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Introduction: The Circles of Patrick Geddes – Patrick Geddes and James Mavor

Cairns Craig

On 22 February 1921, Patrick Geddes wrote from the University of Bombay to James Mavor, Professor of Political Economy and Constitutional History at the University of Toronto. He announced: 'I am going home this summer especially to work with my old friends, V. Branford, first in London, then A. Thomson in Aberdeen; and it occurs to me as just possible you may also be over? If so, it would be a pity if we did not meet: there is much to talk over, and not only of old times or present, but common interests and more or less kindred outlooks'.[1] Having lost his wife, Anna, to illness in India and his son, Alasdair, in the First World War, Geddes was returning to work again with those who had been his most successful collaborators in the United Kingdom before the War – J. Arthur Thomson, who had been the co-author of his most important book on biology, *The Evolution of Sex* (1889), and Victor Branford, with whom (as John Scott and Ray Bromley recount in their contribution to this issue) he had founded the Sociological Society and *The Sociological Review* in the early years of the century. Geddes, overflowing with ideas, had depended on collaborators to turn those ideas into publications and projects, as Lewis Mumford was to discover to his consternation when, after several years of correspondence, he finally met Geddes, who immediately asked him to become the synthesiser of the chaotic 'middens' of his papers.[2] Mavor was one of Geddes's earliest collaborators in the Edinburgh summer schools and the two remained in correspondence until Mavor's death in 1925, when he was on a return trip to visit family in Glasgow. In his autobiography, *My Windows on the Street of the World* (1923), he describes Geddes as 'my dear friend of many years',[3] and his correspondence, both with Geddes and with Geddes's wife Anna, reveals how close were the relations between their families.[4]

[1] James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7b, item 56.

[2] Frank Novak (ed.), 'Introduction: Master and Disciple', *Lewis Mumford & Patrick Geddes: The Correspondence* (London and New York, 1995), 2.

[3] James Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World* (London, 1923), Vol. 1, 160.

[4] Anna Geddes wrote to Mavor from the University Settlement, 184 Eldridge Street NY, 4 March (presumably in 1900 when Geddes was on the lecture tour partly organised

Like Geddes, Mavor had never taken a university degree,[5] but before his abortive career as a student at Glasgow University had spent time in the chemical industry in Glasgow and as an assistant editor of an engineering journal, while at the same time attending courses at the Anderson Institute in Glasgow. Geddes's friendship and support was to shape much of Mavor's subsequent career. When Mavor was struggling to establish himself as Professor of Political Economy at St Mungo's College in Glasgow – an institution for working men – it was to Geddes that he turned for advice. Geddes wrote (from Montpellier) not only to offer to try to bolster Mavor's reputation by giving him French advocates – 'I shall be seeing something of Gide the economist here, and so shall prime him with your syllabus',[6] he wrote – but also to insist that Mavor retain his post whatever the difficulties:

> But I have been most seriously anxious and worrying about what you say of St. Mungo's. But you must not in any case resign – either for your own sake or the College's. A chair is always a chair and the students will come yet. I have lectured for 2 years to 2 students – of whom one who attended 2 years absconded without paying me; but J. A. Thomson I think was the other.

Thomson's importance to Geddes as a collaborator justified the effort of teaching small – and economically insignificant – numbers of students, and his advice proved prescient, since Mavor's position at St Mungo's made it possible for him to be appointed to his professorship in Toronto, despite the fact that he had no formal academic qualifications in the disciplines he was appointed to profess.

It was also through Geddes that Mavor met the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin, to whom he was introduced in Geddes's house in James Court in 1886.[7] Mavor became immediately engaged in promoting Kropotkin's ideas to

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by Mavor): 'I am very glad indeed to have seen you and the children again, and that we may meet before long either on this side of the water or better still, the other!' James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7B.

[5] He notes in *My Windows on the Street of the World*: 'I do not know that this is the best course for everyone to pursue, although for some it has advantages. It was not an unusual course in the Scots universities at that time and earlier. I followed it myself, although my doing so was rather the result of accident than of design', Vol. 1, 213.

[6] Letter to Mavor of 15 January (1893[?]), James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7b.

[7] Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, Vol. II, 91.

