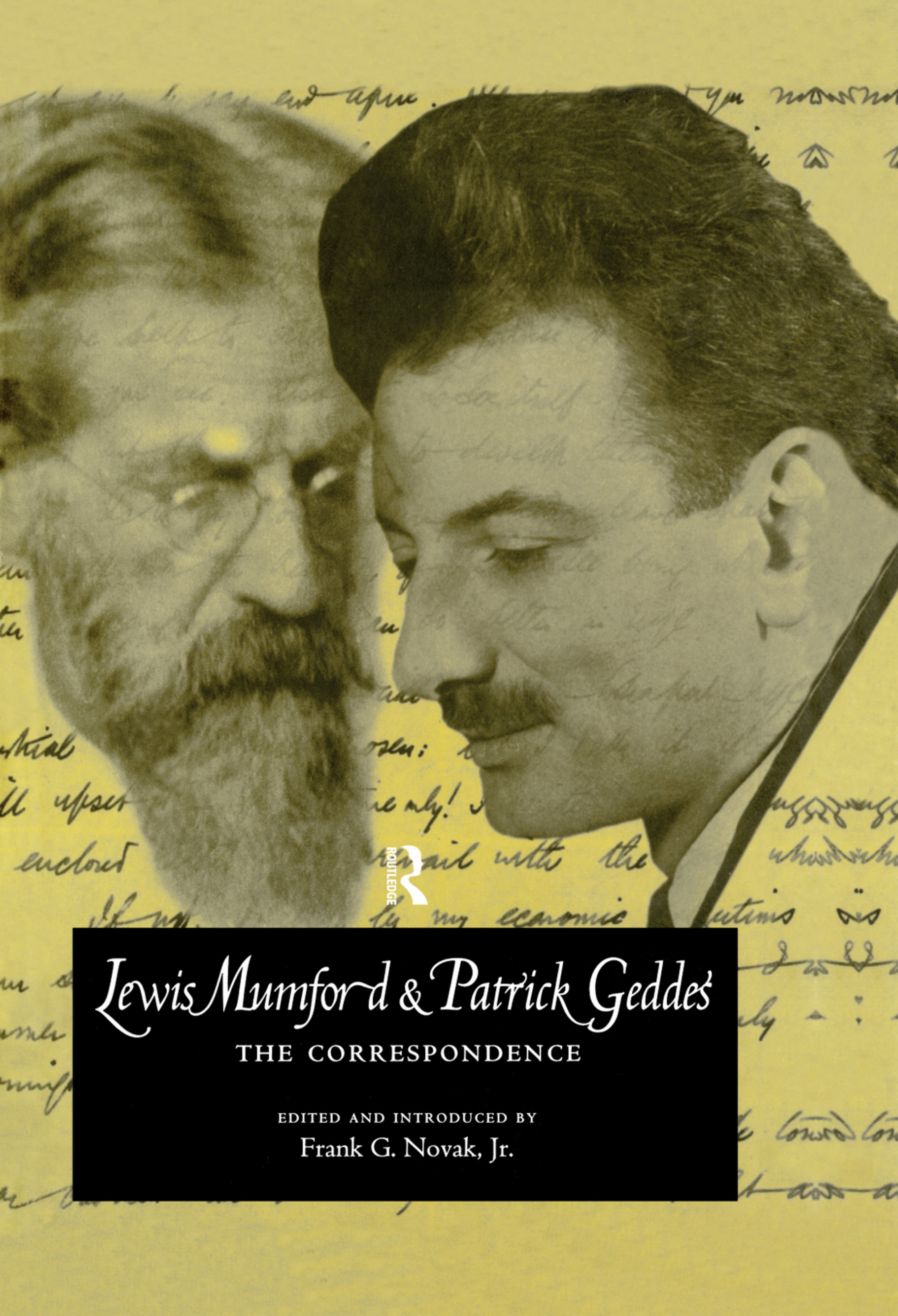
ROUTLEDGE
Lewis Mumford & Patrick Geddes
THE CORRESPONDENCE
EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY
Frank G. Novak, Jr.

Lewis Mumford AND *Patrick Geddes*

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Lewis Mumford AND *Patrick Geddes*

THE CORRESPONDENCE

Edited and introduced by

Frank G. Novak, Jr.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The Lewis Mumford Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library contains most of Geddes' letters to Mumford (folders 5827–5835). In the late 1960s, Mumford sent a number of Geddes' letters to his friend Phillip Boardman, in Norway, as Boardman was researching the revised edition of his Geddes biography. A few of these letters were apparently never returned to Mumford, probably having been lost or destroyed, but copies remain in the collection of Boardman papers at the University of Oslo. Nearly all of Geddes' letters are handwritten, and a number of words and passages are very difficult to decipher. Geddes often used abbreviations and an idiosyncratic shorthand in his writing. The following transcriptions spell out these abbreviations and translate the shorthand. Geddes was inconsistent and sometimes careless in his spelling, punctuation, and use of accents on foreign words. The transcribed letters correct the obvious errors, and an effort has been made to be consistent in regularizing mechanical elements without altering meaning or compromising Geddes' distinctive style. Where the standard form is not obvious or appropriate, the letter has been transcribed verbatim; in other words, one should assume that any unusual or nonstandard forms contained in the transcriptions printed here also exist in the originals. Geddes' letters contain British spellings, which Geddes used in almost all instances. In order to retain something of the flavor of Geddes' swift, often impulsive writing, his use of the ampersand (&) is retained throughout.

The Patrick Geddes Collection at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh contains most of Mumford's letters to Geddes (manuscript 10575). One Mumford letter is in the collection of Geddes papers at the University of Strathclyde Archives, Glasgow. Nearly all of Mumford's letters are typed. Geddes occasionally refers to letters from Mumford that have apparently been lost; but, in view of Geddes' peripatetic career and disorderly habits, it is amazing that so many have survived. Mumford kept copies of several of his earliest letters to Geddes, whose originals have been lost, and those copies (from the University of Pennsylvania Lewis Mumford Collection) are reprinted here. The relatively few obvious errors in Mumford's letters have been corrected. Following

the original manuscripts, Mumford's letters are transcribed using American spellings.

This volume contains transcriptions of all the Geddes–Mumford letters at the National Library of Scotland, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Oslo, and the University of Strathclyde. Mumford included excerpts from a few of his letters to Geddes in *Findings and Keepings: Analects for an Autobiography* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) and in *My Works and Days: A Personal Chronicle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).

The letters are generally arranged in chronological order. When logically appropriate, the order varies to take into account the sequence in which each letter was received and responded to – although one or both correspondents may have written subsequent letters while previous ones were still in transit. For example, Mumford's letter of 5 December 1920 is followed by Geddes' of 10 January 1921 (as a direct and detailed response to the 5 December letter); Mumford's of 3 January 1921 follows Geddes' of 10 January.

Certain parts of the letters are not transcribed because they are missing or illegible. These omissions are indicated in the text by the bracketed ellipsis: [...].

The following abbreviations are used in the identification which appears in brackets beneath the date of each letter:

Ms: Handwritten
Ts: Typescript
NLS: National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
Oslo: Philip Boardman Papers, University of Oslo Library, Norway
UP: Lewis Mumford Collection, University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library, Philadelphia

PATRICK GEDDES: A CHRONOLOGY

1854	Born at Ballater, West Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on 2 October.
1857	Family moves to Perth, Scotland.
1874–1878	Studies biology under Thomas Huxley at the Royal School of Mines in London.
1879	During a scientific expedition in Mexico suffers temporary blindness and develops the graphic method using folded squares of paper.
1880–1888	Biology demonstrator and zoology lecturer at the University of Edinburgh.
1886	Marries Anna Morton; resides at James Court, in old Edinburgh, where he instigates urban improvement projects and establishes University Hall as a student residence.
1887–1899	Directs the Edinburgh Summer Meetings, a summer school program visited by many distinguished intellectuals.
1888	Unsuccessful applicant for the Regius Chair of Botany at the University of Edinburgh.
1888–1919	Holds chair of botany at University College in Dundee, summer terms only, endowed for Geddes by J. Martin White.
1890	Acquires Outlook Tower in Edinburgh to develop as regional museum and "sociological laboratory."

