discovery of Eutopia.
Columba's work in Iona looked to the care both of the place and the people. He conserved the forest. He introduced the culture of fruit trees and of bees, and improved the stock of the island. He shortened the time between seed-time and harvest. He organized the fishing and navigation. He drained the bog between the observatory and the cemetery hills, dammed up the water in a lake and ran it down the ravine to turn the millwheel of his monastery. . . . He tended the sick, comforted the afflicted, admonished and advised the erring, and was a holy and wholesome terror to evil-doers. . . . But the chief purpose of the island monastery was to train the successive bands of missionary monks who sallied forth—often with Columba at their head—into the islands and mainland of Pictish Scotland, and established therein a network of monastic settlements (i.e. radiating foci of practical idealism). (Branford 1912, 61)

In many essays, Geddes and Branford praised small towns, rural areas, and provincial cities, and they advocated community and regional development efforts that were clearly decentralist in character. They did not advocate sweeping central government programs or massive public works. Geddes's planning was local, for a community, neighborhood, campus, town, or city. Through his merchant banking work, Branford was interested in extending railroads and telecommunications in the Americas, and in stimulating new investments in plantations, ranches, and agro-industries, but he saw these tasks as suitable for corporations supported by local and foreign investors, rather than the subject of giant national governmental plans and investments.

World War I had a traumatic impact on Geddes and Branford, and on almost all their social and intellectual circle. As early as 1911 they had warned of the dangers of imminent world war (Mumford 1926, 126), but nothing could prepare them for the daily toll of distressing news during the war itself, or for the traumas of the battlefield survivors who returned home. Geddes lost his exhibition, his elder son, and his wife during the war, and he and Branford saw the world war as a collective insanity.

During World War I, as described more fully in chapter 3, Branford responded to global crisis and Geddes's personal tragedies with the launch of the series of Papers for the Present and The Making of the Future, trying to lay the foundations for a peaceful postwar reconstruction. By “reconstruction,” Branford and Geddes meant something much more profound than reconstructing or replacing the infrastructure and buildings destroyed in the Great War. They were following the concepts developed by Christian Socialists and Social Gospel theologians over the previous forty years, imagining a moral and spiritual “reconstruction” of society. This was the ultimate mission for an activist sociology, finding the way to end war, poverty, and misery by introducing a new spirituality and community value structure (Branford
and Geddes 1919b, 365–79). The utopian society that they imagined would have to be democratic, with a combination of individual responsibility and community solidarity. And for such a society to exist, they idealized the old world of the Greek city-state, and peaceful, progressive communities like St. Columba’s Iona. The problem, of course, was finding a way to get “from here to there”: to transition from a violent and unjust contemporary reality to a much more functional future. Many of the ingredients of their reconstructionism—cooperatives, alternative education, lifelong experiential learning, community development, arts and crafts, credit unions, social credit, engaged universities, and the resurgence of regional and local cultures—are reviewed elsewhere in this volume, but some elements are especially linked to urban, regional, and national planning.

The key planning idea was decentralization and subsidiarity: moving as many government activities as far down the hierarchy of governmental units as possible, creating new units at the lowest levels, and giving much greater powers and autonomy to the lower units. Nation-states might remain in existence, or they might be loosely federated, but the real power would be at a much lower and more localized level, where popular democracy could function effectively. Since the 1890s and their work with the Eastern and Colonial Association to resettle Armenian refugees in Cyprus, Geddes and Branford had been meeting peace and human rights advocates from across Europe. During and after World War I, ideas were beginning to emerge for some form of united Europe, the most coherent possibility being represented by Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan-European Movement (Coudenhove-Kalergi 1943). More specifically, though, Branford had extensive experience of American federalism and local government, most poignantly with his Nevada divorce and Philadelphia remarriage. Meanwhile, Geddes was traveling extensively in India, serving as a consultant to numerous princely states whose maharajas and their Durbars (assemblies of nobles and officials) had invited him to make plans for towns and campuses within their domains. After World War I, with the defeat and breakup of the Ottoman Empire, Geddes was seeing at firsthand how Zionist colonies were emerging in British-administered Palestine.

