



Conversations with Gore Vidal (Literary Conversations)

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Almost sixty years ago, Gore Vidal burst onto the literary landscape with his World War II novel *Williwaw*. He never looked back. To date he has published twenty-nine novels, one short story collection, six theatrical plays, and numerous books of nonfiction. His novel *The City and the Pillar* was a groundbreaking work in the history of homosexual literature. In *Myra Breckinridge* Vidal created a ribald parody of sexual morality and identity. In 1967 Vidal published *Washington, D.C.* It would be the first of seven novels that have come to be known as the *American Chronicles*, a sprawling history of the empire filled with a cast of the most significant social, literary, and political figures of the United States.

Conversations with Gore Vidal features provocative and intriguing interviews with one of America's most prolific authors. Vidal was an *enfant terrible* in the 1940s and a marginalized homosexual in the 1950s. As Edgar Box he wrote mysteries, and as a screenwriter he penned the script for *Ben-Hur*. In 1960 he ran for Congress. In the 1990s, he appeared in films such as *Gattaca*, *Bob Roberts*, and *Shadow Conspiracy*. His essay collection *United States: Essays 1952-1992*, which features 114 pieces on everything from Howard Hughes to French literature, won the National Book Award.

Vidal proves himself here to be a witty, acerbic, cantankerous conversationalist, one who is willing to-and often eager to-defy conventional wisdom and lacerate the tired clichés inherent in both politics and literature. A defiant political insider who is related to both the Gores and the Kennedys, he is a proud Leftist who nevertheless does not hesitate to slash at party orthodoxy when he deems it necessary.

Richard Peabody and Lucinda Ebersole are the editors of the literary journal *Gargoyle*, based in Washington, D.C.

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