



## 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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