British working-class organisations[8] and later he would organise for Kropotkin a North American tour.[9] The inspiration of Kropotkin's ideas would lead Mavor to learn Russian, to correspond with Tolstoy, to organise the migration of the persecuted Russian religious group, the Dukhobars, to Canada, and to produce his most important academic publication, an *Economic History of Russia* (1917). Kropotkin was one of many continental radicals whom Geddes brought to his Edinburgh summer schools, creating intellectual networks (of the kind analysed by Sian Reynolds in her contribution to this issue) that lasted long into the twentieth century.

Mavor was to repay Geddes's encouragement by helping organise a lecture tour of the United States and Canada for Geddes in 1900,[10] during which Geddes was able to raise North American backing for his contribution to the Paris Exhibition of that year. He wrote to Mavor,

> The inaugural meeting of the International Association [for the advancement of science, arts, and education: Secretary: Prof. Patrick Geddes] will be held here in Chicago on the afternoon of Saturday, the twenty-fourth inst. Will it be possible for you to come over here for it, or, if possible, a day earlier, to meet Zeublin, Small etc. etc, and spend a day or two after it, say, Sunday & Monday (we leave [Chicago] on Tuesday) organizing our future co-operation in different ways? I think it would give the whole movement a much more distinctly international character from the first. … [11]

The success of their efforts decided Mavor on travelling to Paris himself; Geddes wrote, in a fashion all too typical of his chaotic lifestyle:

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[8] Letter from R. McGhee, November 3, 1886: 'Today I received a letter from Kropotkine expressing his readiness to lecture for your League on Nov 22nd. The subject will be *Socialism*.', James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 11, item 73.

[9] Kropotkin's letters to Mavor during his tour, all headed 'Dear friend', are in the James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 11, items 74ff.

[10] At some point in 1898, Anna Geddes had written to Mavor asking whether 'there would be an opening in Toronto for fairly well paid lectures', and on 13 December 1898 Geddes wrote to Mavor, 'I also note with much pleasure your very gratifying invitation to lecture in Toronto'; Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7b.

[11] Letter from Geddes to Mavor, February 15, 1900, James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7b.

> If any one of these arrangements suits you will you join me and hold forth as you did at Chicago?
>
> I have never yet paid you those travelling expenses but you must come for them![12]

Geddes's project at the Exhibition was, as Mavor notes in his autobiography, an extension of his Edinburgh summer schools but with a much larger ambition: it was 'entitled, not without a touch of grandiloquence, the "International Association for the Advancement of Science, Arts and Education – First Assembly at the Paris Exposition of 1900".'[13] The continuity with the Edinburgh summer schools was marked by the presence of Kropotkin's wife and daughter, who, with Mavor, Geddes and Anna Geddes, toured the city in the company of 'an old revolutionist named Le Français' who 'had been a boy during the Revolution of 1830, a young man in the Revolution of 1848, and an elderly man in the Communist rising in Paris in 1871: and on each occasion he had fought behind the barricades'.[14] Mavor's autobiography is full of such encounters – he was a man at home everywhere, always able to find a local guide who could condense for the visitor the essential historical experience by which a place had been shaped.

That emphasis on localism, on regionalism, on understanding the historical evolution of a particular place was a crucial element of their shared intellectual agenda in which, for Mavor, as for Geddes, Ruskin had been the initial guide to an understanding of the failings of nineteenth-century economic theory and practice. In a pamphlet of 1884 on Ruskin's economics, Geddes endorsed Ruskin's rejection of traditional economics but insisted on going further, invoking evolutionary biology to suggest that,

> … since the belly and members are dominated by a brain developed and maintained through the constant and varied stimulus of the senses, the practical ideal changes wholly. Our community, where some are so empty and weary, others so idle and full, yet all alike degenerating in their dismal cities with their long unlovely streets, their darkened and fetid air, instead of merely furnishing themes for hymns of progress and occasion for *laissez-faire*, shows clear necessity for criticism more

[12] Letter from Geddes to Mavor, 24 April, 1900, James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7b.

[13] Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, Vol. II, 107.

[14] Ibid,. Vol.II, 119.