Small appeared to be beautiful, and decentrism seemed to have many advantages, but Geddes and Branford were very familiar with “the capitals of capital” and the power of military-industrial-financial complexes. To develop their proposals they worked with the economist Gilbert Slater, principal of Ruskin College before its closure at the onset of World War I, and Professor of Indian Economics at the University of Madras from 1915 till 1921. Geddes and Slater (1917) identified the major cities of Europe as “war capitals.” London, Paris, Berlin, Istanbul, and Vienna were the most striking
examples, but Madrid, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Rome, Budapest, Moscow, and St. Petersburg all had some of the same traits. A “war capital” was a giant city where business, government, and military elites were all concentrated, and where those elites interacted, intermarried, and continually collaborated. Realizing that building a larger colonial empire would give the nation additional captive markets, wealth, and prestige, these elites were happy to go to war with other countries so as to capture portions of their empires. In brief, nation-states went to war to expand their global market shares and supply chains, and to debilitate their competitors.

In the long term, the problem of “war capitals” might be solved by a global decolonization movement of the kind that actually took effect between the late 1940s and the 1990s. In the shorter term, Geddes, Branford, and Slater advocated the solution that Thomas Jefferson and some of the other founding fathers of the United States had advocated in the late eighteenth century. This was to make small cities close to the center of territories the seats of government (Geddes and Slater 1917, 225–49). This would separate government from the military and business elites, and assuming a spread of population across the territory, it might well make the government more accessible to overland travel by average citizens. They envisioned the new small city capitals as more independent from business and military interests, and less susceptible to bribery and corruption. They also envisaged that governments located in such places would be more sympathetic and open to rural and small town interests.

The aftermath of World War I never produced the comprehensive reconstruction of society and values that Geddes, Branford, and Slater had called for. Victory, defeat, mourning, high postwar unemployment, and the punitive revenge of the Treaty of Versailles all distracted public attention from more idealistic and long-term proposals. Few had read the reconstructionists’ proposals, and the world moved on. The Spanish Flu pandemic took a horrific toll, the breakup of the German and Ottoman empires gave Britain and France new territories to administer, and the Russian Revolution led to civil war between Reds and Whites, and traumatic changes as the Reds gained control. The example of the Russian Revolution inspired a worldwide upsurge in political radicalism, and many persecuted radicals emigrated from Europe to the Americas. Internationalism quickly foundered in the bitter arguments about the League of Nations, with the United States refusing to join. Red scares, flappers, American Prohibition, and other distractions quickly gave way to the emergence of Italian and German fascism, the Great Depression, and the Spanish Civil War. The moment was lost, and the reconstructionist dreams faded as the authors aged and became more preoccupied with their own medical and family problems.
Despite all the problems of World War I, including the loss of his exhibition, his eldest son, and his wife, the time that Geddes spent in India between 1914 and 1924 was probably the most productive and least well documented of his whole life. He was a prestigious consultant, resident in India, who could help local officials improve their cities and create parks and campuses. He wrote fifty planning reports (Stalley 1972, xii) for the local maharajas who were allowed to rule large portions of India providing they maintained order and guaranteed tax payments and obedience to colonial laws. His reports were detailed and lengthy, supplemented by appendices and folded maps. Some were published, but most were submitted in manuscript form and never had widespread diffusion. Regrettably, now many have been lost, but enough survive to give a clear picture of Geddes’s methodology and priorities.

