

THE PAUL GOODMAN READER

Paul Goodman • Edited by Taylor Stoehr

A one-man think-tank for the New Left, Paul Goodman wrote over 30 books, most of them before his decade of fame as a social critic in the Sixties. A Reader that does him justice must be a compendious volume, with excerpts not only from bestsellers like *Growing Up Absurd*, but also from his landmark books on education, community planning, anarchism, psychotherapy, language theory, and poetics. Samples as well from *The Empire City*, a comic novel reviewers compared to Don Quixote, prizewinning short stories, and scores of poems that led America's most respected poetry reviewer, Hayden Carruth, to exclaim, "Not one dull page. It's almost unbelievable."

Goodman called himself as an old-fashioned man of letters, which meant that all these various disciplines and occasions added up to a single abiding concern for the human plight in perilous times, and for human promise and achieved grandeur, love and hope.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Goodman, known in his day as "the philosopher of the New Left," set the agenda for the youth movement of the Sixties with his bestselling *Growing Up Absurd*. He produced new books every year throughout that turbulent decade, while lecturing to hundreds of audiences on the nation's campuses, covering subjects that ranged from movement politics to education and community planning, from psychotherapy and religion to literature, language theory and media. There was little that did not fall within his purview as an old-fashioned "man of letters." During this same heady period of his fame he also published his public letters and his journals, the Living Theatre performed his plays, his poems were set to music, and his fiction was chosen for book club distribution. America's most celebrated public intellectual at the time of his death in 1972, his work still resonates for our own times of national crisis.

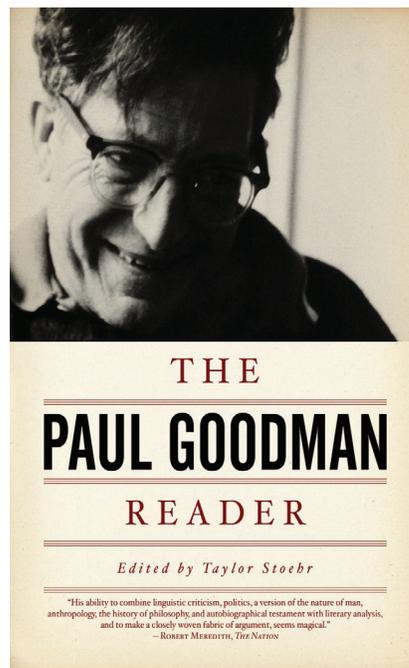
ABOUT THE EDITOR

Taylor Stoehr, Paul Goodman's friend and literary executor, has edited many volumes of his fiction, poetry, and social commentary. He has published numerous studies of Goodman's writings on community planning, media, literature, psychotherapy, and radical politics. His book *Here Now Next* tells the story of how today's widespread Gestalt movement grew out of cross-fertilizing conversations between Goodman, the theorist, and Fritz and Lore Perls, the practitioners, of a daring new therapeutic experiment. A professor of English at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, Stoehr is also the author of half a dozen books of literary and cultural criticism, and translator of two collections of poetry.

ACCOLADES

"It was that voice of his that seduced me—that direct, cranky, egotistical, generous American voice... Goodman's voice touched everything he wrote about with intensity, interest, and his own terribly appealing sureness and awkwardness... It was his voice, that is to say, his intelligence and the poetry of his intelligence incarnated, which kept me a loyal and passionate fan."
—Susan Sontag, novelist and public intellectual

"Goodman, like all real novelists, is, at bottom, a moralist. What really interests him are the various ways in which human beings living in a modern metropolis gain, keep, or lose their integrity and sense of selfhood."
—W. H. Auden, poet



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