

Dr. Wilcox To Be Guest Preacher

At the Congregational church of Birmingham this week will be the Rev. Dr. Edward W. Wilcox, minister, the Congregational Association of Detroit. Services and church school are at 10 a.m. He is one of several summer preachers at the church, pending arrival Sept. 1 of Dr. Alfred Grey, interim minister.

BOOKS and REVIEWS

Three Books on Writers and Writing

Man in Modern Fiction. By Edmund Fuller. New York: Random House. \$3.50.
American Moderns. By Maxwell Geismar. New York: Hill and Wang. \$3.95.
Writers at Work. Edited by Malcolm Cowley. New York: Viking Press. \$5.00.

Reviewed by DONALD A. YATES

The role of the literary critic in America is an interesting one. No one is ever solicited for the job. Men turn critics out of dedication.

to literature, to a certain set of new principles, or with the purpose of somehow reforming a literature that seems to be going astray. No one makes a living as a critic, and there is little if any appeal to the educated masses, then the attitudes and the opinions of the critic must be doubly fascinating. Recently, three significant titles have been published by three of the most important literary critics in this country today. They reveal different minds, different concerns, and always distinctive literary perceptions.

EDMUND FULLER, for example, has grouped together nine of his critical articles in the volume titled "Man in Modern Fiction." Fuller, as one may discern from these pieces or even from his preface, is the country's foremost conservative critic with regard to the depiction of sex in its many facets in modern fiction. His lively, interestingly documented lectures on Tennessee Williams, Norman Mailer, James Jones, Jack Kerouac, and others probe obvious weaknesses in the techniques of some of our most celebrated contemporary novelists, while at the same time they carry the conviction that Fuller is holding forth from an extreme (a difficult one to sympathize with).

THE ESSAYS have honest value as the voicing of "Some Minority Opinions," as Fuller frames them, but perhaps the reader will feel (as I did) that when he proposes that today's writers go back to writing description of sexual experiences with the restraint used in the past (Fuller suggests "Anna Karenina" as an illustration), he is asking far more than can be fairly expected of new, as well as established writers struggling with the profound problems of self-expression. In his "American Moderns," Maxwell Geismar shows himself to be a critic with several words strung to his guitar. This collection of essays, reviews, and articles on American fiction is subtitled "From Rebellion to Conformity—A Mid-Century View of Contemporary Fiction."

IT IS AN extremely interesting, intelligent, and well-written work. It has three main divisions: "In General," which includes essays on the decline of "classic moderns" such as Steinbeck, Dos Passos, and Hemingway, the fate of "naturalism," the Higher Criticism, and the curious figure of Herman Wouk; "Americans and Moderns," which features some of the most lively, opinionated, amusing and honest reviews yet written on Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Cozzens, Marquand, and others; and finally, "Newcomers," wherein Geismar discusses the merits and deficiencies of the most notable of the post-WWII writers—Mailer, Horshy, Algren, Salinger, Bellows, Jones, Styron, and John Howard Griffin.

IT IS unlikely the reader could find a more enlightening and vigorous critical panorama of the present state of fiction in our country than that given by Geismar. **WHILE HE** writes in great sweeping generalities on nearly any literary theme, and lifts his eyes perhaps more than is judicious from the specific work, he is reviewing, the vistas of literary trends, generational movements, and traditional themes are always illuminating, well-organized, and persuasively documented with real criticism. "American Moderns" does much toward establishing Maxwell Geismar as one of our best creative critics. "Writers at Work," which is edited by critic Malcolm Cowley, is pure joy. Cowley has gathered together sixteen of the celebrated "Paris Review" interviews with prominent writers from America, England, France and Italy, pre-

ced them with biographical notes, and with an introduction to the volume.

IN THESE pieces, the writers in question are invited to discuss the techniques and trials of their profession—hence the title. This is journalism, to be sure, but the "Paris Review" staff of reporters working here are seemingly competent—unobtrusively so.