1897	Directs agricultural development project in Cyprus.
1899–1900	Visits America, December–March; meets intellectual luminaries and education leaders in Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York.
1900	Conducts a study program at the Exposition Universelle held in Paris.
1903	Helps to found the Sociological Society of London.
1904	Publishes *City Development: A Study of Parks, Gardens, and Culture-Institutes: A Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust.*
1910	Cities and Town Planning Exhibition first displayed.
1912	Declines offer of knighthood.
1914	Travels to India at the invitation of Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras, to show the Cities Exhibition and to assist municipalities as a town-planning consultant. Continues to work in India until 1924, returning to Dundee for the summer term (through 1919). In October 1914, the Cities Exhibition, en route to India, is lost when the freighter carrying it is sunk by a German raider.
1915	Publishes *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics.*
1917	In April, his son Alasdair is killed in action on the Western Front. In May, his wife Anna dies in Calcutta. Receives the first letter from Lewis Mumford, probably in August.
1919	Commissioned by the Zionist Federation to plan the new Hebrew University in Jerusalem; appointed to the Chair of Sociology at the University of Bombay, which he holds through 1924, and founds the Department of Civics and Sociology at Bombay.
1923	On 7 May, he arrives in New York and meets Lewis Mumford. He gives a course of lectures at the New School for Social Research, 25 June–4 August.
1924	Seriously ill, in April he travels to Montpellier, France, to recuperate. In September, he begins work on the Collège des Ecossais at Montpellier.
1925	In April, he travels to Jerusalem for the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew University. In September, Lewis Mumford visits Geddes at Edinburgh.

1928 Marries Lillian Brown in January.

1932 Awarded knighthood in January.

1932 Dies at Montpellier on 17 April.

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LEWIS MUMFORD: A CHRONOLOGY

1895	Born in Flushing, New York, on 19 October.
1912	Enrolls in the City College of New York.
1914	First reads works by Geddes in the fall.
1915	Writes to the Outlook Tower. Reads Geddes' *City Development* and *Cities in Evolution.*
1916	Inspector for the Joint Board of the Dress and Waist Industry in New York.
1917	Works in Pittsburgh as a cement tester for the Bureau of Standards, May–July. Receives the first letter from Geddes, dated 8 August.
1918	Joins the Navy; is stationed first at Newport, Rhode Island, then assigned to the Radio Training School at Cambridge, Massachusetts.
1919	Discharged from the Navy in February. Serves as an associate editor for *The Dial*, March–November.
1920	Lives in London where he serves as editor of the *Sociological Review*, April–October.
1921	Marries Sophia Wittenberg and lives in Greenwich Village.
1922	Travels in Europe with Sophia, July–November. *The Story of Utopias.* Moves to Brooklyn Heights.

1923	Helps to found the Regional Planning Association of America and serves as the organization's secretary. Meets Geddes for the first time when he visits New York to lecture at the New School for Social Research.
1924	*Sticks and Stones.*
1925	Son Geddes born on 5 July. Lectures on American literature at the International Summer School in Geneva. Visits Geddes in Edinburgh in September. Moves to Sunnyside Gardens, Queens.
1926	Spends the summer at Troutbeck, Joel Spingarn's estate near Amenia, New York. *The Golden Day.*
1929	Visiting professor at Dartmouth College. *Herman Melville.*
1931	Begins writing "The Sky Line" column for *The New Yorker*, which he continued to write through 1963. *The Brown Decades.*
1932	Study trip to Europe.
1934	*Technics and Civilization*, first volume in the Renewal of Life series.
1935	Daughter Alison born on 28 April.
1936	Settles permanently in the Leedsville community, near Amenia, New York.
1938	*The Culture of Cities.*
1942	Serves as head of the School of Humanities at Stanford University (resigned in 1944).
1944	Son Geddes killed in combat in Italy. *The Condition of Man.*
1951	Visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania, an appointment that he held for ten years. *The Conduct of Life.*
1956	*The Transformations of Man.*
1961	*The City in History* wins the National Book Award.
1967	*The Myth of the Machine: I. Technics and Human Development.*
1970	*The Myth of the Machine: II. The Pentagon of Power.*

1982	*Sketches from Life*, his autobiography.
1990	Dies at his Amenia home on 26 January.

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INTRODUCTION: MASTER AND DISCIPLE

THE CORRESPONDENTS

Patrick Geddes exerted a profound and decisive influence on Lewis Mumford's thought and writing. Beginning in 1915, Geddes' writings on the city, his vitalistic philosophy, and his role as a "professor of things in general" were crucial factors in shaping Mumford's interests and purposes at the outset of his literary career. Although he was separated from the peripatetic Scotsman by oceans and continents and met him on only two occasions, Mumford repeatedly acknowledged Geddes as the mentor of his youth and as his most important teacher. In 1930, the cumulative effect of Geddes' teachings and example ignited in Mumford what he termed an "explosion of energy" that propelled his signal achievement in American letters, and Geddes continued to be a vital influence throughout his long and voluminous career. The spirit of the man Mumford addressed as "master" permeates his work – from his first book, *The Story of Utopias* (1922), to his last, *Sketches from Life* (1982).

Lewis Mumford wrote his first letter to Patrick Geddes in 1917, and they corresponded regularly until the latter's death in 1932. Given Geddes' remarkable impact on Mumford, their correspondence is particularly important for understanding the development of this prolific and versatile American critic of culture. Mumford's letters to Geddes tell the story of his intellectual and literary coming-of-age, and they document the evolution of his early career. The letters also tell the story of a personal relationship that had a sad, if not tragic, conclusion. Mumford's youthful dream of studying and working with his intellectual hero never came to pass; nor was Geddes' hope that Mumford become his surrogate son, amanuensis, biographer, and popularizer ever realized. The letters chart the progressive changes in Mumford's relationship with his master, from initial adulation, through early disillusionment and rebellion, to reconciliation and continued, though tempered, admiration.

Their relationship was in certain important respects that of father and son: in its early stages, Mumford looked to Geddes as his mentor and role model; yet within

a few years Mumford found himself growing increasingly restive under the insistent demands and dogmatism of the man whom he had acknowledged his "intellectual parent" (LM 17 November 1922). After 1925, the aging Geddes' pleas that Mumford join him for collaboration at Montpellier, France, became progressively more urgent and unrealistic. Concurrently, Mumford was rapidly gaining literary prestige and was enjoying an expanding demand for his articles and books. In the final phase of their relationship, the weak and ill Geddes desperately, even pathetically, begged Mumford to edit his chaotic "middens" of papers and to continue his work. However, by 1930 it was too late, for the "disciple" had become a confident and wide-ranging intellectual as well as a prominent and successful writer, pursuing a career quite independent of his master; Mumford had reached the threshold of the major phase of his mature career. At that point, Geddes reluctantly began to recognize that he was at the end of his career and that his grandiose ambitions would probably never be realized. Nevertheless, less than a year before his death, Geddes still nurtured the dream that Mumford would join him for the long-anticipated, rousing "Pallas owl-flight" together and would assume the role of intellectual heir and "literary legatee" (PG 17 May 1931).

Although they shared many of the same interests and values, the Geddes–Mumford relationship linked two contrasting personalities who possessed very different temperaments and talents. Geddes was a man of action who was incessantly forming new contacts, travelling to new places, and promoting new schemes; he planned and renovated cities, founded societies and colleges, organized conferences and educational programs. He was notoriously impatient with those who balked at his frenetic pace and precipitate impulsiveness. Continually in financial difficulty, Geddes typically turned to new projects before previous ones had been completed. He was a man of the Victorian Age who had studied under Thomas Huxley, had met Charles Darwin, and had encountered his hero Thomas Carlyle walking in Chelsea. Mumford, on the other hand, was disciplined, methodical, and consistently productive. He aspired above all else to be a great writer and did his main work in the library and at his writing desk. He was single-mindedly, sometimes even ruthlessly, committed to his writing and the success of his literary career. Growing up in turn-of-the-century New York, he served in the U.S. navy during World War I and lost his son in World War II; he witnessed the "roaring twenties," the Great Depression, the atomic bomb, the Vietnam War, and the election of Ronald Reagan. Geddes was imperious, impatient, and impulsive while Mumford was contemplative and cautious; Geddes was more the extrovert, Mumford the introvert. Geddes liked to express his ideas in an idiosyncratic, "intellectual shorthand," while Mumford preferred carefully crafted, eloquently written prose. Despite the deep affection and respect each held for the other, these fundamental differences in age, experience, temperament, and work habits undermined their hopes to establish a collaborative partnership.

Geddes and Mumford were prolific correspondents, who both typically wrote several letters each day. The approximately 160 letters they exchanged represent only a small fraction of the thousands of letters they wrote to and received from others. Mumford conducted extensive correspondences with numerous people, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Henry A. Murray, Van Wyck Brooks, and Frederic J. Osborn.