The basic idea that Geddes applied in India was one that he had already tried and tested in Edinburgh, and to some extent also in his plans for Dunfermline. He called the idea “conservative surgery”—preserving all the good elements of the existing urban fabric, and especially buildings and places of historical and religious significance, while repairing or replacing inadequate and hazardous structures, encouraging local improvements through community efforts, and carefully creating, preserving, or enhancing city and neighborhood public spaces. The tenements of Edinburgh and the polluted waterways of Pittencrieff Park had posed challenges, but those challenges were nothing compared with the overcrowding and sanitation problems of many low-income Indian neighborhoods, with their cubicle tenements, shacks, tent-like structures, pavement dwellers, contamination by human and animal excrement, and vulnerability to fire and flooding. The British colonial administrators were often obsessed with density and the problems of epidemic disease, and advocated mass demolitions and cutting wide, straight avenues through existing urban areas. Their cantonments and civil lines, built for their military communities and civilian administrators, reflected low-density suburbanism, with wide straight streets, many bungalows, large lots, and plenty of open spaces. They contrasted dramatically with the dense, crowded “native quarters” in the old towns, with many alleyways and dead ends. The most famous illustration of this contrast was Delhi, where portions of Old Delhi had been totally cleared after the “Mutiny” of 1857, so that British troops could be garrisoned there, and where Lutyens and Baker’s New Delhi was under construction as a low-density “city of magnificent distances” contrasting dramatically with the surviving high-density sections of Old Delhi (Irving 1981; Mehra 1991).
When Geddes received a commission to prepare a local plan in an Indian city, he and his assistants prepared a “diagnostic survey,” walking every street and alley, sketch-mapping every lot and structure, and classifying the structures by use, historical significance, and quality of construction. His sketch maps also included details of the open areas, including the presence of shrines, trees, and wells (Geddes 1917; and see Mitchell 2010, 1). A typical plan would propose the demolition of between 5 and 20 percent of the structures, and new construction on the edge of the neighborhood or settlement so as to rehouse displaced families. The aim was to remove the worst structures, including any that might collapse or burn down, and to increase the amount of open space. Open space was valued, not just for vehicle and pedestrian circulation, but as fire breaks, and as community areas for meetings, social activities, and children’s play. Shade trees were particularly valued as focal points for community activities, and Geddes usually proposed planting additional trees and establishing community gardens. In preparing such neighborhood plans, Geddes also looked closely at drainage, sanitation, and garbage disposal, extolling the community to keep ditches and watercourses clear from construction and debris, and to carefully manage their wells and other water sources. Geddes was anxious to preserve historic temples and mosques, and to clear away the lean-to structures that often surrounded religious buildings, protecting their architectural heritage and reducing the risks of fire. He sought to provide space for schools and community centers, and to ensure that every neighborhood had such basic services.

As well as planning for the improvement of existing neighborhoods in Indian cities, Geddes sometimes received commissions for more ambitious projects, most notably his plan for a University of Central India in the city of Indore (Geddes 1918). Though much less well known than the 1919 plan for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that he prepared with Frank Mears, his vision for a university in Indore was more comprehensive and complete. He focused the projected university on a central library, museums, indoor and outdoor theatres, and an outlook tower. The museum would feature culture, art, urban development, agriculture, and health, with a particular emphasis on the city of Indore and the surrounding region. His recommended selection of academic disciplines to be taught in the university, and his layout of the campus, were all framed around the central roles to be played by the library, museums, theatres, and tower. Thus, for example, Geddes (1918, 36) justified philosophy as “the complemental need of inlook beside outlook,” proposing a windowless corner turret of the tower as a quiet meditation room with a narrow shaft of light in the ceiling. With characteristic breadth and detail, he proposed degree regulations to prevent narrow specialization...
and to promote a broad understanding of the liberal arts and sciences, and he sprinkled his justification for the university structure with the names of famous scholars, including the Humboldt brothers, Goethe, Comte, Bergson, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Pasteur, Stanley Hall, and William James.

Linking universities to cities, Geddes (1918, 57) wrote: “The true University blossoms from its Culture-City, great or small; hence the significance not only of Athens or Paris aforesaid, but of Edinburgh or Boston (Harvard), or Leyden, Jena, Aberdeen, and a hundred more, and here conspicuously is the rational hope which lately initiated the University of Benares.” The University of Indore would have replicated and extended the great initiative taken in the city of Benares, now known as Varanasi, where what is now known as Banaras Hindu University (BHU) was founded in 1916. That university, which includes an impressive regional museum, was heavily supported by Indian intellectuals and members of the Indian National Congress, and built on the success of the Central Hindu School, which Annie Besant had founded in Benares in 1898.