> searching, and action more systematic than that of Mr. Ruskin. And, moreover, not only do factory acts and many other "sentimental interferences with competition and freedom of contract" become at once scientific and practical, but our theory of production culminates in the Rehabilitation of Beauty, and our productive action for country and city in the restoration of nature, and the organisation of art.[15]

Mavor underlined this 'rehabilitation of beauty' as the key issue which modern economics had to address:

> Ruskin found the explanation of the depression of life under industrial conditions in the artlessness of it—in the drudgery of mechanical reproduction of things of ugliness instead of the invention of new and beautiful things. This artlessness was due, he thought, to the conditions under which production took place, to the system of organisation of industry for profit, involving exploitation of the workers and depression of their lives to a point at which artistic emotion and artistic invention were alike impossible.[16]

Both Geddes and Mavor shared with Ruskin an insistence on 'the unity of life' and a belief 'that the fine arts are integral parts of life, are indeed the visible manifestation of the higher forms of it, and are the means by which we recognise and record them'.[17] Their shared assumptions about the inadequacies of the discipline of economics if severed from artistic purposes is clear in Mavor's account of Geddes's efforts to improve the slums into which the houses of Edinburgh's Royal Mile, from the Castle to the Palace of Holyrood, had deteriorated (and which is explored in detail in Robert Morris's article in this issue):

> By these means the White Horse Inn, Bailie Waddell's house, and other old buildings were rescued from the ravages of inferior and uncontrolled tenantry, rendered habitable by their former occupants, or others on terms of decency, or converted into students' residences. In many cases the interior architecture in French fireplaces and ceilings of the seventeenth century was revealed in an astonishing state of

[15] Patrick Geddes, *John Ruskin: Economist* (Edinburgh, 1884), 35.
[16] Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, Vol. 1, 187.
[17] Ibid., Vol. 1, 187.

> preservation, in spite of the treatment to which it had been subjected by people who had actually lived in these houses without knowing that they were surrounded by things of beauty. Geddes was really on the same track as Morris. With scarcely inferior practical sagacity, though with greatly inferior material means, Geddes had done something to bring back the surroundings of the period before the factory system had divorced the fine arts from production. Geddes had found one place where beauty still existed, overlaid as it was by the debris of two or three generations of people who cared for none of these things, and had at least shown the way by which the lost threads of artistic tradition could be recovered.[18]

Geddes had rediscovered a relationship between urban life and the aesthetic that pre-existed the 'factory system' but by doing so also pointed the way to the recovery of how that relationship could be recreated in the future. The continuity of Geddes's thought in his rejection of traditional conceptions of economics is clear in the letter to Mavor announcing his intention to return to work again with Branford and with Thomson: to the Professor of Political Economy he writes

> But where and how do you economists adjust yourselves to Sociology in its most general and comprehensive claims? … what of your "classic" economics? Instead of seeing the devt. of Physiocratics to Economics, it looks to me as a fall from Physiocratics to Agoracratics, and via Mechanocratics to Mammonacratics etc thrown in. So that progress for me is into Biocratics – which is very much like Physiocratics in a new spiral. The old "Orthodox Economics" I thus see as a mythology, with mammon for its god & "the economic man" as the correspondingly neat inversion of the divine avatar of love and sacrifice into self-love and sacrifice of others, and with "the ideal market" as his paradise.[19]

Geddes acknowledges Mavor, however, as being 'really sociological, and no longer thus mythopoetic', and assumes that what unites them is that,

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[18] Ibid,. Vol. 1, 215–16.

[19] Geddes, letter to Mavor, 22 February 1921, University of Bombay, James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7B, item 56.

> I hold with Comte (as I take it you also largely or completely do?) that society has also always its "spiritual" sides, of "intellectuals" and "emotionals" as Comte called them – or of "intuitionals" and "expressionals" as others may: but any way the emotional (& religious) the scientific (& philosophic) the imagnv (& poetic) spirits representing the former, like the monks of old, and the latter, like the priesthoods, statesmen and leaders, the artists & the inspired and inspiring women, all constituting the latter, and expressing the nascent ideals of the more cloistered minds, & to the people and their chiefs alike.[20]

Art is no mere epiphenomenon of economic life but its essential complement, its fundamental completion.