Geddes' many correspondents included Jagadis Bose, Henri Bergson, James Mavor, and Mahatma Gandhi.[1]

While he is renowned for his writings on architecture and the city, Mumford considered his letters to be an important aspect of his literary achievement and to contain some of his best writing. His two autobiographical "miscellanies," *Findings and Keepings* and *My Works and Days*, include extensive selections from his correspondence. He claimed that his letters "tell as much about my literary as about my intellectual and personal development."[2] And he believed that they possess merits that distinguish them from the writing he produced for publication: "I have always said that my letters were better than any formal work I had written: my correspondents drew out something that an anonymous audience never received."[3] Mumford's letters to Geddes do, in fact, portray a persona different from that projected in his more formal published writings. The letters are more discursive and self-revealing, often more fluid and graceful than the massive volumes of cultural history and criticism on which his reputation rests. The letters more resemble in style and tone his autobiographical works, *Green Memories*, a memoir of his son Geddes, and *Sketches from Life*, his autobiography.[4]

Although he wrote many books and articles, Geddes never completed the "opus syntheticum," the comprehensive statement of his philosophy he hoped to write with Mumford's assistance.[5] As for what Geddes did publish, Mumford warned that readers are likely to be "put off by his crabbed, somewhat Carlylean style, by his incomplete thoughts, by his impatient shortcuts and his willful exaggerations." Mumford believed that Geddes' published writings inadequately reflect the depth and richness of the man's mind and personality; he stated that they do not fully convey "his stern common sense, his massive practical grasp, his astonishing breadth of scholarship, his relentless confrontation of reality."[6] Mumford insisted that to appreciate the true genius of Geddes one had to encounter the man in person, but he also noted that "the essential Geddes from time to time would spring up in his letters."[7] Accordingly, while their correspondence is more important for what it reveals about Mumford's intellectual development and early career, Geddes' letters provide vivid glimpses of a mind and personality that his published writings rarely offer. The letters reveal "the essential Geddes" in flashes of memorable eloquence, original insight, and ruthlessly honest personal confession; they reflect his impressive learning and zest for life; they show his generosity, passion, and humor. Moreover, Mumford found in Geddes' letters an intimacy, particularly in his sensitive responses to Mumford's requests for guidance, that their personal encounters lacked: "Paradoxically, I was closest to Geddes when we were spatially far apart and had to communicate by letter" (WD 103).

Geddes' enduring renown must be attributed, in large part, to his relationship with Mumford. Throughout his major works and in a number of essays and autobiographical writings, Mumford frequently and generously acknowledges Geddes' influence. Discussions of Mumford almost invariably mention the dramatic and profound impact Geddes had on his young disciple, and several scholars have given particular attention to this influence.[8] When he first read Geddes' writings on the city in 1915, Mumford experienced what he described as a sudden and dramatic intellectual awakening. Because of Geddes' influence, Mumford eventually expanded his research and writing beyond the streets and architecture of his native New York, beyond

American art and literature, to a broader field that encompassed the history of the city and technological development in Western civilization and, ultimately, the evolution of the human mind and cultural expression from pre-history to the present. Just as important as the Geddesian ideas and outlook that the young Mumford found so stimulating was the master's role as a model of the intellectual vocation. This example inspired Mumford to develop a wide-ranging approach, a style of "audacious insurgency," and a literary career that were uniquely his own. Although the disciple rebelled and eventually supplanted his master, much of Mumford's work can be read as a response to and extension of Geddes' thought. Moreover, Mumford has paid homage to his master by commemorating him as an ideal, symbolic personality. In fact, given the master's decisive and continuing influence on his productive and distinguished disciple, Geddes might well have claimed Lewis Mumford as his greatest achievement.

Geddes' published writing only partially accounts for the enormous impact he had on Mumford, and their two personal encounters were brief, disappointing, and unproductive. The correspondence was their consistent and most important means of contact and dialogue: Geddes and Mumford established, sustained, and defined their relationship by means of the letters they wrote to one another. Moreover, Mumford's dated annotations on Geddes' letters indicate that he read and re-read them throughout the half-century after his master's death. The Geddes–Mumford letters are notable not only because they document an important Anglo-American intellectual friendship, but also because they describe a fascinating psychological relationship that linked two very different, very powerful personalities; theirs was a complex, multi-faceted relationship both intellectually and personally. In order to appreciate the significance of the correspondence, it is important to understand something of Geddes' continuing, long-term influence on Mumford as well as how Mumford commemorated the thought and personality of his master. For the letters are interesting because of what they conceal as well as what they disclose.

DISCOVERY

Mumford discovered the work of Patrick Geddes in the fall of 1914, at the age of eighteen, when he was a student in the Evening Session of the City College of New York. As part of his studies in a biology course, he read *The Evolution of Sex* (1899) and *Evolution* (1911), works co-authored by Geddes and his long-time associate J. Arthur Thomson. Mumford was arrested by those sections of the books which bore the distinctive Geddesian imprint, "his Meredithian style and his vigorous and entirely refreshing point of view" (SL 144).[9] Within a year he had also read Geddes' *City Development* (1903), and in early 1916 he imported *Cities in Evolution* (1915) from the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh, Geddes' quondam research headquarters where he had established an "index museum" and "sociological laboratory."[10] Mumford recalls that he experienced a feeling of "elation equal only to that upon the first publication of my own first book" when he received the package containing *Cities in Evolution* and other writings by Geddes (SL 152).

Occurring at a critical juncture in his development, Mumford's discovery of Geddes' writings on the city was a dramatic and decisive experience for a young man who aspired to be a great writer. At the time Mumford was grappling with the decision as to whether he should leave the stimulating Evening Session of City College – which enrolled primarily mature, working adults – and enroll in the regular Day Session to complete his undergraduate degree. He had vague intentions of taking a Ph.D. in philosophy in preparation for an academic career. However, as a regular student, Mumford quickly grew impatient with what he considered the arbitrary and demeaning requirements of the undergraduate curriculum. The courses he was required to take seemed irrelevant to his literary ambitions, and he found the day students less serious and mature than those he had known in the Evening Session. At this decisive point, Geddes' writings prompted Mumford to leave college and to embark on the independent program of self-education which laid the foundation for his lifelong intellectual interests and literary career. As a result of his initial contact with Geddes, Mumford writes, "I reconstructed my personal activities as to get for myself the essentials of a genuine education."[11] This "genuine education" was not to be had at City College or any conventional college or university: Mumford recalls that Geddes' "thought and example turned me away from a routine academic education, and caused me to use the city itself, with its museums and its art galleries, with its busy economic and political life, as a field of study."[12] At this fateful moment, Mumford embraced Geddes as his intellectual master; and the disciple's commitment was enthusiastic and unqualified. By 1917 Mumford had abandoned plans to complete his undergraduate degree and to pursue an academic career. This decision was inspired by the independent and iconoclastic spirit of his intellectual hero, Patrick Geddes, who had "refused on principle to take examinations or stand for a degree ... to be entangled in [the] formalities, legalisms, stale traditions, and tepid conventions" of academic life.[13]

In an unpublished note written in January 1916, Mumford describes the dramatic impact of discovering Geddes' *City Development* in the City College library the previous fall:

> The one book which I had always eagerly half-anticipated momentously entered my life.... Geddes' *City Development* capped my educational climax. I felt, and still feel, and hope I shall continue to feel that in the planning, or at least in the enrichment of city life my serious work in future lay. Here I saw a means of utilizing my aptitudes in literature, art, philosophy and the biologic sciences: a focus for varied activities: a coordinating nucleus.[14]

This passage is uncannily prophetic in describing both the major concerns of Mumford's subsequent literary career and the interdisciplinary, organic outlook that informs his work, early and late. Mumford records that *Cities in Evolution*, which he read the following year, also "profoundly altered" his "habits of thought and ways of living."[15]

The immediate effect of both books was to inspire Mumford to explore "the streets and neighborhoods of New York ... with a new sense of both personal direction

and public purpose" (SL 155). Mumford writes that Geddes "taught the reader, in simple terms, how to look at cities and how to evaluate their development." Responding to Geddes' emphasis on the "regional survey," Mumford roamed the streets of New York City "with a new purpose: looking into its past, understanding its present, replanning its future became indissoluble parts of a single process."[16] Geddes' influence also prompted Mumford to leave New York to take a temporary job in Pittsburgh for a few weeks in 1917; he wanted to study that city "as an example of [a] paleotechnic industrial centre" (a term he acquired from Geddes) and "to commune with Pittsburgh in every aspect."[17] Mumford's discovery of Geddes' writings on the city thus had direct, practical effects as well as continuing, permanent consequences. The young Mumford experienced such a complete conversion to the Geddesian philosophy that he wrote in an imaginary, but not completely facetious, dialogue with his future wife: "I am a disciple of Patrick Geddes, and I am an abject admirer of everything he has said and done."[18] In short, Mumford's discovery of Geddes' work while a student at City College encouraged him to pursue his native interests in the city; it helped him to define the content and focus of his studies; it provided a comprehensive, "organic" method of analysis which he took as a model for his own approach; it gave him a sense of ideological and practical purpose as a writer.

Upon discovering Geddes' work, Mumford began to dream of studying with him – a dream that was never realized. In late 1916 Mumford wrote to Frank Mears (Geddes' son-in-law in Edinburgh) proposing to study at the Outlook Tower under the tutelage of Geddes, but he was then engaged in teaching and city planning activities in India, where the first letter from Mumford reached him in 1917. So impatient was the young man to study with his intellectual hero that, as he later confessed, he "had the effrontery to regard the World War as an atrocious nuisance."[19] In one of his earliest letters to Geddes (probably written in late 1918), Mumford reiterates his desire to study with the master in Edinburgh, "even in advance of getting my bachelor's degree in America" (LM undated [1918]). By this time, of course, Mumford had little intention of finishing his undergraduate degree at City College. However, Geddes had been working steadily in India since 1914; and Mumford did not realize that back in Edinburgh there was "no one left to study with, and that, in fact, the tower, sans Geddes, was but a hollow shell" (SL 152), as it would remain throughout the duration of Geddes' life.