Though Geddes’s university proposals for Indore were not implemented, his ideas for a university helped to justify Rabindranath Tagore’s project for Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan, Bengal. Founded in 1921, and building on a community school, Visva Bharati literally meant “communion of the world with India.” In its early years, Visva Bharati was dedicated to community outreach, experiential learning, and rural reconstruction, exemplifying many of the ideals and visions that Tagore shared with Geddes. The link to British, Irish, and American ideas on rural reconstruction and decentralized development was further emphasized by Tagore’s decision to recruit the English agricultural economist Leonard Elmhirst to lead the rural reconstruction effort (Das Gupta 2006, 194–214). Elmhirst worked at Visva Bharati for the first three years, and after marrying his American sponsor, the wealthy widow Dorothy Whitney Straight, he and his wife purchased Dartington Hall in Devon. Dartington Hall emerged as a leading British institution for alternative education, experiential learning, and rural reconstruction, and the Elmhirsts and Tagore built an ongoing rural reconstruction partnership. During the same initial three years at Visva Bharati, Arthur Geddes, Patrick and Anna’s younger son, also worked at Santiniketan, furthering the cause of experiential learning and rural reconstruction.

Many ironies and paradoxes were built into Geddes’s Indian neighborhood plans. He was a man of the people and an advocate for the community, but traveling from region to region in a land of immense linguistic complexity, he needed translators to help him communicate with the neighborhood residents. He had a genuine interest in improving the living conditions of poor people, but he was working for elite maharajas, some of whom were immensely rich, and who held their wealth by taxing the poor and ensuring
a flow of revenues to the British colonial administration. And Geddes, the Scotsman, was in British India under an administration that tolerated his commissions and proposals, even though those proposals often contradicted the schemes of the administration’s own staff. Geddes walked a tightrope, opposing the administration’s schemes, the extensive involvement of Indian troops in World War I, and postwar atrocities such as the Amritsar Massacre, but avoiding wartime internment, the fate imposed on more vociferous British dissidents such as Annie Besant.

Geddes’s plans for India’s densely populated old town neighborhoods, the “native quarters,” have been enormously influential since World War II, gradually emerging as a mainstream perspective on “third world housing policy.” Nevertheless, very few planners have actually read Geddes’s Indian plans. Few copies were produced, they were delivered to local maharajas and Durbar, and very few were ever cataloged into libraries and archives or republished with any significant circulation. The key agent, who brought the plans and associated methods to the world’s attention, was Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, a British planner who had studied Geddes’s writings and visited Edinburgh to explore the Geddes heritage in the 1920s, and who taught planning for the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction (APRR) in London in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Tyrwhitt was closely associated with the International Congress on Modern Architecture (CIAM) in the 1940s and 1950s, and from 1955 onward, with Constantinos Doxiadis, the central figure in the Ekistics (science of human settlements) movement, edited or co-edited the widely circulated planning journal Ekistics from its first issue in 1955 till her death in 1983 (Shoshkes 2006, 2009). In 1947, with help and encouragement from Geddes’s surviving son, Arthur, from Henry Lanchester a member of the old Sociological Society Cities Committee, and from Lewis Mumford, Tyrwhitt published a slim edited book called Patrick Geddes in India, explaining the Geddesian approach and providing very brief extracts from Geddes’s voluminous writings on India. In his preface to Tyrwhitt’s collection, Lewis Mumford extolled Geddes’s Edinburgh projects, his “civic surveys,” and his “diagnosis before treatment” approach, and his intellectual links with the pioneering American environmentalist George Perkins Marsh and the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin. Mumford emphasized Geddes’s opposition to colonial bureaucracies:

This mode of planning challenged the idols of officialdom; it was conceived in terms of primary human needs, not of current business and engineering conventions. . . .

To the town planners’ art, Geddes brought the rural virtues; not merely respect for the land and for agricultural processes; but the patience of the peasant, and the sense that orderly growth is more
important than order at the expense of growth. He saw both cities and human beings as wholes; and he saw the processes of repair, renewal, and rebirth as natural phenomena of development. His ideal of the best life possible was always the best that was latent in a particular site and situation, at a particular moment in the development of a particular family, group, or community; not an abstract ideal that could be imposed by authority or force from the outside. . . .