It was this conception of the necessary aesthetic understanding of society, without which any sociology or political economy would be incomplete, that drove both men's critique of the socialist and collectivist traditions that represented the major political alternative to laissez-faire capitalism in the last decades of the nineteenth century. At the close of the Paris Exhibition in 1900, Geddes and Mavor took, as a holiday, 'a little walking trip in the north of France', and it is typical of their interest in the relationship between the natural world and the urban world that, at St Cloud, 'we wandered in the forest and noticed, in the plan of the forest roads and in their frequent *rond-points*, the evidences of the origin of the plan for the city of Paris'.[21] Also typical is their response to the model industrial establishment at Guise created by the author of *Solutions Sociales*, Jean-Baptiste Godin, who 'had made a fortune out of the manufacture of stoves and kitchen utensils, and he determined to give his Fourierism tangible force by converting his factory into a co-operative society and his workers' dwellings into a *phalanstère*'. This socialist utopia, however, failed the standards by which Geddes and Mavor judged initiatives to change the lives of the working-classes:

> He gave everyone who was employed an interest in the business, he built houses for his people, built a theatre, established schools for them, and founded scholarships for the more promising among the pupils, to enable them to pursue their studies at Paris. Yet the whole enthusiastic experiment produced upon us the effect of a chill. To describe the products of the factory as commonplace would be to flatter them.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, Vol. II, 120.

> They may have been popular in the French kitchens, and they may have served their menial purposes but so far as design was concerned they were destitute of applied intelligence. The houses were obviously designed on the Fourier model. They were *phalanstères*, excepting that they were not arranged like fingers. Perhaps they might be better described as large apartment houses in which people lived in groups. Built in an expensive manner, they were nevertheless ugly. Here also there was no sign of intelligent design. The most depressing feature of the whole experiment was the total absence of influence upon the town of Guise. This ancient town consists of squalid cottages huddled under the walls of the Castle. The contrast between the commonplace splendour of Godin's model factory town with the squalor of Guise was too vivid. The people of Guise, probably from instinctively sound motives, seemed to prefer individualism with poverty to the regulated co-operative life of the Godin phalanstery.[22]

A regulated socialist egalitarianism not infused with 'design' and with aesthetic value was anathema to both Geddes and Mavor: the transformation of the modern world could only be achieved by bridging the gap between economics and art, by infusing into the urban environment the qualities of the best art, whether the art of the folk or the art of the great individual practitioner. It is this that distinguishes Geddes's and Mavor's conception of sociology and economics from the mainstream disciplines which were developing around them (as described both in John Scott and Ray Bromley's article and Alex Law's analysis), as was their belief that their disciplines were not merely the site of academic enquiry and observation but the potential motors of social change.

This deep friendship between Geddes and Mavor was based, fundamentally, on their shared resistance to the conceptions of evolution that they inherited from their nineteenth-century predecessors – Geddes in the biological determinism of Darwin and Huxley, Mavor in the economic determinism of Marx. For Huxley, the point of Darwin's theories was their denial of religious interpretations of the world, their refutation of 'that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science'.[23]

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[22] Ibid., Vol. II, 122–3.

[23] Thomas Henry Huxley, *Autobiography and Selected Essays from Lay Sermons* (New York, 1910), 15.

Geddes and Mavor – both, it should be recalled, sons of the first generation after the Disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843 – rejected the materialist implications of those traditions in favour of a 'spiritual' conception of evolution, similar to that of the Scottish theologian William Robertson Smith (another of the first generation of the Disruption), for whose ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Geddes had provided many articles on biology. Geddes and Thomson, in their co-authored *Evolution* of 1911, insisted, for instance, on the vital role of the social virtues in human evolution:

> It is that the general progress both of the plant and the animal world, and notably the great uplifts … must be viewed not simply as individual but very largely in terms of sex and parenthood, of family and association; and hence of gregarious flocks and herds, of co-operative packs, of evolving tribes, and thus ultimately of civilized societies – above all, therefore, of the city. Huxley's tragic vision of "nature as a gladiatorial show", and consequently of ethical life and progress as merely superposed by man, as therefore an interference with the normal order of Nature, is still too dominant among us.[24]