In the early letters, Mumford also expressed a willingness to help promote Geddes' work. He initially offered to try to interest New York publishers in Geddes' books, most of which he had found to be unavailable in America (LM 6 January 1916). More importantly, in what is probably his first letter to Geddes, Mumford describes how he hopes to build upon the master's work: "it is my own hope to work over the fields you have plowed up and develop a political philosophy of cities, to complement that civic interpretation of cities on which your first thoughts will long stand as the last word" (LM 1917 n.d.).

Thus, long before their first meeting in 1923, this "distant teacher" (SL 144) had profoundly influenced Mumford's thinking, education, and activities. Mumford writes that because of this influence Geddes evoked in him "a personal loyalty ... more intimate than with any other teacher" (GG 371). This enduring "loyalty" was inspired

not only by Geddes' writings on the city but also by his prompt and generous letters to his young admirer.

INVITATIONS TO COLLABORATION

Geddes issued the first invitation for Mumford to collaborate with him in the letter written on Christmas Day 1919. Writing from India, Geddes proposes that Mumford "run my Town Planning and Civic Exhibition in America after a term of it here" and that he help to turn the "unusually disproportionate file of materials" Geddes had accumulated into "books beyond the small shelf of printed ones." Geddes laments that he has continually but unsuccessfully sought effective collaborators, and he mentions the tragic loss of his elder son Alasdair in the Great War as well as the fact that his other son, Arthur, had been "semi-invalided" – thus suggesting a relationship in which Mumford would be much more than a working assistant or literary collaborator (PG 25 December 1919). Mumford was astonished and delighted by this invitation. He recorded in his personal notes that "my imagination has been unlimbering itself by traversing unbelievable distances and fulfilling unexpected dreams" and that the prospect of working with Geddes, despite the obstacle of having to travel vast distances to exotic lands, has "bludgeoned my petty fears into annihilation."[20] Mumford begins his reply to this first invitation with the confession, "Your letter of December 25 has bowled me over"; and he responds with a "prompt and enthusiastic Yes!" (LM 2 February 1920).

This early letter marks the zenith of Mumford's enthusiasm for collaboration and his confidence that he would be able to work effectively with Geddes, despite the obvious differences of age and experience. He writes: "I could give my whole heart to your work, and head and hand would promptly follow in unison" (LM 2 February 1920). Within a few years Mumford would realize what an extraordinarily callow, naively optimistic statement this was. Yet even Mumford's reply to Geddes' first invitation and his simultaneous journal entries betrayed, perhaps unwittingly, his latent reluctance and doubts concerning both his ability and his willingness to devote himself to a "collaboration" in which he would play a subordinate role. Despite his apparent enthusiasm, he experienced deeply seated reservations that could not be suppressed. Mumford's response represents an effort to convince himself, as much as Geddes, that they could work together effectively and that he could bend his own temperament and interests to assist a much older, grief-stricken man who, quite obviously, was seeking a replacement for his slain first-born son. He also astutely sensed that Geddes was seeking an utterly devoted, wonder-working disciple who could redeem a lifetime's accumulation of unfinished tasks and unfulfilled dreams. But even in 1920 the young Mumford had grand, ambitious dreams of his own.

Political uncertainties prevented Mumford from joining Geddes in Jerusalem (where he was planning the new Hebrew University) in the spring of 1920 and accompanying him from there to Bombay as they had intended. He chose the alternative of going to London to work with Victor Branford, Geddes' colleague, as editor of the

Sociological Review, and perhaps later to join Geddes in Jerusalem or India. Mumford remained in London for six months, May–October 1920. While Mumford was there, Geddes issued a second invitation to join him in Bombay as his "secretary and editor [and] as collaborator too" (PG 2 August 1920). However, Mumford's experience as editor of the *Sociological Review* had dampened the appeal of collaboration with Geddes. As much as he liked the man personally, Mumford was beginning to find Branford an inflexible, dogmatic proponent of the Geddesian "system"; this was not encouraging to the young man who had been attracted to Geddes, the liberating iconoclast. Coincidentally, he was hearing disturbing reports from certain of Geddes' associates in the Sociological Society–Le Play House circle (two organizations concerned with sociology and the regional survey) who had found it difficult to work with the founder, indeed who were sometimes terrorized by him. Consequently, Mumford was beginning to doubt whether his own temperament would permit him to be an effective collaborator (as his unposted letter of 12 July 1920 reveals). Moreover, at the time, he had been reading Van Wyck Brooks' essays in which he heard a stirring call to return to America to establish his literary career (SL 356). He had ample leisure for such reading since his duties as "editor" were vague and unchallenging; nor was the income adequate, and he had not been able to find other employment in London. Most importantly, Mumford realized that he was in love with Sophia Wittenberg whom he had met while working for *The Dial* in New York the previous spring. This combination of factors eroded his resolve to remain in London or to join Geddes in Jerusalem or India.

After Mumford returned to New York in October 1920, Geddes continued to issue invitations. In January 1921, for example, Geddes laments the fact the he and Branford lack "younger partners" to carry on their work, and he identifies Mumford as their primary, perhaps even sole heir (PG 10 January 1921). Such a plea probably evoked in the young Mumford confused and troubling feelings of pride and guilt, responsibility and entrapment. The increasingly independent and congenitally reserved young Mumford must have recoiled from the inordinate pressure of the expectations imposed by the revered master whom he had never met in person.

Nor was Mumford encouraged by Geddes' failure to define clearly the role and duties he expected his disciple to assume or to describe the nature of their prospective collaboration in terms that were especially appealing. Mumford was certainly interested in an opportunity that would enable him to unite "the studious and the literary life with the practical"; but he was not attracted by the prospect of becoming "the selling partner" for Geddes' books, the Cities Exhibition, and other projects (PG 8 December 1922). Even had he accepted the literary-editorial role for which he was more suited, Mumford could hardly respond enthusiastically to Geddes' invitation "to tackle ... many thousands of pages of notes and fragments in all sorts of disorderly accumulations in stacks of boxes, here [Bombay] and at Tower [Edinburgh]" (25 March 1922).

Geddes' hopes of enlisting the services of his young admirer were highest just prior to his New York visit in the spring of 1923. Shortly before his arrival, Geddes writes: "It is my dream that I shall find my long sought collaborator in you" (PG 9 March 1923). After that summer together in New York, which was disappointing to both as far as the prospects for collaboration were concerned, nearly two years elapsed before

Geddes renewed his invitations. These post-1923 invitations were considerably altered in tone and described much different kinds of tasks Mumford might undertake; they no longer offered to employ him as mere "secretary" or "selling partner." Instead, the invitations became urgent entreaties as Geddes began to realize that Mumford was his most worthy and sympathetic disciple, the person who could most effectively articulate his ideas and continue his work after his death. In 1925 Geddes writes from Montpellier: "So here I am, and as an old man making his will, to what legatees, and with what executors? ... Hence I ask you! Come next winter and see what legacies you can take over from my mingled heaps – and what executry here or there appeals to you" (PG 2 April 1925). Geddes was soon referring to Mumford as "my essential heir" and promising that "I shall not be excessive in my demands of collaboration" (PG 25 May 1925). Geddes' insistent pleas that Mumford join him at Montpellier as his designated heir continued until his death in 1932.

Unfortunately, Geddes never fully understood Mumford's personality – perhaps he had never really made an effort to do so – nor was he sympathetic with Mumford's single-minded dedication to the literary life. At one point, Geddes became infatuated with the misguided notion that Mumford might assume "a University headship," and that such a position would enable him to realize his destiny as Geddes' "heir," the "leading legatee" (PG 20 November 1927). In 1931 Geddes proposes that they "put our long-dreamed collaboration on a business basis," and he lists several schemes that might be mutually profitable financially (PG 27 April 1931). As Geddes' health deteriorated during the final years of their correspondence, his proposals and pleas became more urgent, more desperate, and more unrealistic. By 1930 the elderly Geddes did not realize that the possibility of fruitful collaboration had long vanished; if the younger Mumford had been hesitant a decade earlier, the mature man was certainly not willing to assume the subordinate role the master would inevitably impose. For by that time, Mumford had published three well-received books on American culture and was completing a fourth; he was beginning to plan and research the Renewal of Life series, the massive, four-volume project that would occupy him for the next twenty years. Rummaging through the chaos of a desperate old man's "Teufelsdröckian paper bags" (PG December 1924) of notes and manuscripts had little appeal for the increasingly successful and purposeful Mumford, who at age thirty-five was embarking on the major phase of his own career.