Among the writers interviewed are Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, Thornton Wilder, William Faulkner, Georges Simenon, Robert Penn Warren, Nelson Algren and Françoise Sagan. Cowley's Introduction, which has recently appeared in essence in the Saturday Review, is interesting. It offers an informed approach to the examination of the "writing profession" as it is practiced in our time.

The Hard Blue Sky
By Shirley Ann Grau. 406 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$5.00.

Reviewed by **FRED MALLENDER II**

As Shirley Ann Grau first attracted public attention and critical acclaim as a short story author, it comes as no surprise that "The Hard Blue Sky" is really a series of vignettes with a common background rather than a true novel. In common with a collection of short stories, there are episodes of true beauty, grandeur and power, and others of little interest.

Off the coast of Louisiana, in the Gulf of Mexico, not too far from New Orleans, is a group of islands, one of which is the setting for "The Hard Blue Sky."

THE INHABITANTS are all related, at least vaguely, and know no other way of life. The men are fishermen; the women are housewives in a very elemental sense, and the children just exist. Two outsiders come into this small world, not to change it but merely to catalyze what action there is. Inky O'Alfonso is crew on the sailing yacht of a wealthy New Orleans businessman. Forced to lay over at the island, he simply vegetates for most of the novel, his gaze curiously attracted to one of the island girls.

ADELE LANDRY is the second wife of one of the fishermen who brought her back from a small mainland port. She accepts conditions as she finds them, slowly degenerating herself to the level of the hereditary inhabitants.

IT IS in the development of her characters that Miss Grau's ability truly shines. Annie, the sixteen-year-old in rebellion; Manere Terribone, matriarch of the island; Julius Arceneaux, the middle-aged puny Romeo; Henry Livaudais, the lone wolf; and the numerous other characters are humorous, noble, ludicrous, or base as the situation requires. They give all appearances of being very real people.

THERE IS still something lacking in "The Hard Blue Sky" which keeps it from being engrossing. Perhaps it is the fact of acceptance without change or struggle, or the fact that the movement only momentary or fragmentary upheavals. For too long the inhabitants of the island have lived with the swamps, the water moccasins, the wild dogs, the hurricanes and the hard blue sky. Miss Grau seems unable, or unwilling, to tamper with this situation, and therein lies the novel's weakness.

B'ham Soldier Gets Assignment

Army Pvt. James E. Rennell, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Rennell, 1623 Holland, Birmingham, recently was assigned to the 101st airborne division's 502d infantry at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Rennell, a rifleman with the infantry's company D, entered the army last February and completed basic training at Fort Carson, Colo. He is a 1956 graduate of Birmingham high school.

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GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That a General Primary Election will be held in the City of Bloomfield Hills, County of Oakland, State of Michigan, on Tuesday, August 5, 1958, at the place or places of holding the election in said City as indicated below, viz:

Precinct No. 1—Fire Hall, Municipal Building, 45 East Long Lake Road

Precinct No. 2—St. Dunstan's Play House, Lone Pine Road

for the purpose of placing in nomination by all political parties participating therein, candidates for the following offices, viz:

STATE—Governor, Lieutenant Governor
CONGRESSIONAL—United States Senator, Representative in Congress

LEGISLATIVE—State Senator, Representative
COUNTY—Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, County Clerk and Register of Deeds, County Treasurer, Auditor in Counties electing same, Drain Commissioner, Coroners, Surveyor, and such other Officers as are nominated at that time.

Also any additional Amendments or Propositions that may be submitted.

Notice Relative to Opening and Closing of the Polls Election Law, Act 116, P.A. 1954.

Section 720. On the day of any election the polls shall be opened at 7 o'clock in the forenoon, and shall be continuously open until 8 o'clock in the afternoon and no longer. Every qualified elector present and in line at the polls at the hour prescribed for the closing thereof shall be allowed to vote.

The Polls of said election will be open at 7 o'clock a.m. and will remain open until 8 o'clock p.m. of said day of election.

Robert J. Stadler, City Clerk

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