The 'gladiator show' is replaced by 'an Eden' where, 'though competition can never be wholly eliminated', we have to recognise 'love as "creation's final law".'[25] In this perspective, the scientific world view was no longer to be regarded as *antithetical* to the spiritual:

> So it is with the science of energy on the one hand, with that of society on the other; physics and aesthetics, economics and ethics are steadily recovering their long-forgotten unity. The age of mechanical dualism is ending; materialism and spiritualism have each had their day; that of an organic and Idealist monism is begun. The studies of sun and stars, of rock and flower, of beast and man, of race and destiny are becoming once more a single discipline; complex, indeed, but no more a mere maze than a mere chaos, no more a mere fixed unity than a maze; but a growing Cosmos, a literal Uni-verse, of which the protean variety of Man and Nature are seen to be orderly developments; each phase of being, of becoming; each at once a Mood of the Universal Energy.[26]

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[24] Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, *Evolution* (London, 1911), 176–7.

[25] Ibid., 247.

[26] Patrick Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', *Evergreen* II (1895), 29.

The new energy physics that had been pioneered in Glasgow by Lord Kelvin – whom Mavor had known as a boy from his visits to James White's shop for mathematical instrument making, White being a friend of Mavor's father – had uncovered the protean unity of the universe by showing how all forms of matter are simply particular organisations of energy, capable of transformation into other kinds of energy: the world is both uniform – everything is energy – and yet in constant flux as one form of energy metamorphoses into another. The evolution of lifeforms can therefore be envisaged as the development towards ever more complex creatures capable of mobilising spiritual as well as physical energy. As Mavor put it in a lecture in 1900:

> The truth is that even the finest impulses of life which for want of a better name we call spiritual are integral parts of it – that life consists as much of these spiritual impulses as it consists of the impulses of hunger and of love and that they can be no more disregarded than can either of these. By spiritual impulses I mean no mere adhesion to any creed or desire, to perform any rite or ceremony but rather those intellectual and moral impulses which arise when a man is fully poised and is in full possession of his whole nature as it were. At such moments or in such a temper a man looks at life squarely in the face and realizes not merely what ought to be done in a particular case, but realizes what must be done persistently in order that he may live at his highest pitch, since action and character act upon one another.
>
> A society may be held to be progressive which more and more tends to produce such men, and a society may be said to be reactionary which tends to produce their opposite.[27]

Just as Geddes had incorporated in his journal *The Evergreen* (1895–6) both modern scientific theories, whether biological or sociological, together with the aesthetic Celticism of Fiona Macleod (William Sharp) and its decorative elaboration in the artwork of John Duncan (which is explored in this issue by both John Morrison and Murdo MacDonald), so Mavor set himself to create in Toronto the infrastructure of a 'spiritual' world that was no 'mere adhesion to any creed or desire', but rather encouraged the city's citizenry to take 'full possession of [their] whole nature' by creating an environment suffused with

[27] Address to the Archdeaconry Conference on 'Social Progress and Spiritual Life', 14 November 1900, James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto Box 58a, item 144, 4–5.

aesthetic values. Mavor might have been a teacher of political economy and constitutional history, but he did not regard these as ends in themselves: in his analyses of the various societies he visited or wrote about, his concern was with the culture that an economy and a constitutional structure could maintain. In post-war Germany, Mavor noted how the former 'palace of the Crown Prince … had already been converted into a gallery of modern art' which contained 'examples of many of the new schools' but, ominously, 'there was not observable any artistic movement arising out of the war or out of the mood of the peace'.[28] Economic strength was of no value unless it could be turned into communal virtue, and he took the opportunity of explaining, in the introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition of recent Scottish art shown in the United States and Canada, how private wealth could become the stimulus to communal cultural achievement. Glasgow's successful industrialists had developed their own aesthetic tastes by buying major works of European art but by then making them available to young Glasgow artists and to the general public, had inspired the young artists of the city and its region to emulation and experiment:

> About 30 years ago, or in 1876, some of the Glasgow merchants, having become wealthy during the previous [era] of great prosperity on the Clyde, began to buy not old masters, but paintings by the Barbizon and the modern Dutch school … One Glasgow merchant after another was induced to make collections. A regular stream of Delacroix, Corots, D'Seivigny, Millets, Rousseaus, Diazes, Montecellis, and Marises came into Glasgow between 1876 and 1886 … They had their influence on the art students because they were always being seen. They were leant to exhibitions and in many cases the private galleries were open to students who wished to see them.[29]

Glasgow was offered as an example to the growing class of wealthy business people in Toronto and, believing that in art as in economics *exchange* as the foundation of wealth, Mavor made strenuous efforts to take the work of Canadian artists to the Paris Exhibition of 1900.[30] This conception of

[28] Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, Vol. II, 418.