In *Sketches from Life*, Mumford scathingly depicts the type of collaboration Geddes sought from him: "What Geddes urgently demanded of me was an impossible lifetime of devotion as Collaborator (read docile filing clerk!), as Editor (read literary secretary!), or as Secretary (read handy drudge!). In short, the perfect disciple: his alter ego!" (SL 156). Their two meetings in 1923 and 1925 convinced Mumford that an attempted collaboration "would be so full of frustrations and humiliations that it might come abruptly to an end before anything was accomplished" (SL 402). Despite his obvious reluctance and published statements to the contrary, however, Mumford never completely abandoned the hope of establishing some sort of working association with Geddes. As late as 1929 he proposes to arrange a "conference" with Geddes and Branford "to discuss plans and future projects."[21] And in late 1930 Mumford lists among his "uncompleted tasks and failures" the fact that he has not taken on "various

possible collaborations" with Geddes.[22] Even though he realistically anticipated the sort of frustrations and difficulties working with Geddes would inevitably entail, Mumford admits that only with Geddes' death did "the dream of faithful discipleship and helpful collaboration which had never come down to earth in either of our lives" finally come to an end (SL 407).

The reasons behind the young Mumford's failure to establish a collaboration with his "intellectual parent" reveal much about the development of his personality and habits of mind as well as the nature of their relationship. Although Mumford became a devoted disciple of Geddes from the moment he discovered his writings on the city in 1915, insurmountable differences in their temperaments, methods, and goals existed from the beginning of the friendship. Mumford was jubilant when he received Geddes' first invitation to join him and was convinced that he could devote "heart . . . head, and hand" to his master's service (LM 2 February 1920). However, within a year he was beginning to question certain aspects of Geddes' intellectual system and to doubt whether he was capable of working with a man who was notorious for his volatile impatience, his frenetic and erratic work habits, and his sometimes capricious, even insensitive treatment of colleagues.[23] Mumford was also suspicious of Geddes' apparent obsession with his graphic method, the terms and diagrams he had developed to demonstrate his ideas and theories. Mumford recalls that that during his months in London, although he had not yet found what his "essential life work" would be, "Some inner conviction, however, already told me it would not be through any direct alliance with Geddes, still less through a permanent addiction to his diagrammatic ideological 'synthesis'" (SL 276). In May 1921 he writes that he is no longer "the earnest inquisitive student" he was in 1919, one who was willing to devote himself completely to Geddes' service: "I don't feel that I wish to give up the plan of active sociological collaboration with Geddes, . . . but I feel that this is a minor and not a major theme in the development of my life."[24] Both Geddes' imperious personality and his dogmatic preoccupation with his "thinking machines" engendered considerable trepidation in the young man, who at the time was struggling to discover his own intellectual identity and literary vocation.

Before meeting Geddes in person, therefore, Mumford doubted whether he would be able to collaborate effectively with the older man. Geddes was a rapid, impetuous thinker; his copious "morning meditations" produced a spate of swiftly noted ideas and possibilities that he had accumulated in those "midden heaps" of "disorderly accumulations" (PG 9 March 1923). Mumford, on the other hand, was a slower, more methodical worker. He kept meticulously organized files containing research notes, outlines of books and articles he planned to write, correspondence, and other material. He first expressed reservations concerning his ability to work productively with Geddes while in London in 1920; Mumford tried to explain his inveterate deliberation in absorbing and utilizing the ideas of others:

> I have very great doubts whether my equipment is sufficiently complete to enable me to keep pace with you and to work profitably with you. . . . I cannot write at all until I have thoroughly assimilated all the material that is mine to work with, and to transcribe notes which are a result of your

> whole lifetime of experience is a task which I could not attempt until I had taken sufficient time to appropriate them. The task seems ... merely one of mechanical journalism. I can't pretend to have the requisite equipment for this.
>
> (LM 12 July 1920)

He reiterated these concerns about his suitability as a potential collaborator throughout their subsequent correspondence.[25] As a cautious, careful thinker and meticulous literary craftsman, Mumford recognized that he could not deftly produce either the various books and articles or the comprehensive "opus syntheticum" Geddes believed could be hewn from his massive piles of unorganized manuscripts. But Geddes apparently never understood his disciple's concerns along these lines, much less was he able to allay them.

Another reason for Mumford's early skepticism about the possibility of effective collaboration with Geddes was his observation of how Geddes' associates, particularly Victor Branford, insisted upon a rigid and unquestioning application of certain tenets of Geddesian thought, rather than building upon those original and liberating aspects of the outlook Mumford had found so stimulating in 1915. Instead of adapting Geddes' philosophy to "particular problems of social reconstruction" (LM 3 January 1921), or exploring its wider implications for social theory and cultural criticism, Branford and others reduced it to what Mumford viewed as an arbitrary and ossified system, to something purportedly complete, authoritative, even sacred. In 1920 Mumford did not realize the extent to which Geddes himself encouraged and even insisted upon such reductive dogmatism, unquestioning reverence, and sedulous imitation of his system and its "thinking machines" – as Mumford was painfully to learn when he at last met his master in 1923. When Geddes invited Mumford to criticize his thought and circle of followers, the disciple's response was at once diplomatically flattering and severely critical:

> The weakness of the Edinburgh school so far has been the weakness of the Aristotelian school after Aristotle: the work of the founder has been so comprehensive and magnificent and inspiring that it has in appearance left nothing for scholars to do except to go over and annotate and dilute the master's work.
>
> (9 May 1921)

However, this was exactly what Geddes had encouraged; and, tragically, such servile annotation and repetition were what Geddes obtusely demanded of Mumford, the most gifted of all his disciples.

As early as 1920, then, Mumford began to have serious doubts as to whether he could ever effectively collaborate with Geddes, doubts which were confirmed during their first meeting in 1923. Nevertheless, Mumford's deep sense of intellectual and emotional allegiance to his acknowledged master never wavered, then or during the subsequent six decades. Despite his recognition that a genuinely productive association would be impossible, Mumford was invariably tempted to assent, often falling prey to

feelings of guilt and emotional turmoil, each time Geddes invited or, later, pleaded with him to journey to Montpellier to undertake collaboration. Mumford had difficulty bringing himself to reply to Geddes' proposals and invitations with definite, negative responses, even though after 1925 he had become absorbed in his own, independent literary career. In fact, contrary to what he claims in his autobiography, Mumford's letters to Geddes and various unpublished papers reveal that, after 1925, he was still contemplating some sort of collaboration (as editor or biographer), that he was willing to arrange a third personal meeting with Geddes at Montpellier, and that he did not decisively abandon either of these possibilities until Geddes' death in 1932.

TOGETHER IN NEW YORK, 1923

Geddes' ostensible purpose for coming to New York in the summer of 1923 was to deliver a series of twelve lectures on city and regional planning at the New School for Social Research, to meet with members of the Regional Planning Association of America, and to present a few additional lectures elsewhere – a schedule Mumford had arranged.[26] However, the unofficial but primary agenda was to initiate, at last, what each hoped would be a mutually beneficial and productive collaboration. Geddes expected to find in Mumford the "long sought collaborator" who would transform his unorganized piles of manuscripts into publishable form and who would assume responsibility for other of his projects. He even sent the Mumford a stipend of $250 so the young man could devote much of his time that summer to their work together, "instead of deviling at reviews and articles" for various periodicals (DR 345).[27] Although he had reservations about his suitability to undertake such tasks as Geddes would demand, Mumford keenly anticipated his first encounter with the man who had exerted such a profound influence on his life and thought, the man whom he idolized as the most important thinker of the day.

While Mumford hoped that the visit might initiate a fruitful and enduring working relationship, shortly before Geddes' arrival Mumford sent several warning signals expressing his concern that the mutually anticipated meeting might not proceed as smoothly or develop as productively as both may have assumed. As they were initiating plans for the visit, Mumford wrote that he had recently begun to discover his metier in the sort of "literary work" with which he was then engaged; he explained that after leaving London he had not renewed attempts to join Geddes in India because "my present vocation gives me a power of control over my time and energy which any other work would not permit"; accordingly, "for the present it is better that I should confine my energies to a province where I am quite effective than that I should disperse them over activities which would shortly bring me grief" (LM 7 January 1923). The "province" in which Mumford was then experiencing considerable success comprised working with the Regional Planning Association of America (of which he was a founding member), reviewing books for the *Freeman* and the *New Republic*, and beginning the study of American culture that would result in his next four books. The less congenial "other work" and "activities which would shortly bring me grief" may

refer to certain secretarial tasks or other mundane duties that collaboration with Geddes would likely entail. A month before Geddes' arrival, Mumford mentioned another factor that made him "dubious about genuine *collaboration*": the great difference in age, experience, and outlook that separated them. He wrote:

> My life... has followed a different trajectory as a result of being born in another part of the world, being almost a generation and a half apart in time, being affected by other circumstances.... So my relationship to you can never be fully that of a collaborator: it is rather of pupilship in which I absorb what I can of your thought and make it over and revamp it to suit the particular life experience I have encountered.
>
> (25 March 1923)

As one well acquainted with Geddes' personality and work habits, Dorothy "Delilah" Loch (who had befriended Mumford during his London sojourn) attempted to prepare him to cope with the man he would be hosting in New York:

> So I lay a serious charge on [you] – Geddes must be accepted (as good Catholics accept grief) with an open heart and no reserves, *if* he is to benefit those whom his presence scourges. He will brook no reserves.... Don't forget he is an old man... and lonely – the very-most-vicious-cave-barbarian when sad, angered, or thwarted.[28]

Of course, Mumford had already heard other associates of Geddes describe the difficulties of working with him. For his part, Geddes several times warned Mumford that he lacked the "popular gifts" of effective public speakers and that his voice did not carry in large lecture halls and auditoriums (PG 25 November 1922). Given the frequency and candor of these warnings, it seems that Geddes may have been trying to prepare Mumford for the prolonged, beard-muffled monologues that he was to find so exasperating.

