directly to the brooding intensity of Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio.*

The performance—prepared for and recorded at the Lucerne Festival—is splendid. An accomplished Baroque specialist, Kurt Redel, conducts with verve, and his singers (among them soprano Sena Jurinac and bass Franz Crass) are distinctly above the liturgical norm.

THE ORATORIO *Der Tag des Gerichts* ("The Day of Judgment"), recorded in Vienna under the direction of Nikolaus Harnoncourt, is even more prophetic. Composed in Telemann's eighty-first year, it shows how remarkably the composer kept up with the times. (In this respect he was a precursor of Stravinsky, though it required less creative and intellectual agility to keep pace with musical fashions in the eighteenth century than it does in the twentieth.) The oratorio runs for two hours and contains not a single fugue. Certain Baroque elements are still in evidence—for example some flowing ariosos, complete with gamba or oboe counterpoint—but the measured pomp and fugal underpinning of the early eighteenth century have disappeared. Telemann is obviously searching for a fresh approach.

Unfortunately, he doesn't quite find it. The oratorio is betwixt and between, post-Handel and pre-Haydn. It has its moments, especially when the composer seizes on a concrete image and attempts to illustrate it in musical terms—the faithful who "tremble in the dust," the "thundering and rumbling" as Jesus descends to give judgment. But too often the piece bogs down into dull and repetitious note-spinning. The booklet that accompanies the recording is impressively detailed and informative, but it makes stronger claims for the text and music ("a masterpiece of amazing magnitude and boldness of execution") than I find warranted by the evidence at hand. Admittedly, the performance is not ideal. The orchestra, Vienna's Concentus Musicus, makes delicious sounds with its authentic eighteenth-century instruments, but Harnoncourt conducts rather stodgily and neither his chorus nor soloists are immune from insecurities of pitch.

BOOKS

Desires and Disappointments

NORA SAYRE

FIVE YEARS: THOUGHTS DURING A USELESS TIME, by **Paul Goodman.** ***Brussel & Brussel. $5.***

Paul Goodman's ideas must be salvaged from his language. Nestling amidst the Socspeak and the bad verbal plumbing, there are many valuable points, all worthy of the repetition that Mr. Goodman gives them—on the triumphant failures of government, disgraceful education, the foolishness of most available jobs, the facts of poverty, the difficulties of living on minimal cash in a rich society—plus his useful analyses of housing and traffic problems. His description of role-playing and the similarity between delinquents and junior executives in "their safe conformity and competitive individuality" is always worth reviewing. Obviously, at a moment when apologists and mediators crowd so many mental vestibules, such an energetic social critic is welcome. Those who prowl beneath the porticoes of liberalism could hardly defend a single item that Mr. Goodman attacks. Hence it is depressing to revolt from what he praises, and disturbing to hear him ruin his own arguments. Whimsical non sequiturs build a palace of fallacies.

DENOUNCING collectivism, he sounds like Ayn Rand. The utopian community in *Making Do* recalls her valleyful of useful citizens in *Atlas Shrugged;* his "congregational anarchists" reflect the righteousness of her exalted egotists. In *Growing Up Absurd,* Mr. Goodman tried not to romanticize his delinquents. But he never really succeeded in justifying the quirks of those who "have nothing to do," those whom society has caused to "feel worthless and guilty." For him, every failed or criminal person is a patient or an invalid. When he insists that society is totally responsible for delinquency, and that it is impossible to mature under contemporary conditions, one recalls that undergraduate examination question: Do men

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make movements or do movements make men? Mr. Goodman believes the latter—"only the community can bestow honor"—and he sentimentalizes history to claim that earlier societies were superior, such as "Florence" (in what century?). His categories of social victims tempt the memory of Emerson quoting Thoreau: "As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way, governments, society, and even the sun and moon and stars, as astrology may testify." Yet Mr. Goodman's assaults on government are hardly fiercer than Thoreau's.