[29] See James Mavor, 'Preface for an exhibition catalogue, Glasgow School of Artists, curated by Charles M. Kurtz of Buffalo', Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto Box 56a, item 16.

[30] See letter from Anna Geddes, 24 November, 1899, James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 7B.

the spiritual value of art to a society was to be the inspiration of his very substantial contribution to the foundation of the major cultural institutions of Toronto – including both the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum.

In making art the centre of civic life, Mavor was carrying into practice the philosophy that had driven Geddes's thinking and underpinned his active civic engagement in Edinburgh in the 1880s. In 1897, only five years after his arrival in Toronto, Mavor wrote the foreword to a document setting out the aims of the Toronto Guild of Civic Art, in which he declared that 'its two chief purposes were to promote and encourage production of works of art intended for the embellishment of the city and for its public buildings, and second to provide an organization for a discrimination and selection of these'.[31] The raw newness of Toronto and its materialist drive to the accumulation of wealth were to be redirected towards higher purposes and to be given spiritual direction by the accumulation of art and the exhibition of the scientific understanding of the world. Half a century on the *Civic Guild Bulletin* was proud to record its achievements, and to note Mavor's contribution in the first decade of the century:

> Ontario's Parliament Buildings and the City Hall's walls can best show how the Guild of Civic Art served its community sixty years ago. Their choice of historic scenes has given us a treasure house of precious records in murals and sculpture. Financial kings, artists, architects and poets, college heads and historians, united to prove modern Toronto's culture was founded in her pioneer days.
>
> Owing to the growing interest in city planning the scope of the society was widened and in 1901 it changed its name to the Civic Guild and soon four hundred members extended services which blossomed into to-day's Planning Boards. Early members can be traced who suggested to-day's municipal affairs department in the provincial government and even the Metropolitan set-up. Parks and pathways were among the first projects. To it all Professor James Mavor gave his enthusiasm to make dreams come true and a world of knowledge.[32]

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[31] 'The Toronto Guild of Civic Arts', Extract from Civic Guild Bulletins, 1901 – 1912, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 56a, item 34.

[32] James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 56B, item 34.

Though Geddes played no active part in Mavor's work in Toronto, that city's modern artistic and educational inheritance can be traced directly to the influence he exerted through Mavor, and in Mavor's active engagement in institution-building designed to fulfil his and Geddes's conception of a *polis* made virtuous by art.

The reach of Geddes's influence, however, can be traced even further in the development of the artistic and civic life of Canada, through the work of Mavor's daughter, Dora Mavor Moore, the first Canadian graduate of London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and first Canadian actress to play a leading role on the Broadway stage. As Geddes sought ways of connecting art and community in the modern world, he had come to emphasise the role of drama as the medium through which a people could express and recognise itself. In particular, he came to see the historical 'masque' as the mode in which people could learn about their own communal past by actually participating in its re-enactment. The masque allowed people both to be *actors* of their own past history and, at the same time, made them aware of how they could be *agents* in their contemporary environment: Geddes's masques involved hundreds of participants re-enacting the history which had shaped their contemporary environment in a 'dramatised education'[33] that was aimed at

> an awakening of imagination, and to fuller creative activities. It is an evolutionary synthesis in the making; and a manifold and ever-increasing collaboration towards its expression. For vital effect, the whole had to be infused by a common idealism, at once artistic, philosophic, and social, and applied towards the enrichment of the City's life, through the diffusion of its past Heritage, and the appreciation of its opening Future.[34]

Drama was potentially the most educative and the most communal of the arts, and it was one that Mavor wanted to encourage in Toronto, which he did by regularly hosting visits by the innovative theatrical group, the Ben Greet Players (sometimes known as the Ben Greet Woodland Players), who had developed a philosophy of playing Shakespeare and other canonical plays in an outdoor environment that encouraged the participation of those who might not attend

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[33] Patrick Geddes, *Dramatisations of History I, The Masque of ancient learning and its many meanings* (Bombay, London, Edinburgh, 1923), 101.