Two months before he arrived in New York, Geddes created a difficulty for Mumford that also boded ill for their anticipated collaboration. He had a thousand copies of his book *The Masque of Learning* (alternatively entitled *Dramatisations of History*) inexpensively reprinted in India under the imprint of Boni & Liveright, the New York publishers of Mumford's first book, *The Story of Utopias*. He did this without requesting permission from Boni & Liveright, and he intended to ship the copies to New York to coincide with his visit. Always the scheming opportunist, Geddes speculated that his presence there would help to promote sales. He put Mumford in an awkward position by asking him to deliver his letter of explanation and to plead his case with Boni and Liveright (PG to Boni & Liveright, 1 March 1923). In a diplomatic reply to Geddes, Mumford confessed that the letter and request caused him "considerable perplexity" and explained why he did not deliver it (LM 3 April 1923). This episode was not a propitious prelude to their impending first meeting or future collaboration: it revealed the sort of imperious high-handedness with which Geddes conducted so many of his enterprises; it asked Mumford to perform a service that would have embarrassed

the young writer and that may have jeopardized his relationship with his publishers. Mumford must have wondered if this was typical of the duties he would be expected to carry out in "collaboration" with Geddes.

Mumford tells the story of their meeting in his autobiographical essay "The Disciple's Rebellion" (Appendix 2).[29] He describes this account as one which aims to depict "the immediate interplay of our two personalities, in the archetypal roles of master and disciple: a relationship whose seamier side was long ago revealed in Aristotle's constant sniping at Plato, after spending ten years under his tutelage."[30] While Mumford disavows any intention of denigrating Geddes' "great mind," the memoir recounts an experience that was preponderately unpleasant, in some respects bitterly disappointing, and in at least one instance even humiliating for Mumford. Yet the account does acknowledge important, positive results of the meeting. Mumford describes how he was deeply affected and transformed by his first encounter with Geddes in person: he discovered a completely new dimension of the man, an intense and powerful personality that neither his published writings nor his letters disclosed.

The meeting began inauspiciously the moment Geddes set foot on the pier in New York. He immediately became irritated with Mumford because he had not obtained a ticket to enter the area where passengers were disembarking. For his part, Mumford was aghast that his exalted master was not wearing a necktie, which Geddes had neglected to put on in the haste of packing before going ashore. Yet a scene far more distressing for Mumford occurred the next day when Geddes grasped him by the shoulders and exclaimed: "You are the image of my poor dead lad, ... and almost the same age he was when he was killed in France. You must be another son to me Lewis, and we will get on with our work together" (DR 345). Geddes must have been anticipating, at least subconsciously, such a role and relationship for Mumford ever since mentioning the loss of Alasdair in the letter written on Christmas Day, 1919; in 1922 Geddes had similarly written: "your qualities and outlooks not a little correspond to those of our lost Alasdair" (15 April 1922). However much he had idolized Geddes, the reserved and introverted young man was stunned and embarrassed by this nakedly emotional overture. He lacked both the maturity and presence of mind to respond tactfully or sympathetically. Mumford writes that "the grief and desperation in this appeal" were "too violent, too urgent, for me to handle. The abruptness of it, the sudden overflow, almost unmanned me, and my response to it was altogether inadequate, not so much from shallowness of feeling as from honesty" (DR 345). In addition to being repelled by the shock of such a blunt and intimate request, Mumford knew that he bore little resemblance to Alasdair, physically or otherwise. Mumford writes that Geddes' "need to falsify our relations and warp them in accordance with his own subjective demands" provided "a clue to a certain blind willfulness" that had "undermined" his own work and that would continue to plague their personal relationship (DR 346).

Despite such an unsettling commencement to their first meeting, Mumford was immediately dazzled by the scintillating mind and personality of his intellectual hero. Mumford found Geddes in person to possess an exuberance and vitality that words could not communicate. Within a week, however, Mumford began to detect an imperious urgency and dogmatism that belied the astute sensitivity and bold originality

that he had found so inspiring and liberating in his master's philosophy. Soon after Geddes' arrival, Mumford reports to Delilah Loch:

> "He" came last week. I speak of Him in capital letters; for now that I have seen a little of him I am more convinced than ever that he is one of the Olympians. Of course that is the difficulty. Jove never walked among the sons of men without the sons of men getting the worst of it, and I find that all the warnings and reservations I have put into my letters have had precisely no effect upon P.G.; for he is a terrible and determined man, and now that he is ready to set down his philosophy, he wants to make use of me to the full. Which would be good and proper if I were a secretary, with a capacity for writing shorthand at 200 words per minute; as it is, I am not a secretary and I cannot write shorthand; what is more, I am as much of a visual as Geddes is, and I simply can't stand listening to anybody for more than an hour at a time, whereas he has held me, as the Ancient Mariner held the wedding guest, for five or six hours at a time; with no result whatever upon my intellect, except to make it dazed and stupid. He calls this collaboration; I call it physical torture. It is not that he lacks a shrewd eye to the state of things between us; but he is determined to carry his work through, and he has the conviction that he knows what is best; whereas I know that I am of no use whatever as amanuensis, and I have an equally firm conviction that although Geddes may know what is best for people at large, I, with infinite pains and difficulty, have a certain limited knowledge as to what is best for myself, in which knowledge is the conviction that I have not either the capacity or the will to become Geddes Minor. I see now why he has lacked collaborators and has, intellectually speaking, always been surrounded by servants.... He gives one no opportunity for reflection in the intellectual sense; he demands reflection in the physical sense; and that is the sort of thing which even a poor second rate mind like my own finds it impossible to give.[31]

During the first two months of the visit, their relationship was not a tranquil or happy one. Geddes may have been hurt and perplexed by Mumford's chilly response to his plea that the young man become as a son to him. He must have quickly perceived that his disciple was an ambitious, self-absorbed young man who was reluctant to immerse himself in the work of collaboration. For his part, Mumford found the old man to be egotistical and insensitive, usually preoccupied with other people, often complete strangers, rather than the faithful disciple who had arranged the visit. During those infrequent occasions he did devote to Mumford alone, Geddes typically subjected him to protractive and tedious monologues and, on at least one occasion, demanded that he reproduce from memory charts and diagrams of the graphic system – an experience that angered and humiliated Mumford. In early July, Mumford wrote in his personal notes that "it came to me that we were not merely not getting on with our work together but seemed actually from some obscure misunderstanding to be driving apart."[32] However, certain causes of their "misunderstanding" could hardly be termed "obscure": their great

difference in age and experience, the strong and independent ego each possessed, and the unrealistically high expectations each must have placed on this long-anticipated meeting.

On 6 July 1923 the disciple rebelled. He wrote Geddes a long letter in which he analyzed the differences that separated them, described his own personality and interests, criticized Geddes' methods and work habits, and pleaded with his master to give him a clearly defined role and direction in their collaboration. The fact that he chose to convey all this in a letter is significant: it suggests, on one hand, that Mumford lacked the courage to confront Geddes directly and, on the other, that Geddes was so oblivious to Mumford's feelings and so preoccupied elsewhere that there was no other way for the disciple to express his concerns. In the letter, Mumford discusses the profound difference in outlook between his cynical, modern generation and Geddes' more optimistic, Victorian one. He protests that Geddes appeared to view him as a "quack journalist," instead of appreciating his devotion to serious writing. He charges Geddes with attempting "to make me over a little into the idealized portrait, whose aims and interests and actions were more congruent with your own" – an attempt which Mumford "instinctively" resisted. Finally, Mumford pleads with Geddes to concentrate on the essentials of his thought and to shape it into some concise and coherent form: to "take all the sub-theses, which obscure the main problems, and cast them aside; and devote your attention to the architectonic whole, and to the problem of how that whole is to be presented." He criticizes his master's habit of producing a "morning's pile of paper" that "will be so big presently that it will defy almost anyone's patience and organizing power" (LM 6 July 1923).