Many sociologists can be accused of oversimplification—but not this one. His theme of Community (dimly screened as a "universal Republic of Reason") falters because all the characterizations in his writings are so feeble. What humanoids could live in his community? When he mentions "the individual," it is still a mass concept; his descriptions of particular personae yield only types. (The novels do have other narrative problems: "His doughnut was on the floor. He looked at it. She looked at him." But the people are only notions with names.) From *Making Do:* "In sizing up a situation I always looked at a man's crotch or where a woman's fingertips were wandering. . . ." Perhaps this replaces palmistry; it is certainly a substitute for any perception of character. His community would have to be populated with what behavioral scientists call "interpersonal human units," having "face-to-face relationships" and what Mr. Goodman describes as "feelingful" sex. It would be no sanctuary for the eccentrics and free-lancers, "the motley collection" of whom Mr. Goodman speaks fondly—but whom even he is unable to classify. His assumption that everyone bears an Oedipal stripe also shows his imperviousness to variety. *Growing Up Absurd* is concerned with "the average American boy," surely a scarce creature. Unfortunately, Mr. Goodman can write only about conspicuous groups: racial, sexual, professional, or psychotic clusters. References to age levels or salaries serve to evoke personality—a curious practice for a psychologist.

In his latest book, Mr. Goodman describes "my disgust of the naked faces of clothed bodies: so little flesh to convey the whole person. . . . For a change we ought to try the opposite convention: all modestly wearing masks over the face, but otherwise going naked." Perhaps bodies are easier to classify than physiognomies; some observers think that torsos show less variety than faces. At any rate, *Five Years*—a set of notebooks spanning 1955 to 1960—is crammed with equally sensitive suggestions. Despite occasional drolleries ("I am doggy, dogged, and doglike. But I am not a dog, a dirty dog, or a gay dog"), this is a sad book, with an acute emphasis on happiness. Concerning a time when the author received little love or publication, he constantly asked for

more warmth and support than any community could give him: ". . . nobody takes care of me."

Homosexual cruising, "groping," "quickie love," detailed disappointment in lust—all these alternate with small bottoms-up impressions of foreign travel, whiffs of therapy and "method," depression, social meditations ("Consider the U.S. Employment Service—what did people do before it existed?"), aesthetic judgments ("*Le Balcon* is a grand work . . . It is at least a masturbation-fantasy, rather than a phony like other contemporary plays"), and informed observations: "Rain-wear, these days, is more various and colorful than ordinary wear." He does appear to experience the freedom which he has said that society denies. Still, there are many tears: in the unresolved scenes in his fiction, when the author is at a loss, his characters weep. The ululations of his thought are divided into little bunches: "people, places, things," "psychology," "myself," "society," "art," "God," and so on. Mr. Goodman protests that his notebooks are not like those of Gide or Hawthorne, also "unlike . . . Pascal." But he fails to fight off comparisons with Socrates.

In the preface, Harold Rosenberg writes that "With P.G.,... thought is attached to action at both ends." Open-endedness does indeed characterize Mr. Goodman's thinking; he tries to have so many things both ways. In *The Empire City,* the mythic young dropout was able to read his name at the age of two months. This is admittedly the privilege of fantasy. But in *Five Years,* which surely celebrates sexual freedom, he still tries to prevent his wife from enjoying the same liberty. Also, he is angry at prostitutes who want to be paid. Of course, no one is swifter to savage his own mentality than Mr. Goodman. Elsewhere, he wrote of kindred writers and himself: "They have the courage of their own confusions." In the notebooks: "Indeed, I am *not* much in touch with the desires and disappointments that I gripe about so bitterly. . . . My griping is not authentic, and it also changes nothing."

His confusions are reflected in the analyses of his books by intelligent and sympathetic critics, none of whom appears to be describing the same author. (One rather wistful tribute was: "by no means . . . unreadable.") Perhaps this is Mr. Goodman's appeal: each reader can interpret as he wishes, can seize or augment the particular themes that he thinks he perceives. A statement (crucial to *Growing Up Absurd*) such as "a successful revolution establishes a new community" can be bent into anyone's ideal wishbone. Most of the dicta in the notebooks are equally pliable: "Truth is not the description of a state of things but the orientation of an ongoing activity." Or: "The Kingdom of God is within me surely, but I don't live there." The flexibility of meaning can be fondled by any brand of poet (yet Mr. Goodman's themes are clear enough when he writes poems). But it seems a luxury when a psychologist or community planner pretends to pragmatism.