In his early reaction against the cult of the state, Geddes anticipated the modern generation's reaction against totalitarianism. The very thought that his thought remains post-Marxian will, perhaps, link him more closely with the oncoming generation who, in both war and peace, have discovered the limitations of military and bureaucratic organisations, no matter how well-meaning and beneficent their purposes may be, and who—without relapsing into a defeatist laissez-faire—will seek for counterpoises to the present tendency to over-concentrate power and authority. (Mumford 1947b, 11–12)

Tyrwhitt's career is enigmatic in many senses, sometimes promoting grassroots planning and community engagement, but also working with leading modernist architects whose grand schemes were the antithesis of such approaches. In editing Geddes in India, however, she brought Geddes's Indian heritage out of the shadows, and she presented it directly to a new generation of students in the APRR, a special program for British World War II veterans who sought to enter architecture and planning during a period of vigorous worldwide activity associated with postwar physical reconstruction of bombed cities, the Marshall Plan, the independence of many former colonies, and the ambitious international development rhetoric of the newly formed United Nations and World Bank. Among Tyrwhitt's students was John F. C. Turner, who subsequently worked on British aid projects in Peru, focusing on the squatter settlements (barriadas) of Arequipa and Lima. Through a series of articles published in the 1960s and early 1970s (e.g., Turner 1967), and in his highly influential book Housing by People (Turner 1976), Turner emerged as the world's leading spokesperson for “conservative surgery,” re-baptized as the “neighborhood upgrading” of slums and shantytowns. There was little new in Turner's approach, which built on Geddes and also on the work of Jacob Crane, a mid-twentieth-century American housing policy specialist, but Turner’s work came at an opportune time for the major aid agencies and international organizations concerned with “third world development” (Harris 2003; Bromley 2003). Development specialists were seeking an alternative to expensive public housing projects, a means to activate market forces among the very poor in rapidly urbanizing nations,
and a means to overcome the highly visible squalor of the burgeoning shantytowns ringing most major cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The result has been the publication of hundreds of articles, reports, and books on upgrading (e.g., Payne 1977; Brakarz 2002), and the implementation of many thousands of neighborhood upgrading projects around the world. Though few are aware of Geddes’s inspiration to these efforts, the intellectual link is very clear (Turner 1982, 100).

### PALEOTECHNIC, NEOTECHNIC, AND VISIONS OF “SUSTAINABILITY”

In his writings, Geddes frequently created neologisms and typologies, and his terms and typologies sometimes helped to explain new theories and interpretations of reality. He adopted the terms *paleotechnic* and *neotechnic* to summarize a general theory of urban and regional development. This terminology was frequently used by Victor Branford and other disciples, and it was developed into major works and much more sophisticated terms and theories by Lewis Mumford. Geddes had a fascination with Ancient Greek ideas on the *polis* (city) and utopias, and he delighted in developing new words to describe variants on the *polis* and utopia. Branford, Mumford, and Doxiadis all shared this fascination, and so their writings are peppered with neo-Hellenic expressions such as *parasitopolis*, *tyrannopolis*, *necropolis*, *kakatopia*, *subtopia*, and *ecotopia*. While the great variety of *polises* and *topias* can be irritating or confusing to contemporary readers, at least two of the terms that Geddes introduced to the planning literature have genuine utility: *conurbation*, the fusion of adjacent urban areas while maintaining distinct downtowns, and *megalopolis*, the interlinking of adjacent metropolitan areas into one continuous metropolitan region.5

Geddes's general theory of urban and regional development is quite crude and simple. He looks back to a predominantly rural preindustrial world, with villages and small market towns, and idealizes that world as one signifying an intimate working relationship between place, folk, and work, a cradle for the arts and crafts, and a harmony between mankind and the natural environment. Despite the occasional ravages of pandemic disease and invading armies, which he was certainly aware of, he saw these societies as representing wholesome traditions. He also saw them as representing a durable interdependence of nature and human activity, what in twenty-first-century terms we would call “sustainability”: a pattern of development that uses renewable natural resources and maintains the fertility and biodiversity of the natural environment, and thus enables future generations to enjoy the same environments, lifestyles, and life prospects as current generations.
Into this simple world came the agricultural and industrial revolutions, with their increasingly intensive use of drainage, irrigation, hybrid crop and livestock varieties, and fertilizers, and the gradual development of canals, railroads, steamships, electricity, telephone, telegraph, motor vehicles, aircraft, radio, television, pesticides, antibiotics, nuclear power and weapons, remote sensing, computers, the Internet, global positioning systems, space exploration, robots, and drones. Geddes only saw part of this vast and accelerating technological progression, but it was enough for him to make a simple two-part division of urbanization, industrialization, and globalization: the identification of paleotechnic and neotechnic cities and civilizations.