The letter had an effect, but only temporarily. In a reply written the same day, Geddes responded with warmth and understanding. Mumford recorded the scene that occurred when he reported for their morning confabulation several days later: "He looked at me kindly and reached out his hand: 'That was a good letter!,' and we had such a day together as we had never had before."[33] In his reply, Geddes admits that "yes, we have yet to meet," but he denies having stereotyped his young admirer as a "quack journalist": "There is no caricature of you in my mind, whatever be sometimes said in half-jest . . . nor yet any *excessive* ideal either. I claim *some* little understanding of the real creature!" Beyond that, however, Geddes does not acknowledge Mumford's criticism of his work habits, nor does he outline any definite program with which his young disciple might assist him; he only assures that he does not intend "mere secretaryship" or that Mumford become "a mere exponent of mine." As for his apparent unwillingness to organize and to clarify "the architectonic whole" of his thought, Geddes' justification is that "fresh thoughts and theoretic visions come with and from each task"; this implies that he had no intention to cease adding to the "morning's pile of paper" or to condense the essentials of his thought into concise and coherent form. His only excuse for his inability to devote himself to collaboration with Mumford is that he finds himself in New York "on holiday and free" for the first time "in a decade" (PG 6 July 1923).

The summer 1923 meeting in New York must be accounted a failure insofar as it did not establish a continuing, productive collaboration. As Mumford had suspected, their temperaments, habits of mind, and routines of work were incompatible. Moreover, Mumford discovered that the great Geddes possessed some significant flaws

and weaknesses, and he found the older man's treatment of him frequently perplexing, sometimes painful. He experienced contradictory feelings for Geddes: "Personally he seemed a mixture of great obtuseness . . . and swift, keen insight."[34] Mumford's reaction to Geddes must have resembled that of his fictional persona, Bernard Martin, in the presence of his "master," James McMaster: Bernard finds himself "shrinking into a chaos of complicated resistances, half paralyzed by worship, weariness, and fear . . . aghast at that great pride and energy of mind which takes life for its province and falters at nothing."[35]

However, despite the problems and disillusionments, Mumford writes in "The Disciple's Rebellion" that "my sense of Patrick Geddes's 'greatness' survived the whole summer I spent in his company" (DR 346). Although they did share "some good moments, brief but memorable" which remained with Mumford throughout his career, the aspect of Geddes' visit that most influenced him was not contained within these rare "moments" (DR 349). Rather it was his firsthand encounter with the living person that had the truly powerful, enduring impact on Mumford. In fact, he claimed to have been more profoundly influenced by Geddes' personality, which he first encountered during this otherwise "abortive" (DR 346) collaborative venture, than he had been by the discovery of the master's books on the city eight years earlier:

> [N]othing that he had written . . . had an influence on my thinking nearly as profound as he in his own person had on my life. . . . [T]he impact of his person shook my life to the core. . . . The most impressive thing about Geddes, even at sixty-nine, was the sense he conveyed . . . of what it is to be fully alive. . . . [I]t was by this magnificent aliveness that Geddes towered above those around him.
>
> (DR 349)

Only after meeting Geddes in person could Mumford appreciate Delilah Loch's cautions and understand why such an original and "prodigious" thinker had not been able to enlist and retain capable disciples: "the very intensity of his vitality, its exorbitance, made impossible demands upon those about him" (DR 350). He saw in the person certain features Geddes' writing could not convey: "A delight in every manifestation of life, a sense of its wonder and mystery, was what issued forth from Geddes' personality, a kind of radiant emanation, with a halo of visible and usable wisdom, not essentially different from what emanated from William Blake" (GG 372).

The 1923 summer meeting had a crucial impact on the young disciple, because of both its positive and negative aspects. In "The Disciple's Rebellion," Mumford writes: "though we met briefly in 1925 and corresponded at irregular intervals up to the month of his death in 1932, this parting was really our final one" (DR 351). However, this first encounter did not end their association; rather it defined both the nature of their subsequent relationship and the sort of influence Geddes would continue to exert. The experience allowed Mumford to discover key aspects of the man's "genius" and his "extraordinary gifts" which were embodied in the person and and which his writings did not disclose. Delilah Loch wrote him a letter of encouragement and commiseration during Geddes' visit:

> You suffer, I fancy, from being the hope of his old age.... [Yet] you will never regret these months of travail. Geddes' chance words, Geddes' casual reflections will come back to you for untold years afterwards with the force of inspiration and illumination to thought, life, and conduct. In your present turmoil you may hardly know you have heard many things which will stick by you for life afterwards.[36]

The prediction was accurate. Geddes is cited in nearly all of Mumford's books, and he figures prominently in Mumford's last – the autobiography published sixty years after their their first meeting. Without the 1923 meeting, however disappointing, it is unlikely that Geddes would have assumed such significance in Mumford's later writing as an ideal, symbolic personality – as one who embodied the purposeful, intense, and balanced life.

Therefore, although a complete failure in achieving its anticipated, primary aim of initiating a working partnership, the 1923 meeting must be accounted an enormous success as far as its long-term effects on Mumford's thought and writing are concerned. Far more was gained than lost. Rather than promoting collaboration, the impact of Geddes' personality actually had the effect of inspiring and shaping Mumford's independent career. Instead of a definite collaborative role or an agenda for future tasks, what Geddes gave Mumford that summer was "an insight into the possibilities of intense activity and intense thought."[37] The encounter represented their "final parting" only in ending Mumford's youthful and naive dream of remaking the world in association with his master.

In a letter to his friend Josephine MacLeod written on the return journey to Bombay from New York, Geddes provides a surprisingly clinical evaluation of Mumford's potential as a collaborator: "Lewis Mumford is a very bright and keen writer,... but not yet ready for the scientific grind, though not incapable of that; as I found by putting his nose to the grindstone repeatedly. Still he is not yet the positive collaborator I had hoped."[38] Geddes apparently experienced some measure of disillusionment in his gifted young disciple and prospective collaborator, but this is the only recorded indication of it. Despite whatever disappointment he may have felt in the summer of 1923, throughout the next nine years Geddes reiterated and intensified his pleas for Mumford to join him.

After learning of his unhappy experience with Geddes that summer, Gladys Mayer – one of Geddes' most devoted associates – also wrote Mumford a letter of consolation:

> So he's devil-ridden and God inspired in a breath, and we don't know whether to bless or curse him most. And the only solution is to love him as I did and do. This is how I see the origin of your torment and P.G. [is] the most tormenting and lovable spirit that ever harried the earth.[39]

While Mumford must have cursed Geddes often during the summer of 1923, his affection and respect for the man – both for what he had achieved and for what he represented – endured and flourished. In their correspondence during the ensuing years, both Geddes and Mumford express regret that the 1923 meeting was not more

productive. In fact, each ascribes a certain amount of blame to himself: Geddes admits that he was foolishly preoccupied with other matters and had not been "cleared up" sufficiently to exploit the situation (PG 17 May 1931), and Mumford confesses that he had lacked the maturity and sagacity to make the most of the opportunity (3 May 1931). Mumford writes in "The Disciple's Rebellion" that their failure to cooperate resulted, at least in part, from the fact that "there were two demanding, self-absorbed egos to reckon with" (DR 348).

Mumford began to address Geddes as "master" in the salutations of the letters written after their 1923 meeting.[40] This reveals that Mumford's esteem for Geddes had not been diminished by the disappointments of the visit and, moreover, that encountering the man in person had irrevocably established his revered and idealized status. Although Mumford from time to time criticized aspects of Geddes' thought and method in the correspondence of the following two years, both continued to discuss the possibility of arranging another meeting and initiating some sort of collaborative work. They hoped that a second meeting in Edinburgh in 1925 would be more productive than the first in New York. Shortly before the Edinburgh meeting, Mumford expressed his hope to accomplish "much . . . more" by way of collaboration than he had been able to do in 1923 (LM 20 June 1925). Mumford's willingness to undertake a second attempt at collaboration, despite the failure of the first, also indicates the depth of his esteem for the man he now formally acknowledged as his "master."

However, as far as Mumford was concerned, their second meeting only confirmed his sense that productive collaboration with Geddes would be impossible. Mumford visited Edinburgh in September 1925 for five days on his homeward-bound journey after lecturing at Alfred Zimmern's International Summer School at Geneva. Even though he was able to fulfill his youthful dream of residing in the Outlook Tower, Mumford found Geddes in his native habitat to be even more insensitive and willful than he had been "on holiday" in New York two years earlier. Again preoccupied with other people and tasks, Geddes paid relatively little attention to his most brilliant, if not most devoted, disciple. But Mumford accepted the reality of the situation with philosophical resignation rather than with bitterness, with enduring respect for Geddes rather than anger: "And yet I love him; I respect him; I admire him; he is still for me the most prodigious thinker in the modern world."[41] As Mumford evaluated their relationship half a century later, this final meeting was decisive: "all possibility of any closer relation with Geddes was over" (SL 403). Nevertheless, between 1925 and Geddes' death in 1932, Mumford's enduring devotion to his master would occasionally rekindle the dream that they might somehow manage to meet and to accomplish great things together.

