



Thinking Machines

'Every city seeks to complete itself. It finds itself with the means and the will to develop its own civilisation within, not merely draw it from without. Thus Glasgow stamped its utilitarian philosophy upon the world by producing Adam Smith.'

Cities in Evolution, p. 90

To Geddes' sociological thinking, the city was a worked example or material demonstration of the relation of people to their environments. People adapt to their environments so they can live well in them; people adapt environments to fit their daily practices. All human environments are built environments. The problem: how to conceptualise this dual relation in a way that organises vast amounts of sociological knowledge. Geddes would fold a sheet of paper up to 64 times to create matrixes that would correlate a form of society with a form of city, or – in Geddes' terms – work, place, and folk. This framework for thinking about people-place adaption is a powerful model for understanding the attachment of people to places, which has the potential to contribute to our understanding of environmental wellbeing, and has the potential to inform UK Planning Policy.