Still, there is always an honest reply: "The few things I know

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surely and simply I cannot effectually present and execute, because of all the garbage in my head and all the garbage in other people's heads." If so, shouldn't a teacher avoid using other crania as his personal trash cans? In *Making Do,* a student (well read in "bad authors buffeted by the modern crisis") cries to the narrator: "Help me! Help me! . . . Tell me what I mean." The narrator has already wearily admitted: "I had to be their bridge, between them and the World"; also, "They sought me out, I had no choice." But Mr. Goodman should some day choose between analyzing bad education and contributing to it. Failure to admire his books sometimes makes one feel guilty, partly because of the kindness that seeps through the prose. But the rest of the seepage is spasmodic. The elderly concept of language as a means of concealment is revived when Mr. Goodman and his colleagues make it a tool of misunderstanding. From *The Empire City:* "It is Man who is wont to project the immortal death in the soul as an abstraction that imitates, by its abstractness, the nonexistence of that which is. And there he is, rising, a constellation in the Great Cosmos." If this is what students like to read, it shows what's wrong with American education. Schools can hardly improve until educators like Mr. Goodman remove the curse they have put on language. «»

Again Perfection

VIRGILIA PETERSON

UNDER GEMINI, A Memoir by Isabel Bolton. *Harcourt, Brace & World. $3.75.*

Until twenty years ago, Isabel Bolton, author of *Do I Wake or Sleep, The Christmas Tree,* and *Many Mansions,* was writing poetry and children's verses under her real name, Mary Britton Miller. It was only with the publication of her first novel, *Do I Wake or Sleep,* when she was sixty-three, that she adopted her present pen name. Whoever has read that piercing but poetic evocation of the New York of the late 1930's will not have forgotten what Edmund Wilson called its "exquisitely perfect . . . accent." Neither will he be surprised that in this new book, *Under Gemini,* the autobiography of her nineteenth-century childhood, Miss Bolton's accent is perfect once again.

In our essential solitude, every one of us as a child comes to dream of having a double who would respond in precisely the same way to the same experiences, duplicate all our impulses, love and hate the same things and people, be more than an echo or a reflection, be in fact another self. In Isabel Bolton's childhood, the dream was fulfilled before she dreamed it. For her first fourteen years, she had at her side a living replica. Now, toward the end of the long life she has since had to live without her sister, she tells in *Under Gemini* what it meant to be an identical twin.

According to the Miller family legend, Miss Bolton says in her foreword, a nurse once misplaced the ribbons that she and her twin sister wore around their wrists to identify them and had to call in their mother to decide which was Mary and which was Grace. In fact, it made no difference. To themselves and to each other they were interchangeable. How interchangeable they were to outsiders can be seen in the old photograph reproduced on the back of the book's jacket in which, standing together in the snow, their bulgy little figures becoated and becapped and bemittened identically, they look out from under their fringed hair through two pairs of identically grave, attentive eyes.

There were reasons for the gravity of that Mary-and-Grace look. The youngest of five children, they were still tiny when their life in the house where they were born was brought to an abrupt end by the death of both parents. Old enough to respond to the weeping of the woman who broke the news to them with wails of their own but too young to have any sharper memory of their mother than that of a radiant "presence," and of their father remembering only the fearful moment of his wrath when in an accord of uncontainable excitement they had risen from behind the couch where he was sleeping and spat in unison upon his face, they did not actually feel the loss of their parents. Yet all too soon they became aware of being a problem to their grandmother in whose house in Springfield, Massachusetts, they went to live, to her disapproving companion "Aunt Julia," and to the Uncle Jim and Aunt Anna who lived in a much grander house down the street and who were henceforward to be their guardians. Inevitably, they slipped into problematical behavior. They gathered, from the warnings and exhortations of the adults around them, that they were a handful.

The surprising thing is that they were not more of a handful than Miss Bolton shows them to have been. The older of their brothers, Philip, no doubt on edge from his greater awareness of the family plight, loved to reduce the twins to terror by slowly fixing his face into a grimace, clenching his hands, and whispering with sepulchral emphasis the single word "CHOLERA." Their aloof, highly emotional older sister, Rebecca, ignored them. Their brother James, who was close enough in age to understand, amuse, and defend them when they needed defense, was all the same too old to be much within reach. Uncle Jim with his perpetual sallies and Aunt Anna with her pieties and condescensions puzzled them and put them off. When their grandmother died and Aunt Anna hired the wispy, refined Miss Desire Aurelia Rogers to take charge of the household of orphaned children, they were torn in their feelings for this new incumbent between their mirth over her all too obvious pretensions and their pity for her all too obviously hungry heart.

How easily, therefore, the Mary-and-Grace combine (one and indivisible, yet often themselves locked in frenzied combat for separate identity) might have foundered, had it not been—and this is the leitmotif of

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