[34] Ibid.

a traditional theatre.[35] This strategy had been developed in London from the 1880s but proved particularly effective in North America, where, in the years before the First World War, major outdoor theatrical events were combined with performances for schools. Dora Mavor Moore trained in the Ben Greet company and developed in Toronto her own version of community drama. She wrote to Greet (who was knighted in 1929),

> My dear Sir Philip,
> You have no idea how thrilled I was to get your letter which was forwarded on to me here in the wilds of Ontario. My boys are at Camp in the neighbourhood and I am having some delightful days with friends, canoeing, sailing, swimming and generally basking in our Canadian sunshine. Your enclosure was most interesting and I am delighted to know that you are still putting on plays. I only wish I had known that you were on this side of the Atlantic. Is there any chance of your coming down to N.Y. Autumn? If there is I'll run down to N.Y. to see you! I am expecting to be there for the opening of my cousin's play, "The Sleeping Clergyman", which the Theatre Guild is putting on for their first production. His nom de plume is James Bridie and his real name as perhaps you know is Dr Osborne Mavor of Glasgow. His plays appear to have been successful in the Old Land but whether they will be well received in New York is another matter …
>
> … For the last few years I have been trying to give a feeble imitation in Ontario of what you did for the N.Y. High Schools with Shakespeare, and largely due to my apprenticeship with you, have been successful to a certain extent. At any rate I have the wolf from the door for myself and my three boys.
>
> It was dear of you to write and I do appreciate your thinking of your old pupil. When I return to Toronto, I shall send you some of my programmes.[36]

Her modesty belied the quality of her achievement because she was in the process of establishing Toronto's first professional theatre, whose initial

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[35] See for instance James Mavor Collection, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 11, item 65, letter from Frank McEntree offering another series of Pastoral Plays in their spring tour.

[36] Dora Mavor Moore Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 59, item 14.

offerings were to include many Scottish plays by J. M. Barrie and her cousin, James Bridie (Osborne Mavor), and she was subsequently instrumental in the establishment of the Stratford Festival which, like the Ben Greet Players, sought to present Shakespeare in a theatrical space more like Shakespeare's Globe than nineteenth-century proscenium arch theatres.

What Dora Mavor Moore was doing in Ontario had significant parallels with what was happening in Scotland, for her cousin Osborne Mavor was also involved in the establishment of a community theatre, the Citizens in Glasgow, founded in 1943, and was also responsible for the development of new a kind of theatrical space through the production of Sir David Lindsay's *The Thrie Estaites*, presented at the second Edinburgh International Festival in 1948 at the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, using a stage that thrust into the auditorium. The director of that now famous performance of *The Thrie Estaites* (the first since 1554) was Tyrone Guthrie, who subsequently became the first director of the Stratford Festival in 1953, using the same staging techniques, and establishing its international reputation as a place for the innovative recreation of classical drama, and, later, as a place for the development of Canadian drama.

The Mavors, on both sides of the Atlantic, bear witness to the influence of Patrick Geddes – and to his insistence on the relationship between creativity and community. It was through the circles of *his* collaborators and *their* collaborators, and through the institutions that they founded in fulfilment of the kind of cultural activism that he promoted, that Geddes helped shape many cultures in the modern world.

The papers gathered here derive from a symposium supported by the AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen, as part of a project on Scotland's intellectual migrants. Thanks to the generosity of Mrs Mona Shea, we were fortunate to be able to hold the symposium in Ramsay Garden, in the very room decorated with murals by John Duncan to which both John Morrison's and Murdo MacDonald's papers refer. We would like to thank both the AHRC and Mrs Shea for making our discussions possible, and hope that this publication of them will continue to develop our understanding of the impact of Patrick Geddes not only on twentieth-century culture but on our contemporary intellectual environment.

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