Even after the Edinburgh fiasco of 1925, Mumford never bluntly told Geddes that he had no intention of joining his master at Montpellier, that he had completely abandoned the dream of collaboration, or that he did not wish to become Geddes' literary executor and designated intellectual heir. In fact, shortly before Geddes' death in April 1932, Mumford was trying to arrange his itinerary to include a visit to Montpellier during the study trip in Europe he had planned for that summer. Mumford's reluctance to be candid with Geddes was certainly in part motivated by a wish to spare the feelings of an elderly, seriously ill, increasingly lonely and desperate

man. But there was also enduring loyalty and affection for Geddes which made it impossible for Mumford to disappoint his master or to abandon completely his youthful dream of collaboration.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between Geddes and Mumford never became what each hoped it might become. When he discovered Geddes' work, Mumford's initial reaction was one of exuberant intellectual excitement, and he immediately became an ardent disciple who deeply revered his master. Unfortunately, during their two personal encounters, Mumford experienced Geddes' "radiant" personality in a mere handful of memorable but fleeting moments they shared. The extent to which Mumford had idealized his master before their first meeting, making him into an exemplary figure of profound originality and intellectual authority, created expectations that it was impossible for Geddes – or perhaps any person – to fulfill. In retrospect, it is clear that the disappointment and disillusionment the disciple experienced were inevitable.

The relationship was unavoidably complicated by their great difference in age (forty-one years). The Geddes whom Mumford encountered in New York and Edinburgh was an old man who could be rigidly dogmatic in outlook, unpredictable in behavior, and insensitive to the needs of his young admirer. Mumford writes that he had initially been drawn to the younger Geddes of the 1880s: "the man of vision, the liberated and insurgent spirit.... But at the time we met, Geddes' graphic system, with its desiccated ideology, had taken possession of him and displaced the person I had been drawn to" (GG 371).

The relationship was also impaired by Mumford's reluctance, or inability, to express his true feelings for Geddes. Compared with what he wrote about Geddes elsewhere, Mumford's letters rarely and inadequately acknowledge the extent to which he felt indebted to his master; nor do they provide a candid expression of his avowed "personal loyalty... more intimate than with any other teacher" that he repeatedly emphasized both in his personal notes and in writings published after Geddes' death – including the autobiography completed over half a century later (GG 371). Had he openly expressed such feelings of loyalty and affection, perhaps they could have established some sort of collaboration; or at least, the relationship might have assumed a more honest and personal character in which the sense of frustration and loss was not so acute.

In the mid-1920s, Geddes began to besiege Mumford with a succession of invitations, proposals, and pleas which became increasingly urgent. Although he appeared to be as active as ever, the aging Geddes (who turned seventy in 1924) realized that the prospects of writing and publishing his "opus," not to mention the completion of his other projects, were rapidly diminishing, that "for the most of it, it may be too late" (PG 20 March 1926). Thus Geddes looked to Mumford to help him finish uncompleted tasks and to assume responsibility for his work after his death. In March 1929, for example, he importunes: "try to come – Look you I'm old... We need your

cooperation" (PG 20 March 1929); and in April he reiterates: "Now's the time! Neither of us [himself and Branford] has anyone of your calibre to look to for collaboration – and we are seeking for heirs and executors – as yet without success" (PG 10 April 1929). Re-invoking the kind of relationship he had unsuccessfully tried to establish with Mumford when they first met nearly a decade earlier, he began his penultimate letter to Mumford with the greeting: "Dear Mumford – (no – Lewis my Son!)" (PG 5 January 1932). This salutation represents a desperate, final effort to establish a level of personal intimacy and a sense of obligation in Mumford that would persuade him to assume the role of literary executor and intellectual heir; it also reflects Geddes' recognition that Mumford was the most innately sympathetic and loyal of all his followers, that Mumford was his true "son" at least in an intellectual sense.

Therefore, despite the deep esteem each man felt for the other, the letters sometimes fail to communicate what might have been more honestly expressed or what would have been more relevant to their primary concerns. Reading the letters, one occasionally senses a restraint, a suppression of feeling and candor, even a melancholic tone of regret and loss. This is particularly apparent in certain letters written during the later stages of their relationship. Mumford detected such a tone in the letters Geddes wrote him after their 1925 meeting in Edinburgh: "I am saddened by two things: the repetitiousness of their ideas and suggestions and, even worse, their irrelevance, their failure to reach the plane of easy personal intercourse" (SL 406). Geddes was never able to articulate a timely and coherent statement of his need for Mumford's assistance, nor did he recognize that, after 1925, collaboration and literary "executorship" were losing their appeal for the increasingly successful and independent young writer. For his part, Mumford's letters also failed to "reach the plane of easy personal intercourse" because of his reluctance, or inability, to express his deep sense of gratitude, loyalty, and affection.

In "The Disciple's Rebellion" Mumford makes clear that, as far as he was concerned, the possibility of collaboration with Geddes decisively ended in 1923 and that he indulgently endured, but firmly declined, Geddes' repeated, subsequent invitations to collaboration. However, the letters and unpublished papers show that he actually had ambivalent feelings about the matter, feelings which continued to trouble him until Geddes' death in 1932. Mumford writes in 1925 that his "internal processes" had somehow been "paralyzed" during their New York meeting but that he hoped to do "much more" by way of collaboration in the future (LM 20 June 1925). In 1928 he confesses to Branford that the invitation to join Geddes at Montpellier "tore at my heartstrings" and made him "wish keenly" to arrange a visit: "I would drop everything and join him for a while had I any feeling within me that our being together could bring anything more than a deeper sense of friendliness and encouragement. Still, if I can possibly manage it this spring, I will."[42] It was not until 1931 that Mumford forthrightly told Geddes that productive collaboration on the long-dreamed "opus" would be impossible and declined the offer to become Geddes' designated literary executor and intellectual heir, even though he was still apologetically accepting much of the responsibility for their failure to establish a working relationship in 1923; nor did he have any interest in assisting Geddes in other ways, such as promoting the Montpellier college project or pitching his articles to American journals – because they

paid more than European ones (LM 3 May 1931). Nevertheless, a deep emotional bond and sense of allegiance remained. Mumford was clearly torn between the practical impossibility of working with a difficult old man and an enduring sense of obligation to his intellectual father.

But by 1930 it was too late to initiate the sort of personal relationship both had attempted to establish in 1920. A decade earlier Mumford would have relished the role as Geddes' personal assistant and designated heir. In 1930 Mumford had achieved considerable success and recognition on his own, and he had little interest in undertaking any work that would divert him from his flourishing literary career, no matter how desperate the pleas of his master. Mumford must have taken Geddes' requests to sell his articles and to recruit students for the Montpellier college as impractical, if not demeaning. Geddes' last letter to Mumford ends with the familiar, sad refrain: "So you must take over much of my further Sociology and Education, etc." (PG 2 April 1932; he died on 17 April).

Soon after Geddes' visit to New York in 1923, Mumford began to view that disappointing experience as one which boded considerable tragic loss for both of them. On the one hand, he revered Geddes as his master, mentor, and role model who had been his most important source of ideas and inspiration. On the other, there existed significant impediments to their collaborating as equals, not the least of which was the unavoidable conflict between two powerful and ambitious personalities. There was also the inevitable conflict of a father–son relationship: deep, instinctive loyalty and love existed on both sides, to be sure; yet the father's compulsion to dominate and control conflicted with the son's struggle to establish his freedom and independence. In 1924 Mumford writes Delilah Loch that news of Geddes' recent illness "gives me another wrench after the failure of our meeting last summer." In a passage of striking poetic eloquence and psychological prescience, he describes the tragic loss that looms ominously before them:

> O, Delilah: this damned flaw in life! This cracked gem; this vase too beautiful to be broken, and too broken to be wholly beautiful. The tantalizing nearness of everything we want most; were it not for some fatal, stubborn grain in both of us, Geddes and I, linked together, intellectual and emotional, might still conquer the world. For lack of this he will be imperfectly articulate, and I, perhaps, will have nothing worth articulating.[43]

In a subsequent letter, Mumford describes his "temperamental inability" to work effectively with Geddes as something that "happens in all discipleships: it is the real tragedy of the relation."[44] He also discusses the tragic dimensions of the relationship in his correspondence with Victor Branford. After receiving one of the many invitations to join Geddes at Montpellier, he writes Branford of his reluctance to assume any of the roles Geddes wanted him to fill – as "amanuensis or super-secretary," as "an active teacher or even as college principal," or "taking up" the master's work in some other capacity. He describes his relationship with Geddes as "a tragic dilemma":