

## *Vidal flunks teachers who mechanize literature study*

Novelist Gore Vidal castigated the American approach to teaching literature in a talk at College Hour last Wednesday.

"Teachers expect students to go to bed with Jane Austen over the weekend, examine her and have a full autopsy by Monday. Teachers today are pretending that literature is a science. It is not mechanistic! We are not able to get an idea of anyone's character out of graphs.

"The terrible fate of the novel is that reading it is not voluntary. It is forced upon the student. If you don't feel like reading, don't!"

Vidal on Hemingway: "He had a tremendous influence on my generation. However, he was, as the saying goes, 'essentially a photographer.'"

On Faulkner: "He was a genius. However, people will find his material a bit too soothing, too provincial in the future."

On Golding: "Fascinating. **Lord of the Flies** is an astonishing projection. Golding is essential a moral tabulist.

On Ian Fleming: "James Bond is popular because bright people are beginning to understand the nature of the trap of life into which they are born. The order of the day is to become double agents, and underneath we realize that we are truly vivid, exciting—comparable to Batman."

### **Vidal is interviewed**

**By Raoul Lowery**

A bright person who does not go to college will not succeed, so the counselors tell us. A bright person who does go to college is wasting his time, said Gore Vidal during an interview last Wednesday.

Vidal, one of the major writers of today, did not attend college. He authored his first novel, **Willawwa**, at the age of 19, and since then has published such book as last year's best seller, **Julian**, and plays such as "Visit To a Small Planet", "The Best Man", the movies, "Suddenly Last Summer" and the recently finished "Night

of the General" with Peter O' Toole. Vidal also wrote a number of plays for television's "Golden Era" of drama during the Fifties. Studio One, Playhouse 90, and Omnibus were some of the dramatic programs he wrote for.

Some of his opinions on various subjects are:

#### **Literature courses . . .**

They are ruining reading for students who read before entering college for pleasure or intellectual pursuit. "Surgery" can not be performed on a novel by a teacher for students because reading is such a personal thing that only the individual can interpret for himself what he reads.

#### **How English courses should be taught . . .**

Every day, every student should be required to write essays on what they have experienced or know, to develop writing skills as well as the ability to organize thoughts. Students today cannot  
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# Vidal blasts scientific teaching of novels

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organize their thinking in other than the television jargon that they have grown up with. That is to say, that they think in terms of Madison Avenue jingles. Ideally, the English teachers would not be so concerned with whether or not a comma is in the right place, but rather, is the truth being approached.

## Other authors . . .

Ayn Rand is a bad writer. She stands for "greed and selfishness" and a society governed by an elite. If such an elite ruling class existed, Ayn Rand herself wouldn't qualify, "She's too poor a writer." Leon Uris writes for money only. I was please that my **Julian** out-

sold his **Armageddon**.

## Presidential politics . . .

Any Republican, with the exception of Richard Nixon, can beat Lyndon Johnson or Bobby Kennedy in 1968. The war in Viet Nam will be the critical issue in that campaign.

As for Republican candidates, I would not be able to vote for George Romney because of his "nutty religion." Mormons should not hold public office because their beliefs preclude civil rights. they truly discriminate against Negroes. However, he probably wouldn't need my vote to win.

Charles Percy is a man I could vote for but I would be more enthusiastic for Mark Hatfield of Oregon. If the Republicans can cast aside their traditional death-wish, they can win in 1968 and it might be good for the country.

## Viet Nam. . .

The war is a meaningless one. It is unjust. More people should refuse to serve in that war. As a young man I was drafted to serve in WW II and I served. I am not a pacifist. I felt that the war against Fascism was as just as the current one is unjust. I fear, however, that we are involved so deeply that we will never be able to withdraw from Southeast Asia, unless the Republicans exhume their traditional

"Party of Peace" attitude and run as the anti-war party of 1968. I should add, of course, that I have been a lifelong Democrat and will remain so, but this war of Johnson's turns my stomach.