Paleotechnic for him was unsustainable, a world based on fossil fuels, industrialization, automation, materialism, and greed. Enormous capitalist wealth was created at the cost of a depleted natural environment, impoverished rural areas, growing rural-urban migration, and the mushrooming of squalid, polluted urban areas characterized by poverty, ignorance, and deprivation. In many senses, it was a materialist industrialized world gone mad. It was gradually destroying the environmental and social conditions, and the cultural traditions and institutions, that enabled free-thinking, self-managing communities to better themselves and maintain sustainability.

To Geddes, many of the new technologies available to humankind were not damaging, and what was needed more than anything else was a high degree of selectivity, consciously favoring clean and environmentally friendly technologies, preserving ecosystems and biodiversity, and maintaining vibrant local societies, economies, and democracies. He described this ideal world as Neotechnic: taking advantage of the progress of science and technology, but constantly selecting the best options and avoiding any developments that would encourage resource depletion, environmental deterioration, increased social inequalities, or social pathologies such as crime, delinquency, alienation, and suicide. Crucial features of the neotechnic world were interdependent relationships between regional cities and surrounding rural areas, the continued vigor of rural societies, the enrichment of human life by the arts and humanities, and the dispersal of urbanization to a variety of small to medium-size cities, rather than concentration in one giant metropolis.

Geddes’s neotechnic order offered multiple eutopias in technology, society, politics, and most poignantly in life itself: what Geddes called, following Bergson, “vitalism.” In one of his most powerful illustrations (Geddes 1926), he sprinkled the names of inspiring authors into his neotechnic vision: Ruskin, Morris, Wundt, Durkheim, Kelvin, Ferranti, Plunkett, Pasteur, Galton, Haeckel, Comte, Westermarck, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Eucken, Bergson, James, Schiller, Papini, Gide, Ingram, Hobson, Lamarck, Driesch, Le Play. His selection was curious, very personalistic, and tied to visions of the Recovery of Parnassus, the Recovery of Olympus, and a world based on
conservation, electric power, geotechnics, sociology, and social psychology! Geddes, as usual, was complex, leaving the reader bemused, but offering many snippets of what others, most notably Mumford, could build into a more coherent theory and vision.

The simple contrast between paleotechnic and neotechnic alternatives, as presented by Geddes, seems to pose easy choices between bad and good futures, yet the alternatives are rarely so simple. The quest for increased wealth in the short term often imposes longer-term social and environmental costs, and elites often enrich themselves while displacing or impoverishing some poorer social groups. Food shortages and excess abundance of food cause different health problems, but they both cause unnecessary morbidity and mortality. New transportation technologies and growing international trade facilitate the spread of high-value tree species, food crops, and livestock varieties around the world, but they also facilitate the spread of weeds, parasites, vermin, and diseases. Some cities emerge as “world cities,” command and control centers in the global system, and the centrality of those cities contrasts dramatically with the marginalization of many regional cities, especially in smaller and poorer countries and regions. Geddes was well aware of the complexity of such issues, and his writings were full of pleas for balance, moderation, and harmony. Without even using the term sustainability, he was a pioneer in examining sustainability issues: seeking paths and patterns of environmental, social and economic development that could continue in the long term.

In many senses, the Geddesian vision of the relationships between civilization, urbanism, and technology was fulfilled by Lewis Mumford in his monumental four-part book series called “The Renewal of Life.” Mumford drew on the paleotechnic/neotechnic distinction, but his treatment of the underlying issues was much more sophisticated than Geddes’s version. Mumford began with Technics and Civilization (1934), published just two years after Geddes’s death, continued with The Culture of Cities (1938), and completed the project with The Condition of Man (1944) and The Conduct of Life (1951). These were works of hope and progress, setting out a broad humanistic vision of how technology could be harnessed to improve the human condition. Soon after completing the series, however, and depressed by the loss of his son Geddes in World War II, by the cold war, by the dangers of nuclear capabilities, and by the spread of consumerism, individualism, and environmental contamination, Mumford began to develop equally monumental, but much more pessimistic works. The City in History (1961) emphasized the horrors of Coketown, Necropolis, and banal suburbs, and the two-volume Myth of the Machine (Mumford 1967 and 1970) presented Faustian visions of megamachines, pathologies of power, imperialist misadventures, and the ever-present possibility of nuclear disaster.
This chapter has focused more on Patrick Geddes than on Victor Branford. Though he convened the Cities Committee of the Sociological Society, and though his wife Sybella was active in the Garden Cities Association, Branford never described himself as a planner. His mission was always to promote sociology; to pursue a broad, activist Geddesian version of sociology, which, in Branford’s view, subsumed planning, community development, and large portions of education and social work. Branford grouped these fields together as “civics,” applied sociology to promote social reconstruction. In contrast to Branford, Geddes did write plans, most notably for Dunfermline, for numerous neighborhoods, cities and institutions in India, and for Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. His plans were full of vague pronouncements, and many were not implemented, but nevertheless they were landmark schemes advocating historic preservation, community development, and environmental conservation. For the period in which they were written, and in comparison with the works of architect-planners, they were socially, environmentally, and historically sensitive and visionary.

Though he chose other words to describe his ideas, Geddes was a pioneer of neighborhood upgrading, community development, and sustainability. Not surprisingly, therefore, his work has been more heavily profiled and praised in planning than in other disciplines. Most notable are Helen Meller’s biography, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (1990), Volker Welter’s *Biopolis: Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (2002), and Noah Hysler-Rubin’s *Patrick Geddes and Town Planning* (2011), but most of the other books published on Geddes give substantial attention to his planning work. All the book-length works on Geddes focus more on his social science and civic activism than on his scholarship in biology, and most of the books comment quite specifically on Geddes’s rather disorganized life and scholarship, and the difficulties that many experienced in understanding his lectures, notes, and thinking machines. He was a man of bounding interests and many projects, most of them frustrated, and he lived in troubled times and suffered several personal tragedies. He worked in and on several different countries, and he made two major changes in country of primary residence; from Britain to India in 1914, and from India to France in 1924. Not surprisingly, his many biographers have found it hard to summarize his works and impact. Paddy Kitchen (1975) summarized Geddes wonderfully in the title of her biography, *A Most Unsettling Person: The Life and Ideas of Patrick Geddes, Founding Father of City Planning and Environmentalism*.

As an inspiration to twenty-first-century planning, Geddes had a pioneering role in civics, university outreach, and community partnerships,
PLANNING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

historic preservation, and community development and neighborhood upgrading. His broader approach emphasized what we now call “sustainable development,” focusing on the significance of nature in the city, the interdependence of cities and rural areas, community food security, biodiversity, renewable energy, civic institutions, spirituality, and the importance of a balanced and dispersed urban system, avoiding heavy concentration on a few giant metropolitan areas or conurbations.

In the early debates of the Sociological Society, as exemplified by the articles in the three volumes of Sociological Papers, including most of the works presented to the founding meetings of the Society in 1904, 1905, and 1906, the primary debate is between eugenics, as advocated by Francis Galton, Benjamin Kidd, and others, and civics, as advocated by Patrick Geddes, Victor Branford, and others. It was apparently a classic “nature versus nurture” debate in which the two alternative explanations of the human condition are genetics and culture. In reality, however, Geddes's position was much more nuanced, combining the biological and social sciences and focusing on ecology, environment, and culture. To Geddes, the human condition had three major features: our biological nature as mammals within ecosystems; our social nature as the species uniquely possessed with powers of speech, culture, and spirituality; and, our activist nature, as a species, like ants, possessed with a tremendous capacity for social organization, construction, and improvement in the physical and social environment. This was the grand idea that Geddes and Branford sought to bring to sociology, a multifaceted vision of an activist society in its cultural and biological context. Their idea was grander and more sophisticated than eugenics, but they never managed to make it fit into universities because twentieth-century academia had more restrictive concepts of disciplines and expertise. Instead, a much narrower concept of sociology took root, a much narrower version of planning emerged as a separate discipline, and biology, psychology, anthropology, and education all took their separate courses. Meanwhile, civics, the centerpiece of Geddes and Branford's sociology, failed to find a meaningful place in universities or in most sociopolitical systems. Though civic consciousness and spirit would seem desirable attributes of every nation and society, there is little evidence that they are growing or dominant forces in the contemporary world.